Portfolio Guide

A handbook for students, trainers and assessors in England and Wales

Certificate in Local Council Administration

Contents

This guide explains everything you need to know about CiLCA and answers most of your questions. Learners are advised to find out what information is provided and where. Trainers should know the handbook well and help learners find their way around.

Section One notes the background to CiLCA; it introduces Level 3 and suggests who might take CiLCA; it explains who manages CiLCA.

Section Two describes the structure of CiLCA, the importance of training and the number of hours involved.

Section Three explains how assessment works and its integrity is protected. It includes policies to handle cheating, complaints and appeals.

Section Four provides guidance on compiling the portfolio; it explains word limits and annotations.

Section Five suggests some resources that you might find useful.

Section Six contains the nationally agreed occupational standards which provide a basis for the five units of CiLCA.

Section Seven is the most important assessment plan. It includes the tasks to complete and additional guidance.

Section One: Setting the Scene

What lies ahead?
Excellent - you have decided to take the CiLCA challenge. Your task is to demonstrate that you have the core knowledge and skills for working with a local council. This guide explains what CiLCA is, where it comes from and how it works. You are asked to read it with care and refer to it often.

What is CiLCA?
CiLCA is a foundation qualification for local council officers and others working with local councils. It's a Certificate in Local Council Administration awarded at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) where it is worth 20 credits[1] and it equips people for moving on to a Level 4 qualification[2]. CiLCA is owned and managed by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB) working on behalf of local councils in England and the National Training Advisory Group (NTAG) representing local councils in Wales[3]. Local councils in this instance are parish, town, community and neighbourhood councils. CiLCA is administered by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

Where has CiLCA come from?
CiLCA was created by the sector bodies in England as a foundation qualification in 2001 and accredited and quality assured by the AQA as part of a new National Training Strategy. In 2003 the Monitoring

[1] As an NQF-aligned award, CiLCA can be assessed *only* by the IDB and NTAG.
[2] A university-accredited advanced qualification is delivered by the SLCC called the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Governance: Local Council Management.
[3] Members of the IDB represent the National Association of Local Councils, the SLCC, chief officers of county associations of local councils (CALCs), the Local Government Association and the Department of Communities and Local Government. Members of NTAG represent the SLCC, One Voice Wales, the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association.

and Verification Board (M&VB) took over responsibility on behalf of the sector bodies and CiLCA Wales was launched in 2010. CiLCA has been updated from time to time and was then refreshed in 2015 to position it at Level 3 of the NQF making it transferable outside the sector. CiLCA also has its roots in a set of occupational standards for the chief officers or clerks of a local council approved in 2012 following consultation across the sector. The standards indicate to employers the potential scope of the chief officer's work.

What is Level 3?
Familiar qualifications at Level 3 are AS/A-levels, NVQs Level 3 or BTEC Nationals. At Level 3 you describe relevant knowledge in some detail and demonstrate skills and understanding by using that knowledge in a professional setting and in a broad range of different activities. Assessment includes written explanations that show an accurate and detailed understanding and examples of relatively complex work undertaken in the workplace.

Who can take CiLCA?
CiLCA is suitable for all officers working with local councils. Councillors and officers of advisory bodies have also taken CiLCA in the past. CiLCA is flexible enough to suit candidates from the diversity of local councils. When a council's chief officer (or clerk) has CiLCA , s/he is qualified in England for the purposes of the Local Council Award Scheme (Quality and Quality Gold) and eligibility for the council to use the general power of competence. A CiLCA qualified council officer can also become a Member of the Institute of Local Council Management.

The sector bodies wish to make CiLCA equally accessible to all but you need access to council documents and, if necessary, permission from the officers

responsible to use them for CiLCA. If you are not linked to a specific council you are advised to find a council willing to provide appropriate documents. If you have a registered condition (such as dyslexia or visual impairment) that might affect your ability to create your portfolio, you should notify the CiLCA Administrator who identifies appropriate advice or support. For example, a candidate with a visual impairment could provide an audio commentary for the portfolio. The Portfolio Guide is published in both English and Welsh and candidates can submit a portfolio in either language.
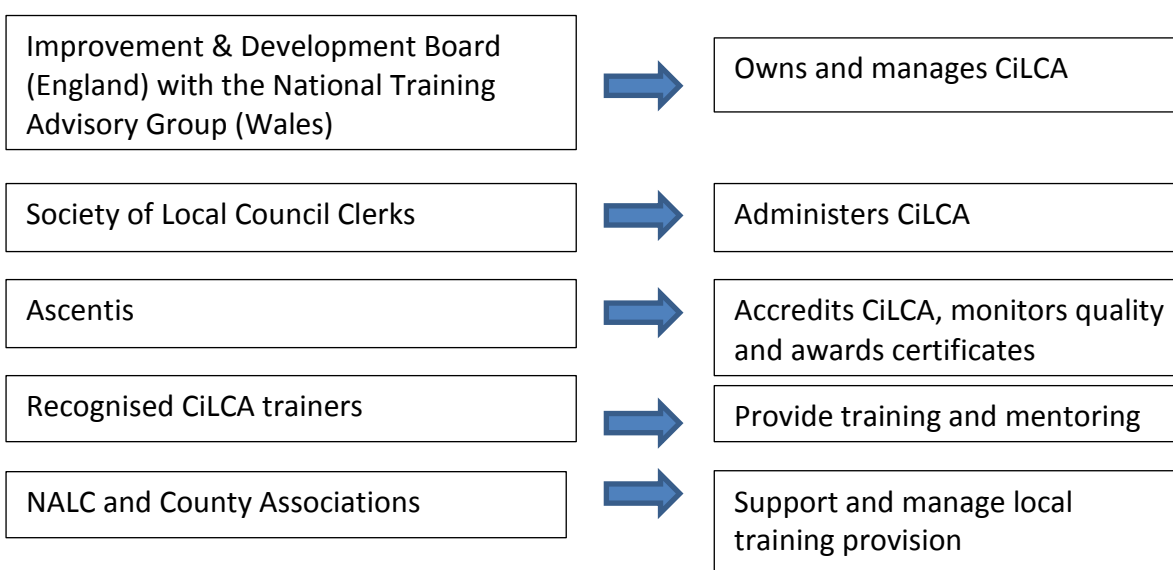
Who manages and administers CiLCA?
The IDB and NTAG are responsible for strategic oversight with operational review in the hands of a group representing both England and Wales. The IDB's secretariat is provided by the Improvement and Development Manager at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) while One Voice Wales (OVW) provides support for NTAG. The SLCC is approved as a delivery centre for CiLCA by Ascentis - the awarding body that accredits CiLCA. Ascentis monitors quality assurance to protect the integrity of CiLCA and awards certificates. The IDB and NTAG have worked with Ascentis to develop CiLCA as a Level 3 qualification

worth 20 credits. The qualification complies with Ascentis's approved framework.

CiLCA is administered by officers at the SLCC. The Head of Conferences, Training and Education manages the education and administrative team including the Academic Leader, the Internal Quality Assurance (QA) Verifier and the CiLCA Administrator. The Academic Leader advises on the academic integrity of the qualification. The Internal QA Verifier manages the CiLCA assessment process and the assessors who mark the portfolios. The CiLCA Administrator liaises with candidates and assessors, manages EMMA, the e-portfolio facility, and hard copy portfolios and keeps all records.

CiLCA is a qualification and not a training course. CiLCA trainers provide training and mentoring independently and in a variety of ways through the SLCC, OVW and CALCs nationwide. Training for recognised CiLCA trainers is provided by the IDB and NTAG in partnership with the SLCC. The Improvement and Development Manager at NALC manages the service to trainers on behalf of the IDB and works in partnership with One Voice Wales.

Improvement & Development Board (England) with the National Training Advisory Group (Wales)	Owns and manages CiLCA
Society of Local Council Clerks	Administers CiLCA
Ascentis	Accredits CiLCA, monitors quality and awards certificates
Recognised CiLCA trainers	Provide training and mentoring
NALC and County Associations	Support and manage local training provision

Section Two: Preparing for CiLCA

How does CiLCA work?
The occupational standards agreed in 2012 provide a framework for CiLCA consisting of five units matching the five areas of work in the standards. The units identify the outcomes of learning or what a council officer needs to understand, know or be able to do. Each outcome is assessed against related criteria. You show that you can meet the assessment criteria by providing evidence in a portfolio. Assessors check your performance against the assessment criteria. This guide specifies the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and evidence to be submitted for assessment. It also provides additional guidance to help you – and trainers and assessors – work out what is needed.

Occupational standards ➡ Learning outcomes ➡ Assessment criteria ➡ Evidence

The five units are as follows. Each unit carries a number of credits depending on the work involved. Credits and hours represent a currency required by Ascentis and include training, research, writing and time at work. As an example (in the table below), up to 70% of the 200 hours may be part of your paid work with 20% spent on research and writing and 10% on training and group support. Over a year, 200 hours is about four hours a week but up to three hours can be part of your normal work.

Unit title	Credit value	Total Hours	Paid work	Writing	Training
Core Roles in Local Council Administration	3	30	21	6	3
Law & Procedure for Local Councils	5	50	35	10	5
Finance for Local Councils	5	50	35	10	5
Management for Local Councils	2	20	14	4	2
Community Engagement	5	50	35	10	5
Total	**20**	**200**	140	40	20

Each unit involves three to nine learning outcomes. You provide evidence that you have met the 30 learning outcomes and related assessment criteria to an expected standard. The tasks include pieces of work written specifically for the portfolio and council documents that you annotate to show knowledge and understanding.

You cannot create documents for an invented council but you can suggest amendments to genuine documents to demonstrate your understanding. Short written pieces and annotations must be your own work. There is sometimes a word limit as this reinforces the important professional skill of writing concisely. Guidance on word limits and annotations is provided in Section 4.

How can you learn what is required?
This guide provides a training curriculum by explaining what a CiLCA qualified officer needs to learn. Trainers design training courses based on this curriculum to suit local circumstances and support learners as they prepare for assessment. You are a learner until you submit your work and then you become a candidate.

The main purpose of training is to help you learn. When you take responsibility for your own learning you become a more confident practitioner (so there are no model answers). You need knowledge of the subject and an awareness of assessment technique. Learners are often advised to familiarise themselves with the subject knowledge first – only covering assessment technique when ready to prepare the portfolio. Trainers and mentors have experience and knowledge. You do not have to be a member of the training organisations to benefit from their training which is available to everyone who needs it. Many trainers recommend taking ILCA[4], the SLCC's introductory e-learning course, before moving on to CiLCA training. Under the national training strategies for England and Wales, the IDB, NTAG and related sector bodies recognise trainers who have attended a one-day course examining how CiLCA works. Trainers evaluate their training and make improvements to address concerns. The IDB and NTAG monitor the performance of candidates from different counties and Wales and share good practice.

Trainers help you remain motivated and manage your time. They may encourage you to enter into a learning agreement setting out the expectations of trainer, learner and employer. The agreement may include an offer to review selected elements of the portfolio (a model agreement is available). Trainers are not responsible for suggesting that a portfolio or unit is ready for approval by an assessor. The purpose of reviewing drafts is to reassure you that you are on the right track but not that you have reached your destination.

Trainers have no contact with the assessors or the Internal Quality Assurance (QA) Verifier but can seek advice from officers responsible for CiLCA at NALC, OVW and the SLCC. Similarly, trainers provide the conduit by which learners can seek further advice. Learners are not expected to communicate directly with CiLCA officers at NALC, OVW or the SLCC except when registering formal complaints (see below).

How long does CiLCA take?
You have one year to submit your portfolio from the date of registration. Depending on the state of your council's documents and the provision of training, your portfolio could take from six months to a year to complete. As an example, if you do one learning outcome a week, it will take seven months. You are required to submit all units of your portfolio within one year of registration and to pass all units within fifteen months. If you seek an extension for the late submission of your portfolio or of any re-submissions you apply by e-mail to the CiLCA Administrator clearly stating the reason.

Your council should support your studies. It can pay for training and CiLCA fees and offer study time where possible. The council as an employer can be a party to the learning agreement. The council is advised to monitor your workload and limit new projects during this time. CiLCA is awarded to *you* and not to your council although the council benefits significantly.

You cannot claim credit for qualifications related to elements of the portfolio as the aim is to apply existing knowledge to a specific council.

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[4] Introduction to Local Council Administration

Section Three: Assessing CiLCA

How do you get started?

You register and pay for CiLCA using a form downloaded from the CiLCA page of the SLCC website which also provides details of fees. The CiLCA Administrator confirms your registration and notifies the lead officer for CiLCA in your area. You cannot access EMMA, the e-portfolio, until you have registered with the SLCC. You are advised to register *after* your first training session covering guidance on portfolio assessment. This section of the Portfolio Guide explains how we organise assessment so that you can bear this in mind when building your portfolio (see Section Four).

How does assessment work?

All learners are expected to use EMMA for submitting your work. When you register for CiLCA you are given access to EMMA and receive instructions on how to use it. At the same time you are allocated to an anonymous assessor. A significant benefit is that your portfolio is assessed one unit at a time (in any order). You complete all the work for your chosen unit, writing short explanations directly into the box provided or uploading documents as required by the task before clicking the submit button. Your unit is then available for your assessor. You will receive feedback unit by unit. If you have technical reasons for not using EMMA, you can submit the whole portfolio as a hard copy or on a memory stick by post but you cannot submit a posted portfolio in separate units.

It is important to ensure that your assessor is objective so if you come from the same county as an assessor or an assessor knows you personally, your portfolio is sent to another assessor to avoid a conflict of interests. Portfolios cannot be anonymous as the documents submitted belong to specified councils.

Assessment gives all candidates an equal chance of achieving CiLCA. The aim is to be flexible and allow for the diversity of councils. CiLCA qualifies all candidates to work with councils undertaking a range of activities so trainers advise officers of less active councils on how to provide suitable evidence when necessary.

Assessors are selected for proven subject knowledge and assessment practice and are totally objective in their approach. They are supported through induction and receive training. Assessors hold two meetings a year to share ideas, address concerns and participate in standardisation activities to ensure consistent assessment practice.

If advice for trainers emerges from assessment, the Internal QA Verifier issues a training briefing via the Improvement & Development Manager at the National Association of Local Councils.

Ascentis's policy is that candidates must achieve *all* the assessment criteria to an *adequate* standard. Minor errors, misunderstandings and points for improvement are noted in feedback but do not require further work. Candidates are asked to do further work and re-submit sections of the portfolio where significant points are missed or errors show that the understanding of the law or accepted good practice is less than sufficient, especially where the council might be put at risk.

The contents of a portfolio are always treated in confidence by officers at the SLCC responsible for education and the administration of CiLCA, by the assessor team and representatives of Ascentis. Trainers cannot discuss the contents of a

portfolio outside the specific training team unless a candidate gives permission.

Assessors may take up to three weeks to assess each unit. You receive feedback within three to six weeks of submission depending on whether the marking is verified by the Internal QA Verifier.

While you are waiting for the results of one unit, you continue to prepare your next unit. Your assessor provides feedback on each unit via EMMA and you receive an e-mail when the feedback is ready. There are two possible results for each learning outcome.

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1. You have provided all the required evidence and achieved the assessment criteria (excellent).

2. The learning outcome is referred for further work. The assessor provides feedback suggesting what you need to do. You re-submit your work as soon as it is ready. This is your first referral – and it is free of charge.

If your work is referred a second time, you cannot make another attempt until you have finished all five units. You then contact the CiLCA Administrator and pay a fee to unlock access to the referred units (see the website). You then respond to the feedback and re-submit your work as soon as possible to complete CiLCA.

Remember, you must submit all five units for the first time by the one-year deadline. You have another three months from this date in which to complete and pass all referred work. This includes the time taken to mark referred work.

When you have passed all five units, you celebrate. You will receive your certificate when your result has been processed by the SLCC and Ascentis.

How is the integrity of CiLCA assured?
Confidence in the integrity of CiLCA as a qualification is vital. All parties commit to maintaining this integrity through the quality assurance process. The Internal QA Verifier is responsible for assessment and the *internal* quality assurance of CiLCA. Ascentis is the *external* body that accredits CiLCA; its External Verifier monitors quality assurance by reviewing the work of the assessors and verifier once a year.

Ascentis advises the Internal QA Verifier on training for assessors and provides access to training. New assessors have one induction meeting with the Internal QA Verifier and attend an Ascentis event.

The Internal QA Verifier allocates the new assessor to a mentor from the assessor team. The new assessor marks one practice portfolio and a second assessor overmarks at least the first five portfolios marked by a new assessor until the Internal QA Verifier is satisfied that the assessor achieves the expected standard.

The Internal QA Verifier checks a 20% sample covering all assessors and all units (or a minimum of 5) and trains assessors to ensure consistency. The Internal QA Verifier keeps a record of all meetings and issues discussed with assessors. Assessors identify advice for trainers emerging from assessment. If there is any concern that an appropriate standard of marking is not

being maintained, this is raised with the national committee[5] which investigates the matter and acts on its findings.

Ascentis expects the IDB and NTAG to monitor the numbers and performance of candidates from different regions to identify good practice for the benefit of trainers across the country. If trainers wish to make a complaint regarding the administration of CiLCA or an example of unfair treatment, they follow the complaints procedure below.

What is cheating?

You don't give yourself an unfair advantage by plagiarism or syndication. Plagiarism is where a candidate uses or imitates someone else's words or ideas and passes them off as their own work. In all qualifications this is unacceptable. So, when asked to write explanations and annotations, you must use your own words. You cannot use material from other sources unless you acknowledge that source in a reference. You don't have to use a specific style of referencing but someone should find the source from the

information you provide. You always put direct quotes in quotation marks.

When you submit your portfolio you take full responsibility for its content. It must be clear which writing is your own work. *Every* document or page that you write and upload onto EMMA (or put into a hard copy portfolio) must be labelled with your name.

Syndication occurs when two or more people submit the same or closely similar words. To check that syndication has not taken place, candidates from the same council are normally assessed by the same assessor even if the portfolios are not submitted at the same time.   The assessors alert the Internal QA Verifier to possible incidents of cheating. The Internal QA Verifier notifies the candidate, reviews the evidence and decides whether there is deception or not. There are two possible outcomes detailed below.

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[5] This committee is contacted through the Improvement and Development Manager at NALC.

- There is no deception. The candidate is notified and the portfolio is assessed. The candidate is advised on how to avoid the charge of plagiarism or syndication in future.

- Deception is identified. The problem is explained to the candidate who cannot resubmit a portfolio for six months following the decision letter and pays a full fee for resubmission.

A written appeal against the Internal QA Verifier's decision can be submitted to the IDB (England) or NTAG (Wales) and their decision is final. Candidates have 28 days from the date of the Internal QA Verifier's decision letter in which to appeal. The IDB or NTAG appoints two representatives to assess the evidence and decide whether there is a clear case of deception. There are then three possible outcomes reported to the IDB or NTAG, the Internal QA Verifier and the candidate:

- There is no deception; the candidate is cleared and the portfolio can be assessed.

- The Internal QA Verifier's decision is upheld and the sanction remains.

- The representatives of the IDB or NTAG find that the case is less severe and advise the candidate of action to be taken to enable re-submission.

How can you complain or appeal?
- You make a *complaint* if a serious problem with the administration of CiLCA is identified.

- Trainers can make a *complaint* if they identify an example of unfair treatment.

- You can *appeal* against an assessment decision related to any element of the portfolio.

All complaints and appeals must be put in writing with evidence to support the case and sent to the CiLCA Administrator who notifies the Head of Conferences, Training and Education (CTE) at the SLCC, the Chief Executive and Ascentis. The Head of CTE deals personally with complaints about administration but sends appeals and complaints suggesting unfair treatment to the Internal QA Verifier who is responsible for the assessment process.

Complaints and appeals are investigated by the officer concerned who may discuss the evidence with the candidate, trainer or other parties.   The officer then decides how to respond and writes a report justifying the decision and any action to be taken which is then sent to the candidate or trainer by the CiLCA Administrator. If the response remains unsatisfactory, the complaint or appeal can be submitted to the IDB (England) or NTAG (Wales) who appoints two representatives to review the case. Their decision is final. The outcomes of all complaints and appeals are reported for monitoring to the IDB or NTAG, the Chief Executive of the SLCC and Ascentis. There is a fee for making an appeal to cover administrative costs but the fee is returned if the appeal is upheld (see the SLCC website).

Section Four: Building the Portfolio

How do you construct your portfolio?
You provide evidence to meet the numbered assessment criteria for each of the 30 learning outcomes. It is expected that you submit your portfolio via EMMA where your work is marked unit by unit. If you wish to submit your portfolio as a hard copy or on a memory stick you must submit the whole portfolio at once.

EMMA is very easy to use. You follow instructions given to you in an e-mail when you register and a short video (available on the SLCC website) also demonstrates how EMMA works. You write some responses directly into boxes provided although you are advised to draft them in Word first. These boxes and the footnote tool help you to keep within the word limits. You also upload notes and annotated documents when required.

All portfolios are submitted with a completed copy of Ascentis's Form 03: CiLCA Portfolio Front Sheet. This is available from the SLCC's CiLCA web page or on EMMA (see below for details).

Form 03 is followed by all the evidence required. The boxes below provide a checklist to help you format your portfolio so that assessors and verifiers can find their way quickly through your documents. This formatting is required by Ascentis. EMMA may ask you to indicate that you have seen the checklist.

All portfolios whether hard copy, memory stick or uploaded to EMMA
Form 03 comes at the start of the portfolio. It provides your details and confirms that it is clear throughout the portfolio which work is/is not your own.   There is a space on the reverse to add an introduction to the organisation(s) with which you are working and your role(s). It is the first task with a word limit (400 words) and an early opportunity to see if you follow instructions on writing concisely. It is *essential* that you complete the introduction on the reverse of Form 03.
Every page of work that you produce yourself should include (either at the top of the page or as a header) your name and numbers of the relevant Unit, LO and assessment criteria.
If your name is not on a page, it is assumed that it is *not* your own work.
It must always be clear whether or not you wrote any accompanying or annotated council (or other) document. All annotated documents must state your perspective or role in relation to the document (see the guidance on annotations).
Each piece of work that you produce yourself should state the date of completion.
Always include a statement in the space for LO4 (and in the explanation box on EMMA) noting that the evidence for LO4 can be found in all other evidence of your own work that you submit.

Hard copy portfolios
If you submit a hard copy, you compile your portfolio in exactly the order of units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria set out in *The Portfolio Guide*.

You hold it together when posted with treasury tags (not a ring binder). An A4 ring binder is too bulky for posting but helps to keep your portfolio together until you submit it. Don't use plastic envelopes for pages or sets of pages as they are time consuming for assessors.
The start of each unit in a hard copy portfolio can be identified by a coloured title sheet.
The start of the work for each learning outcome (LO) throughout a hard copy portfolio should be identified by a numbered tab. The LO should be numbered and written out in full on the first sheet.
The assessment criterion (or criteria) being addressed should also be numbered and written out in full on the first sheet of relevant work.
If your explanations or annotations are on a separate sheet from accompanying documents, always organise the documents so that your explanations/annotations come first.

Memory stick portfolios
Label it with your name. Organise files in five unit folders and number every file with the correct LO number. If there is more than one file for an LO, add information so that your assessor knows immediately which portfolio item it contains.

Posting
Post your hard copy portfolio or memory stick to the CiLCA Administrator at the SLCC, 8 The Crescent, Taunton, TA1 4EA. You should ensure secure delivery and be ready to provide another copy if your portfolio goes missing in transit

Assessors review your presentation skills using work submitted so far on Form 03 and under Learning Outcome 4 (LO4) in Unit One. If your work shows significantly weak communication or word processing skills, it will be referred for further work. Trainers can provide guidance as appropriate on page layout, the use of font styles and sizes, grammar, spelling, punctuation, proof reading and concise writing.

In submitting your portfolio, you are taking full responsibility for its contents, You are also agreeing that the SLCC, OVW, your CALC or training partnership will create and maintain records containing your personal data and that these records will be used for administration and monitoring statistics as required. The application form explains to whom your contact details may be disclosed in line with Data Protection legislation. The contents of your portfolio are treated in confidence by all concerned. Portfolios are stored securely on EMMA; they are frequently backed up and are retained in perpetuity. Hard copies or memory sticks are held at Taunton for three months when returned by the assessors. If you wish your portfolio to be returned to you after this date, please let the CiLCA Administrator know. It is the SLCC's responsibility to ensure that all portfolios and records in their care are secure.

What is the policy on word limits?
Some activities have a word limit to ensure that you write concisely. You can exceed the word limit by up to 10%. A word limit of 400 words means a maximum of 440. If you under-use the word limit by more than 10% you might have missed vital items of information. If no word limit is given, you still write concisely and keep to the point (see LO4). EMMA counts the words when explanations are written into the box.

- You can use bullet points to be more concise; ensure that they are properly formatted and fit the stem sentence appropriately.
- Footnotes can be used to expand on a point as long as substantive information required as a significant element of the task is included in the main body of the text.
- References to legislation are not counted; they can be included in footnotes when using the explanation boxes on EMMA.
- You should note the word count on any written work with a word limit.

How do annotations work?
Annotations are notes attached to a document. They can be written into a document using highlighting, comment boxes, footnotes or endnotes or can be put into an accompanying document. In fact it is helpful to the assessor if you introduce your annotated documents with an uploaded front sheet of notes laid out in the standard format; they should also cover the bullet points below. You are not expected to write *everything* you know in annotations but to select key points that demonstrate exactly what is required. In addition to any annotations specified in the task, you include (if relevant in each case):

- your perspective (did you create, amend, oversee, use or simply study the document); it must be crystal clear to the assessors and verifiers whether you are annotating documents created by yourself or someone else
- a note of how the council or councillors use the document
- important legal references
- a note of how the document might be improved.

All candidates seeking CiLCA Wales, should make sure that their documents, explanations and annotations demonstrate a proper understanding of the Welsh Language Act. Welsh candidates should also note that the word 'national' can refer to Wales, England or the UK as appropriate.

If you work for more than one council, you can use documents from different councils but do make this clear. If you are not a member or employee of a specific council you should link up with a council that will share documents with you. If you need help in identifying a supportive council you ask your training provider to help.

Section Five: Resources

You should have access to the latest editions of the following general resources:

- *Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration* originally written by Charles Arnold-Baker and more recently updated by Paul Clayden; published by LexisNexis (OVW, CALCs and SLCC sell copies at a discounted price)

- *Local Councils Explained* by Meera Tharmarajah of NALC is available for purchase from your CALC or OVW. It contains model standing orders.

- The booklet, *The Good Councillors' Guide*, is a useful introduction. There are separate editions for England and Wales. The booklet for England can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk and hard copies are available from CALCs.

- *The Clerk's Manual* is published by the SLCC (see www.slcc.co.uk)

- *The Parish Councillors Guide* is also written by Paul Clayden; published by Shaw & Sons (normally available from your training provider)

Specialist topics include:

- *Being a Good Employer* a useful booklet available to download from www.nalc.gov.uk or in hard copy from CALCs. For specialist guidance on employment issues the website for ACAS (*Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service*) is also useful.

- *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners Guide (England)* or *Governance and Accountability (Wales): Practitioners Guide* (latest editions) can be downloaded from the SLCC website. Each edition contains statutory proper practices and is essential for all councils.

- *A Community and Town Councillors Handbook: The land use planning system in Wales* is published by Planning Aid Wales and available from http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/about-planning/guidance-publications/.

- Planning Help provides an 8-step guide on its web pages: *How to comment on a planning application* available from www.planninghelp.org.uk.

For any learner wishing to study Harvard referencing (especially in preparation for Level 4):

- Pears R & Shields G (latest) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*, Newcastle, Peartree Books

A central resource known as the CiLCA Hub is available for trainers. It contains examples of documents they can use; they should build a resource pack including local information or case studies. For example, you should be familiar with local development plans for your area and national planning policies for England or Wales as appropriate.

You should be aware of policies that support CiLCA. The SLCC keeps policies on public liability insurance, Health and Safety and Data Protection on file. The policies below are set out in this guide:

- Management responsibilities
- Assessment ethos and the assessment plan
- Internal verification and quality assurance processes
- The induction and staff development of assessors
- Complaints and appeals procedures
- Data protection policy (on application forms)
- A confidentiality statement
- The security of portfolios and records

Other records are stored by the SLCC and kept indefinitely. Records of all IDB and NTAG meetings are kept by NALC or OVW while the SLCC is responsible for the CiLCA-related records of all other meetings.   The CiLCA Administrator uses data produced by EMMA and data on posted portfolios to report as required by the IDB and NTAG to show how many registrations are submitted and how many CiLCAs are achieved in Wales and across English counties. The CiLCA Administrator monitors all registrations and makes a note of registrations that expire without a submission or an extension after one year.

Section Six: The occupational standards

Twenty two occupational standards provide a basis for the thirty learning outcomes contained in the assessment plan (Section 7). The five units of CiLCA correspond with the five themes of the standards. Some standards require more than one learning outcome while some standards are assessed in the Level 4 or 5 qualifications.

The role of proper officer, chief officer or clerk to a local council is a recognised profession. (These standards refer consistently to the clerk although CiLCA is available for a range of council officers.) The scope of work undertaken in the clerk's profession is diverse but all local councils operate within the same legal, financial and procedural framework and share the same purpose of democratically representing a local community. Differences depend on the size of the community served by the council and its level of its activity. The occupational standards, agreed by the sector bodies in 2012 following extensive consultation, provide a framework for the profession across the range of councils, levels of responsibility and functions.

"Occupational standards describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in their job in order to carry out their role in a consistent and competent way" (UK Standards 2009). They suggest best practice and the values of a job.

CiLCA tests your skills, knowledge and understanding for meeting these occupational standards at Level 3 of the NQF. Many council officers, such as the Responsible Financial Officer, have specific responsibilities that may not be covered by these standards.

A clerk is a valuable investment for the local council, especially when qualified. However, a clerk is valued for many attributes in addition to qualifications. Three overarching values are resourcefulness, objectivity and integrity.

Resourcefulness: Clerks respond to questions and problems with a dynamic, 'can-do' attitude. They take the initiative and approach their work with enthusiasm, common sense and a vision for the future of the council and its community. They are resilient and flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. They are keen investigators who know where to go for advice, information and ideas.

Objectivity: Clerks maintain a professional detachment from specific views expressed by individual members of the council or in the community. They respect the legal framework and democratic processes within which councils operate and advise the council accordingly. The council can rely on their discretion and neutral, independent approaches to problems and on their professional, objective advice.

Integrity: Many characteristics contribute to the integrity and inherent strength of clerks. They are reliable, committed and consistent; they are honest, open and worthy of trust; they support their employing council as a corporate body. They are approachable, diplomatic and sensitive to the needs of others; they treat people fairly, equally and with respect for diversity. They are committed to their own and the council's excellence and pursue personal and professional development to underpin confidence in their actions. They take responsibility for their work and are accountable for their advice and the decisions they take.

The standards represent what an experienced, qualified clerk should be able to do. Many standards involve giving advice, ensuring compliance with the law, managing diverse tasks and supporting the council. CiLCA qualified officers meet most of these standards at Level 3 as appropriate for their council. The standards are organised into five themes:

1. The core role   Standards 1 to 5 relate to the general knowledge, activities and skills upon which the remaining standards depend
2. Law and procedures   Standards 6 to 9 relate to the legal and procedural framework underpinning the council's statutory role
3. Finance   Standards 10 and 11 refer to the financial management of the council. The standards apply to the clerk, whether or not that person is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
4. Management   Standards 12 to 15 refer to the management of projects, services, assets, facilities and people enabling the council to fulfil its role whatever that may be.
5. Community   Standards 16 to 22 relate to the council's role in the community including town and country planning, community engagement, community planning and partnership working.

The core role
S 1 Understand the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council and of the individuals involved in the work of the council
S 2 Carry out research so that the council is well-informed for making decisions
S 3 Manage the implementing of decisions for which the council is responsible
S 4 Organise and maintain effective administrative systems, processes, policies and records
S 5 Employ a variety of written and oral communication skills including the use of information and communications technology (ICT)

Law and procedures
S 6 Advise the council on its duties and powers
S 7 Ensure that all statutory requirements are observed including employment law, Health and Safety, Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Equality
S 8 Establish appropriate and lawful procedures for managing the meetings of the council and its committees
S 9 Advise the council on statutory requirements and other procedures for maintaining public confidence in the council

Finance
S 10 Advise the council on financial planning and reporting including the preparation and review of budgets, the management of risks to public money and funding applications
S 11 Ensure compliance with proper financial practices including accounts, financial regulations, audit processes, VAT and procurement

Management

S 12 Support the council in the planning, management, funding and review of projects, services, assets and facilities

S 13 Manage the employment, performance and development of council staff

S 14 Manage effective relationships with contractors and service users

S 15 Advise the council on its performance as a corporate body ensuring councillors have opportunities for training and development

Community

S 16 Advise and support the council as it identifies and implements plans for the future of the community it represents

S 17 Manage and administer the council's participation in the planning system according to current planning law, policies and procedures

S 18 Demonstrate an awareness of all aspects of the community served by the council, recognising and respecting different interests and enabling cohesion

S 19 Help provide all members of the community with opportunities for influencing decisions that affect their lives

S 20 Facilitate the council's engagement with the community, managing public relations and ensuring that the council is transparent in all its actions

S 21 Manage effective partnership working

S 22 Advise and support the council as it facilitates community activity

Section Seven: CiLCA

This section contains the assessment plan. Under the heading for each unit you see its credit value and the number of learning outcomes covered. Each task begins with a **learning outcome (LO)** indicating what a CiLCA qualified officer is expected to know, understand or be able to do. The plan refers to a 'CiLCA qualified officer' to include the range of officers taking the qualification. Assessors seek assurance that you have the required knowledge, understanding and skills by checking your work against the numbered **assessment criteria**. The plan sets out the **evidence** you must provide to show that you have met the criteria and provides **guidance** to help you appreciate what is expected. Do refer to the explanation of annotations above as it is not repeated in the guidance. Several words with specific meanings are used in the guidance:

- 'May' means that something is permitted
- 'Can' or 'could' mean that you have a choice
- 'Should' means that something is good or best practice
- 'Must' refers to something required by law.

You complete the appropriate version of LO7 for England or Wales. If you need to transfer CiLCA from Wales to England or vice versa, please ask for guidance.

To help you achieve CiLCA you should:

- follow instructions closely
- read the instructions several times and seek clarification if necessary
- keep to the point and avoid including material that isn't requested
- follow guidance on word limits and use a concise writing style
- name the council when asked to relate the task to a specified council

- note your role in relation to all council documents.

Your trainer's role is to:

- remind you that you are responsible for your own learning
- provide the basic knowledge required
- point you in the right direction
- provide guidance without saying precisely what to write
- help you stay on track by providing support and encouragement
- guide you on managing the support and expectations of employers
- help you to understand the tasks

You can claim up to 20 CPD points for time spent on CiLCA including training, mentoring, other support, learning at work, studying and writing. Points can be allocated to different years pro rata up to 20 points in total.

This guide is maintained in digital format so that it can be updated easily. Trainers are asked to notify the Improvement and Development Manager at NALC if the guide requires modifying. Trainers and assessors will be notified of any changes.

This version of CiLCA was created in 2015. The IDB and NTAG monitor its progress as a matter of routine but will consider a major review after five years.

Good luck!

UNIT ONE: CORE ROLES IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

Credit value: 3   This unit has 4 learning outcomes (LOs).

Note that LO4 refers to the quality of presenting the work for the portfolio as a whole. It is not a separate item.

LO 1   **A CiLCA qualified officer understands the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council and of the individuals involved in the work of the council.**

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

1.1   explain, with reference to relevant legislation, the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council, a clerk, the chairman, a councillor and the responsible financial officer (RFO).

The evidence
For each of the five roles: • Summarise the role • Note relevant responsibilities • Specify at least two duties and the basis of the role in statute. 1000 words
Guidance
Check that each role is accounted for and make clear the differences between the council as a corporate body and the councillors as individuals and between the clerk and the RFO. Two or three sentences can provide an overview of each role and recognise the most significant responsibilities. Mention at least two statutory duties of each role and related legislation (a duty is an action required by law) and identify the legislation that either permits or requires the role to be created.

LO 2   **A CiLCA qualified officer can carry out research and make recommendations.**

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

2.1   research a topic for a specified council and provide evidence of sources used
2.2   summarise findings
2.3   provide the council with options or recommendations as appropriate.

The evidence
Submit a report on any topic for a specified council that • summarises the findings of research • provides evidence of sources used • provides the council with options or recommendations as appropriate.

Guidance
Officers are often asked to investigate a topic for their council. Any realistic topic for a named council is appropriate. Examples are extremely wide-ranging (eg play equipment, road closure rules, a planning application, a job evaluation, IT equipment, pensions).   A short report in a formal report-writing format addressed to a named council is required. There is no word limit but the writing must be concise and to-the-point. The report should be recent or current and dated. Your summary contains key points that councillors need to know to help them make a decision - not everything that has been discovered.   You include sources that were researched (eg websites, publications, experts) to indicate the reliability and credibility of the findings. A specific referencing format is not required but the information provided should help someone trace the source.   The council could be making a decision as a consequence of the research so you offer a choice between options or recommendations to be accepted or rejected. It should be clear to councillors what decision they need to consider.

LO 3   A CiLCA qualified officer can identify a council's core documents and policies.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
3.1   provide a list of selected core documents and policies for a specific council
           identifying legal references and dates of approval and review.

The evidence
Provide a list of between six and twenty selected core documents and policies for a specific council. In each case, note appropriate legal references, the date when the document was (or will be) approved by council and the date when it is due to be reviewed.

Guidance
This is not a guide to an appropriate selection but core documents might include standing orders, financial regulations, the Code of Conduct, a publication scheme, an open media policy, a risk management scheme, internal control procedures, a data protection policy, an equality policy, a complaints procedure, a strategic plan, a dignity at work policy, a social media policy or a Health & Safety policy. There is no need to include insurance policies. Welsh candidates should consider core policies for Wales.   Some documents are required by law or are created as a consequence of legislation. Where possible relevant legislation should be noted.   It is important to recognise the need to review documents so you note the last date of approval and the next date of review (including approval dates for draft documents).

LO 4   **A CiLCA qualified officer demonstrates professional writing skills and uses information and communications technology.**

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

4.1   use concise expression, accurate spelling and grammar and well-designed word processing.

The evidence
Submit the whole portfolio for assessment. Every item in the portfolio is evidence of your professional writing and presentation skills.
Guidance
You should insert a sentence into your portfolio stating that Form 03 and the work submitted so far is evidence for this assessment criterion. Later the assessor monitors the presentation of the rest of your portfolio. The assessor considers whether the whole portfolio demonstrates • good spelling, grammar, sentence construction and meaningful note form • concise writing, clarity and logical paragraph organisation • smart page layout, use of fonts, graphics and design • ease of reading and finding items in the portfolio

UNIT TWO: LAW AND PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Credit value: 5   This unit has 9 learning outcomes.

LO5   **A CiLCA qualified officer understands the difference between statutory duties and specific powers.**

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you

5.1   can explain the difference between duties and powers

5.2   identify specific powers used for carrying out a council's functions.

The evidence
Identify the difference between duties and powers. Provide at least four examples of powers used for specific functions, *not* including the Local Government Act 1972 s137 and the general power of competence (England) or the power of well-being (Wales). 100 words
Guidance
It is important to recognise that duties are and powers are prescribed by law with different implications. The difference must be clear. The examples chosen must be powers and not duties. If possible suggest a range of powers related to the specific functions of a named council. Even the least active council employs an officer and pays for administrative materials. Provide the statutory reference and explain what it allows the council to do. Remember that s137 and the general power of competence/power of well-being cannot be included here.

LO6   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the Local Government Act 1972 s137.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
6.1   explain the Local Government Act 1972 s137 (as amended) and show how a council might use s137.

The evidence
You write an explanation of the Local Government Act 1972 s137 (as amended) and give one example of using s137. 200 words.
Guidance
Attention should be drawn to the principles behind the use of the power, the annual s137 allowance, how the allowance is calculated, the appropriate use of s137, the later amendment, the commensurate benefit of s137 and the need for a separate account. S137 should be used for activities not covered by another specific power.

LO7   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the general power of competence (England) or the power of well-being (Wales). (Please make sure that you complete the correct task for England or Wales)

England: Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
7.1   explain
   a.   the general power of competence providing legal references
   b.   the criteria for eligibility
   c.   the process for confirming and reaffirming eligibility.
7.2   explain activities that a council might undertake using the general power of competence
7.3   identify any relevant risks and restrictions.

The evidence
Submit notes explaining what the general power of competence is and where it is found. Identify the criteria that councils must meet to be eligible to use the power (with the legal reference) and the process of confirming and reaffirming eligibility. Identify three activities that a named council might undertake using the power and explain any risks and restrictions that might apply in each case. Make clear the difference between risks and restrictions. 250 words
Guidance
You specify the relevant legislation as a substantive part of the answer and explain what the general power of competence allows a council to do. The legal reference for the two eligibility criteria is also a substantive part of the response. It is not necessary to provide the details of relevant qualifications as long as both qualifications are recognised. The process by which the council regularly confirms eligibility is specified in law. Identified activities could be innovative or unusual but the general power of competence is a power of first resort so

an eligible council can use it for most of its activities.   The named council does not have to be very active or eligible to use the power. This evidence includes activities that it might undertake if circumstances were different. For each of the three activities any risks or restrictions that might apply are identified. It is not essential to identify all the risks and/or restrictions in each case although the difference between risks and restrictions must be recognised.

Wales: Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
7.4   explain the power of well-being including restrictions
7.5   provide legal references
7.6   suggest activities that a council might undertake using the power of well-being.

The evidence
Submit written notes that explain what the power of well-being is and where it is found. Identify the restrictions on using the power. Suggest three activities that a specified council might undertake using the power.   250 words
Guidance
The relevant legislation should be specified as a substantive part of the answer. The notes explain what the power of well-being gives a council the power to do in your own words. There is a restriction on using the power to be explained. You also suggest three activities that make appropriate use of the power for a named council.

LO8   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the implications of employment law and equality legislation for a local council

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
8.1   explain
   a.   the importance in law of the Written Statement of Employment Particulars and other statutory duties arising from employment legislation
   b.   the duties and responsibilities arising from equality legislation for a specific council

The evidence
Submit evidence that meets the criteria by annotating documents written for the council.
Guidance
The aim is to demonstrate an awareness of employment law and equality legislation. You select appropriate documents and annotate them to explain • the importance in law of the Written Statement of Employment Particulars and of an employer's statutory duties such as minimum wage rules, statutory sick pay and holiday pay, working time rules, and the need for disciplinary and grievance procedures.

> - the statutory duties of the council and other responsibilities arising from equality legislation such as equal access for members of the public and equality in recruitment and in the management of employees, with reference to protected characteristics.
>
> Many of these issues can be demonstrated in a Written Statement of Employment Particulars, policy documents and council records. Check the guidance on annotations.

LO9   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the implications of Health and Safety legislation for a local council.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
9.1   explain the clerk's role in response to Health and Safety legislation.

The evidence
Submit evidence that explains the clerk's role in response to Health and Safety legislation either by annotating documents written for the council or in a written explanation. 300 words

Guidance

You demonstrate an understanding of the clerk's role and explain to whom the clerk is responsible with respect to Health & Safety. This can include
    • duties to employees, contractors, volunteers and others affected by the council
    • the delegation of functions related to Health & Safety where relevant
    • reference to risk assessments relevant to Health & Safety
 	
There is no need to show a thorough knowledge of the legislation, but evidence should show how it affects the named council. This may include, for example, lone working, fire precautions, manual handling, COSHH, the safe use of equipment (eg display screens), trip hazards and first aid. You also recognise the implications for insurance provision.
 	
Policy documents can be annotated to demonstrate an understanding (see guidance on annotations), or a written explanation can be submitted.

LO10   A CiLCA qualified officer can prepare for and support council meetings.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
10.1   produce agendas and minutes for full council meetings and the annual meeting of the council
10.2   explain good practice in the design of agendas and minutes
10.3   convene meetings lawfully
10.4   record lawful decisions.

The evidence
Submit a set of agenda and minutes for the annual meeting of the council and one set for an ordinary council meeting. The documents are annotated to meet the assessment criteria and include legal references.

Guidance
Check that you submit exactly the agendas and minutes required. The annotations show an understanding of how to write a lawful agenda and appropriate minutes.   They highlight good practice and make recommendations for change if necessary.   The documents and related annotations identify good practice such as: • Compliance with the law • Convening meetings lawfully • Clear 'business to be transacted' • Appropriate handling of councillors' interests • Appropriate handling of public participation • Appropriate handling of confidential matters (if the documents don't include a confidential matter, you explain in your notes how to handle them) • Concise minutes and clear, lawful decisions Where possible, legal references are included in the annotations. Remember to check the additional guidance on annotations.

LO11   A CiLCA qualified officer knows how to advise a council on standing orders.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
11.1   explain how standing orders operate and are tailored to the needs of a council.

The evidence
Submit a copy of standing orders for a specific council annotated to show how they work and explaining the purpose of four specific orders.

Guidance
In demonstrating how standing orders work, you might show, for example, how some standing orders reflect procedures set out in law or while others are tailored to suit a specific council. You comply with the general guidance on annotations and choose four specific standing orders to explain their purpose.

LO12   A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on the different kinds of committee and delegation to the clerk.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

12.1   explain the benefits and disadvantages of committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups and delegation to the clerk.

The evidence
Write notes to explain the benefits and disadvantages of committees. You note the differences between committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups. You also explain delegation to the clerk. 400 words

Guidance
It is important to explain the differences between committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups.   Some of the benefits and disadvantages to the council and to individual councillors in each case should be noted.   You also provide guidance on the delegation of decision making to the clerk.

LO13   A CiLCA qualified officer understands a council's duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

13.1   explain how a council fulfils its duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life with reference to the statutory duties of councillors and good practice for conducting meetings.

The evidence
You submit an explanation showing how a council fulfils its duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life. You refer to the statutory duties of councillors and good practice for conducting meetings. 250 words

Guidance
The council has a duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life. The legal reference for this duty should be noted. Councils fulfil this duty by adopting a Code of Conduct and by guiding councillors to comply with their statutory duties. The explanation should include non-statutory activities designed to help the council fulfil its duty such as ensuring councillors are trained, managing conflict and avoiding breaches of the Code.

UNIT THREE: FINANCE FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Credit value: 5   This unit has 7 learning outcomes.

LO14   A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on the preparation and monitoring of budgets.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
14.1   prepare budget proposals comparing income and expenditure for the last, current and next financial year and calculate the next precept
14.2   prepare and present an appropriate budget monitoring document to the council.

The evidence
Submit a budget proposal document comparing income and expenditure for the last, current and next financial years and calculating the precept. Also submit a budget monitoring document. Annotate the documents to show how they help the council make sound financial decisions.

Guidance
Two documents are required. They should be clear and transparent so that all councillors can understand them. • A budget proposal is put to the council to help councillors decide the precept for the following year. It shows plans for expenditure and for income other than the precept and includes a precept calculation. It often has four columns comparing the actual outcome for the last financial year, the budget and predicted outcomes for the current year (two columns) and plans for the next financial year. You can vary the model as long as good practice in making a comparison between years is recognised. • A budget monitoring document is presented to councillors from time to time during the year so that they can assess progress against the planned budget for income and expenditure (or receipts and payments) to date. You select an appropriate document presented to councillors for their assessment at a meeting during the year. Annotations follow the standard guidance to show how the documents help the council make sound financial decisions.

LO15   A CiLCA qualified officer understands how to prepare and explain a cash book and bank reconciliation.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
15.1   prepare or explain a cash book and bank reconciliation.

The evidence
Submit a mid-year extract from the cash book and related bank reconciliation (not the year-end) as required. Annotate them to explain how they work.

Guidance
The cash book records money as it is received or paid on a daily basis. You submit an extract from the cash book linked to a bank reconciliation. The bank reconciliation is a transparent calculation showing how the balances in the cash book are reconciled with the balance on a bank statement. The extract and bank reconciliation are taken from any point in the year except the year-end (March). Relevant information is recorded in the cash book with appropriate analysis columns and accurate balancing of the account. There is also clear evidence of VAT and s137 payments as required by law (where relevant). Additional annotations follow the standard guidance. You also show how the figures from the cash book, bank reconciliation and budget documents inform each other.

LO16   A CiLCA qualified officer can write a risk management scheme and understands the value of insurance for risk management.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

16.1   prepare a risk management scheme covering all a council's functions and showing the importance of insurance.

The evidence
Submit a risk management scheme covering all a council's functions, annotated to show understanding and good practice including the importance of insurance.

Guidance
A risk management scheme covers a range of risks to public money and related to council property, activities and employees. It indicates levels of risk and ways of mitigating risks (eg insurance policies or regular inspections). It is also dated and includes provisions for review. Annotations follow standard guidance.

LO17   A CiLCA qualified officer can apply for grant funding.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

17.1   complete a grant application.

The evidence
Complete and submit a grant application form, annotated to draw attention to three examples of good practice.

Guidance
You submit any genuine application for which you have been responsible in the last two years. If this is not possible, you can look for a suitable fund such as Awards for All and generate an application for the council or a community group. Using annotations, you identify three examples of good practice in making a grant application such as reflecting the objectives of the grant-awarding body.

LO18   A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on financial procedures.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
18.1   explain how financial regulations help a council manage risks to public money
18.2   identify a council's regulation for contracts
18.3   explain a council's arrangements for internal control
18.4   explain how the council manages the payment of its employee(s).

Evidence
Submit annotated extracts from a council's financial documents to identify and explain the four criteria above. Documents as appropriate can include financial regulations, standing orders, internal control procedures and payroll procedures. If you need to write a short explanation of payroll procedures, you have 300 words.

Guidance
You can submit extracts rather than complete documents. Annotations follow standard guidance and provide additional information as required. You highlight at least five regulations to show how they protect the council from risks such as error or loss through fraud, theft, bad debts. Councils must by law have a standing order specifying how they handle contracts. You highlight the correct extract. The regulations (or related document) should specify internal controls guiding councillors in monitoring the effectiveness of the council's financial management and procedures. If the council has a document setting out procedures for paying employees, then this should be included and annotated. If not, then you write a short explanation (maximum 330 words). Your explanation includes (as appropriate for the council): • whether payroll is contracted out or done in-house • which software is used (if any) • arrangements for pensions • arrangements for recording Real Time Information • how rates of pay are decided • authorisation of the payroll and payments by the council

LO19   A CiLCA qualified officer knows the implications of VAT legislation for a council.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can explain
19.1   the difference between business and non-business activities
19.2   the difference between taxable, zero-rated and exempt supplies
19.3   when it is not lawful for a local council to reclaim VAT.

The evidence
Write an explanation that identifies and explains the three criteria above. 300 words

Guidance
The aim is to show an understanding of the basic concepts of VAT legislation for local councils. It is important to recognise whether an activity on which the council is spending money is a business or non-business activity and whether business supplies of goods or services made by the council are taxable or exempt supplies. You also need to recognise the circumstances under which it is unlawful for a council to reclaim VAT.

LO20   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the processes involved in the annual audit.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
20.1   explain the purpose and timing of annual audit processes and the duties and responsibilities involved.

The evidence
Write an explanation of annual audit processes and identify the timing, duties and responsibilities involved in complying with the relevant audit guidance. 400 words

Guidance
You explain the processes, timing and purpose of internal audit, preparation of accounts and end-of-year statements, external audit and exercising electors' rights. End-of-year statements include the annual return and/or other documents depending on the annual income or expenditure of the council. In England, you refer to the appropriate transparency code for authorities if relevant. You identify the duties and responsibilities of the council, the RFO, the clerk, the chairman, the internal and external auditors throughout the process.

UNIT FOUR: MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS
Credit value: 2   This unit has 3 learning outcomes.

LO21   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the range of activities involved in managing projects, services, facilities or assets.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
21.1   explain the work and responsibilities involved in managing a specified council project, service, facility or asset.

The evidence
Submit annotated evidence from council documents or write an explanation (500 words) to meet the assessment criterion for *one* council function.

Guidance
Select one project, service, facility or asset that is managed by the council for consideration. If the council is not responsible for managing any project, service, facility or asset then a relevant function managed by another council or by a community organisation can be used. As a guide, examples include: - a project to run a festival   - a project to promote the democratic process   - a library or grass-cutting service   - a village hall or playground   - ceremonial assets   - the purchase of computer equipment   You show how the chosen subject is managed. General elements of the management process can include legal powers, planning, budgeting, responsibilities, managing contracts, decision making, monitoring, review, problem solving, Health & Safety, risk assessment, insurance, sustainability, partnership working, community or user engagement and time management. You also outline specific work involved in the chosen activity. Council documents such as a project management plan or management reports can demonstrate an understanding of management processes. If council documents are used, they should be annotated according to standard guidance. Alternatively a written explanation of 500 words (maximum 550) can be submitted.

LO22   A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on responsibilities for managing staff.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
22.1   prepare advice to a council on structures and processes for managing staff.

The evidence
Write a short paper   - summarising the named council's role as an employer   - explaining a structure and processes for managing its staff   - listing core documents supporting the employment of its staff   300 words

Guidance
The role of the council as an employer can be summarised briefly. It is often not practical for the council as a whole to act as line manager for staff; you may therefore propose a structure for delegating line management and suggest appropriate performance management processes. You list core documents that underpin the council's employment of staff including documents used for recruitment and performance management.

LO23   A CiLCA qualified officer can write or review a training and development policy.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
23.1   prepare or review a training and development policy for councillors and staff that helps a council achieve its objectives.

The evidence
Annotate a named council's training and development policy to show how training helps the council meet its objectives.

Guidance

The task is to demonstrate an understanding of the content and value of a training and development policy. The policy should be tailored to the needs of the named council and its staff. The policy can include references to:
    • the training and development of councillors and all members of staff
    • connections between training, development and the council's objectives
    • a training and development budget
    • responsibilities for training and development processes
    • a process for reviewing the policy
 	
You also meet standard guidance on annotations.

UNIT FIVE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Credit value: 5   This unit has 7 learning outcomes.

LO24   A CiLCA qualified officer can create an action plan for the council.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can
24.1   create a council's action plan for the year ahead.

The evidence
Annotate a council document that includes plans for a council's activities in the year ahead.

Guidance
An action plan sets out what a named council aims to achieve over a twelve month period. The plan can come in any format from a single page to a strategic plan or long term business plan. If the council already has an appropriate document that includes a plan for a twelve month period, this can be used. Councils that are limited in their activities should still be clear about what they aim to achieve. An action plan normally includes an aim, objectives and actions indicating how those objectives are to be achieved. The annotations follow the standard guidance.

LO25 A CiLCA qualified officer understands how to write an appropriate objection to a planning application.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

25.1 present arguments against a planning application supported by references to policies and other material considerations.

The evidence
Write an objection to a specified planning application and include references to national and local policies and other material considerations.
Guidance
You write an objection to a planning application (even if you do not normally do so). You can use an objection that you have drafted in the last twelve months. If there are no recent applications requiring an objection, an application for another community can be used. The objections should identify the planning application and what it is for. It gives sound planning reasons why the application should be refused, demonstrating an understanding of material considerations. Planning reasons should include references to relevant national and local planning policies.

LO26 A CiLCA qualified officer understands diversity in local communities and fosters good community relationships.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

26.1 describe the diverse groups in a specified community

26.2 suggest how a local council might help to foster good relationships between different interest groups in a community.

The evidence
Write a short explanation of the diverse groups in a named community. Choose an example of potentially conflicting interests and explain how the council might help foster good relationships. 400 words
Guidance
Every community is diverse. There are different age groups, ethnic groups, people with different needs, skills and interests and people living or working in different localities. There are informal and organised community groups while some people join community activities and others do not. The task is to describe the diversity of a specific community. Diversity can mean that people have conflicting interests. So dog owners and parents think differently about a park while teenagers and residents have opposing views on a skate park. You choose two groups and identify their potential conflicting interests and explain what methods the council might use to help foster a good relationship between the groups.

LO27   A CiLCA qualified officer understands the impact of positive community engagement.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
27.1   describe ways in which different groups in the community can influence decisions
27.2   suggest ways in which those who rarely join in can be encouraged to express a view.

The evidence
Submit proposals for community engagement that give different groups in the community, including those who rarely participate, the opportunity to influence decisions. This can be either an annotated council document or an explanation of 400 words.

Guidance
Modern local councils find ways in which people in the community can influence the council's decisions. Community engagement includes listening and finding out what people think about issues affecting the community. Proposals for community engagement should recognise the diversity of the local community and highlight ways in which people can communicate their ideas. Examples of such methods might include surveys, focus groups, workshops or social media. In particular you identify people who rarely participate (if ever) and show how they can be encouraged to express a view. The council may have a document demonstrating these points. If so, you annotate it using the standard guidance and show how the criteria can be met. If there is no such document, you have 400 words (maximum 440) for an explanation covering all aspects of the task.

LO28   A CiLCA qualified officer advises the council on raising the council's profile.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can
28.1   list ways in which the council can raise its profile in the community
28.2   write an article advertising the council and promoting the democratic process.

The evidence
Submit two documents (a list and an article) that show how the council can raise its profile and promote the democratic process.

Guidance
The first document is a list identifying a selection of ways in which the named council can raise its profile, making sure that people across the community know what the council does. Examples include webpages, social media, signage or activities in the community. Secondly you write one or two articles advertising the work of the council and promoting the democratic process. The article(s) may be appropriate for publication as a webpage or in a local newsletter for example. There is no word limit since a genuine article can be used. The writing should be concise and engage the readers' interest. In promoting the democratic process, the article might include, for example, a reminder to its readers that

- electors can identify potential councillors and nominate candidates for election
- candidates must meet the required criteria to be councillors
- people are encouraged to vote to elect councillors to represent their interests.

LO29   A CiLCA qualified officer ensures the transparency of the council's decisions and actions.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you

29.1   recognise the implications of legislation and guidance that ensures the transparency of the council's decisions and actions.

The evidence
Annotate up to three council documents (or extracts) to demonstrate transparency.

Guidance
Community engagement is supported by the Freedom of Information Act, regulations and codes that require the council to be transparent about its activities. The council must have a publication scheme explaining information available to the public, its format, processes for making it available and information that is not available and why. The council can adapt a model scheme from the Information Commissioner's Office. Transparency codes require, where relevant, the online publication of information on activities, spending and meetings. You can select and annotate up to three extracts from documents showing that the council complies with legislation. In addition to a publication scheme, appropriate documents include agendas, minutes, correspondence, standing orders and financial regulations. Legislation in England includes, for example, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and in Wales, requirements related to the Welsh language.   Your documents are annotated to meet the standard guidance.

LO30   A CiLCA qualified officer can write or review a grant awarding policy.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

30.1   write or review a grant awarding policy.

The evidence
Annotate a grant awarding policy document to explain its key features.

Guidance
An active council awards grants to community organisations to support them in their work. The council therefore needs a policy that explains to community organisations how the grant scheme works. A scheme might include the aims and objectives of the council, its priorities for awarding grants, the amounts to be awarded, the criteria that an application should meet and details of the application and awarding process. An appropriate policy document is selected and annotated to meet the standard guidance.