

IRRV Syllabus 2024

IRRV Diploma (England, Wales and Scotland)



Contents

Introduction	2
Diploma Structure	2
About the Institute	3
Internal Regulation of Qualifications	3
The Institute's Qualifications.	3
Membership of the Institute	4
The Diploma – Entry Requirements.	4
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	4
The Diploma – Information for Candidates	5

Detailed Subject Information

Diploma: Assignment	9
Management	9
Diploma: Management Case Study	12
Diploma: Revenues & Local Taxation Administration and Public Sector Finance	13
Diploma: Valuation for Rating	17
Diploma: Welfare Benefits Administration and Public Sector Finance	19
Diploma: Council Tax Law and Practice.	23
Diploma: Law of Property	26
Diploma: Non-Domestic Rate Law and Practice	27
Diploma: Welfare Benefits Law and Practice.	32

Introduction

The IRRV Diploma is intended for candidates who have gained experience in Local Revenues, Welfare Benefits or Valuation Tribunal areas, and who wish to study for a qualification that builds on that experience.

Achievement at Diploma level reflects the ability to identify and use relevant knowledge, understanding, methods and skills to address broadly-defined, complex problems in the subject areas.

It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives or approaches and the reasoning behind them.

Students take five subjects, consisting of one assignment and four subjects that are assessed by 3-hour examination. The combinations are as follows.

Diploma Structure

Candidates take the Common Core subjects and two further subjects – one from each group – as below.

Common Core

Candidates take all subjects:

- Diploma Assignment.
- Management.
- Management Case Study.

Option Group 1

Candidates choose **ONE** subject:

- Revenues and Local Taxation Administration and Public Sector Finance.
- Valuation for Rating*.
- Welfare Benefits Administration and Public Sector Finance.

* Valuation for Rating is only available to candidates who have previously passed Introduction to Valuation or Valuation Theory and Practice at IRRV Level 3 Certificate.

Option Group 2

Candidates choose **ONE** subject:

- Council Tax Law and Practice.
- Law of Property.
- Non-Domestic Rate Law and Practice.
- Welfare Benefits Law and Practice.

* Valuation for Rating is only available to candidates who have previously passed Introduction to Valuation or Valuation Theory and Practice at IRRV Level 3 Certificate.

Candidates who have not previously passed one of the above Level 3 Certificate subjects may take Level 3 Certificate Introduction to Valuation instead of Diploma Valuation for Rating.

Candidates wishing to take Level 3 Certificate Introduction to Valuation at the same session as Diploma papers may not be able to take all papers at the same session. Consult the examination session timetable or enquire with the IRRV for further details.

About the Institute

The Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation is the professional body for people working in the fields of local revenues and benefits administration, and both public and private sector valuation. It promotes its members' interests in offering sought-after qualifications and professional development opportunities, as well as representing the professions at both central and local government level. The Institute keeps its members informed of current issues through its range of publications, conferences and courses, and conducts research projects on behalf of government and commercial clients.

Internal Regulation of Qualifications

The Institute's Qualifications Management Board, which is appointed by the IRRV Council but acts independently of it, oversees the appropriate conduct of assessments and the award of qualifications. It considers appeals and special cases, and refers any unresolved issues to an external arbitrator.

The Institute's Qualifications

The Diploma is one of a suite of qualifications offered by the Institute. Also offered are the Honours qualification, IRRV Level 3 Certificate (England and Wales), the IRRV Certificate (Scotland), the IRRV Level 3 QCF Qualification, the IRRV Level 6 Qualifications in Scotland, and the IRRV L3 Business Rates Certificate (England and Wales).

Membership of the Institute

The main categories of membership are Technician, for those at an early stage of their career. The Level 3 and Scottish Level 6 qualifications lead to Technician membership. The Diploma leads to IRRV (Dip) membership, Honours level leads to IRRV (Hons) membership. Fellow status (FIRRV) is offered to members who have reached (Hons) level and have rendered specific service to the Institute and the professions it serves.

The Diploma – Entry Requirements

Candidates for the Revenues or Benefits streams of the Diploma **MUST** have passed the Level 3 (Technician Qualification, the IRRV Level 3 Certificate (England and Wales), the IRRV Certificate (Scotland), an IRRV Level 3 National Vocational Qualification or an IRRV Level 3 Scottish Vocational Qualification);

OR they must hold a qualification at least equivalent to A-Level, Scottish Highers or any qualification at Level 3 of the national framework (England and Wales) or Level 6 (Scotland) and have had substantial workplace experience. Candidates entering by this route generally find that they need to study more intensively than students who have entered via one of the IRRV qualifications given above.

Applicants for examinations and assessments must have enrolled, and paid for, membership of the Institute by either the **31st March**, or **30th September**, if they intend to sit examinations in **June** or **December**. Student membership is available to those who are new to the IRRV.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Candidates may claim Recognition of Prior Learning, which may lead to the award of credit for one or more Diploma units without assessment. Both formally accredited learning and informal learning may be considered, but in all cases candidates must provide evidence of learning which corresponds to subject content and level. Further advice on the RPL process will be provided on application.

No part of the Institute's Level 3 and equivalent qualifications may be considered under the Diploma RPL process, except to holders of Valuation for Rating (which was previously offered at Level 3). Otherwise no Diploma exemptions will be granted to IRRV Level 3 Qualification holders on the strength of the Level 3 Qualification alone.

The Diploma – Information for Candidates

The language of all IRRV qualifications is English.

Regional Applicability

While the syllabus is applicable to the whole of the UK, it is recognised that law, procedures and terminology can vary between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales across the professional fields covered. In the case of examinations and centrally-set assignments, regionally appropriate questions will be offered. Separate examination papers may be necessary in some subjects, or suitable variations will be included within papers.

All examination papers and assessment tasks will be edited by regional subject specialists before approval, and variations incorporated where necessary. Assessors will be aware that candidate responses to the same question or task may vary according to region.

Changes to Law, Regulation and Practice

In principle, all Law, Regulation and Practice covered in examinations and assignments must be current at the time of assessment.

Candidates are expected to be aware of recent implementation of new legislation or changes to the law. However, candidates need not respond in terms of new arrangements that have come into force two months or less prior to the examination or assessment date.

Where appropriate, candidates are expected to refer to any relevant green and white papers, guidance documents etc.

Updated information on the effects of changes to the law, regulations and procedures relevant to specific Diploma subjects will be made available on the Institute website (www.irrv.org.uk), which should be consulted regularly. Information on format of examinations and assessments, which may be modified from time to time, will also be published on the website.

Entry Procedure

Candidates are required to submit entries by the stated time limits.

Modular Entry

Candidates may enter for some subjects at two or more sessions (subject to the validity rule – see below) or all subjects at one session. Candidates should check that subjects are available for assessment at the required session.

Validity of Pass Credits

Individual subject passes will maintain a validity period of three years, or seven consecutive examination sessions. All Diploma subjects, in the appropriate combination, must be therefore be passed within this period. A subject whose validity period expires before all required Diploma subjects are passed must be re-taken.

Subject Exemptions

There are normally no subject credits available for Revenues and Benefits subjects at this level, as equivalent subjects do not exist in other qualifications.

Generally, credit/exemptions may be available for Management, Introduction to Valuation, Valuation for Rating and Law of Property.

Management

An applicant must hold a Management qualification at Level 5 ("ordinary" or 2nd-year degree equivalent) or above, with substantial overlap in content between their existing qualification and the IRRV Diploma Management subject (about 70% overlap).

Introduction to Valuation

If a candidate is a valuation surveyor or holds a qualification in Surveying or Property Studies or similar, including a significant Valuation component, at Level 3 (A-level or Scottish Highers) or above, then they can be considered for a subject credit/exemption.

Valuation for Rating

An applicant must be a valuation surveyor or hold a qualification in Surveying or Property Studies or similar, including a significant Valuation component, at Level 5 ("ordinary" or 2nd-year degree equivalent) or above.

Law of Property

An applicant must hold a Law qualification at Level 5 ("ordinary" or 2nd-year degree equivalent) or above, including a significant Property Law component.

Fees

Fees information is available separately.

Fees must be paid, or a purchase order number must be supplied to the Institute, at the time of entry. If not settled at the time of entry, fees must be paid at the earliest opportunity. If fees are not paid in full by the date of examination entry may be refused.

Results

Results will be made available on the Institute's website on an advertised date. Individual candidates will only be able to access their own results by use of a personal access code. A hard copy results letter will not be issued except by individual candidate request.

Results are issued according to the following categories.

Result	Examination	Assignment
Distinction	225-300	75-100
Pass	150-224	50-74
Marginal Fail	135-149	45-49
Fail	50-134	17-44
Unclassified	0-49	0-16

A Pass List is published by the Institute following each assessment session. It includes the names of all candidates who have achieved the full qualification, with the name of their employer. It is assumed that candidates accept on entry that this information will be made publicly available. Any candidate who does not wish this information to be published must inform the Institute in writing.

Results will not be issued to candidates whose fees remain outstanding.

Queries and Appeals

Queries regarding entry and results must be raised in the first instance with the appropriate department of the Institute. A report on performance in any examination or assessment process can be provided on payment of the fee currently in force. Following the issue of a report an appeal can be lodged against a fail result, again on payment of the appropriate fee.

Certificates

Full qualification certificates are issued within one month of the release of a Pass result. Individual unit/subject certificates are only issued on request.

Certificates remain the property of the Institute and should be surrendered on request.

Prizes

At the discretion of the Qualifications Management Board prizes may be awarded to candidates for outstanding performance in the full qualification, or in individual subjects.

Past Papers and Examiner reports

Past examination papers and assessment guidance will be published on the IRRV website following each assessment session, for the information of future candidates, tutors and employers.

Further Information

Further information on all syllabus, qualifications, examinations and assessment matters may be obtained from the IRRV.

IRRV Syllabus 2024

Detailed Subject Information



Diploma: Assignment

The Assignment will be completed over a six-month period, and will be **4,500-5,000 words** long. A number of titles covering the Diploma subjects will be set by the Institute in **January** and **June** of each year. Results for the **January** assignments will be issued with the following **August** examination results; those for the **June** assignments will be issued with the following **January** examination results.

See separate section for full Assignment regulations and procedures.

Management

Aim

To provide an understanding of role of the manager and of management within the organisation, including service planning and its management within the local government and Valuation Tribunal context.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of their studies, students should be able to:

- Explain the purpose and benefits of planning for an organisation in the context of its internal and external environment and achieving results from such planning;
- Analyse the processes by which a plan is developed and the importance of the involvement of an organisation's stakeholders in the planning process;
- Evaluate and explain techniques for effective implementation of the plan including any change management and monitoring of its outcomes;
- Describe and evaluate effective management of working with people including human resources within the organisation;
- Explain the main principles and methods of project and change management;
- Characterise the abilities needed to work effectively as a senior member of the service delivery team;
- Recognise the importance of self-development by the manager;
- Describe effective management of change within an organisation.

Content:

Purpose and Benefits of Planning

Context of the plan: internal - the organisation, its culture and mission; external - the organisation and its relations with the outside world; an understanding of the organisation's market and its customers, service delivery within the legislative framework; types of plans; business and service plans. Risk Management.

Processes for Plan Development

Defining the nature of the business/service function; analysis of the market and competition; analysis of stakeholder/customer requirements through effective investigation and consultation;

- Internal SWOT analysis and interpretation of results; evaluation and comparison of alternative delivery strategies; identification of resources needs: negotiating and setting a budget, ICT requirements, staffing requirements, customer service issues, equipment and accommodation (including tender evaluation);
- Reporting and presenting the plan.

Effective Implementation of the Plan

- Setting objectives and targets; allocation of tasks individually and within teams; decision making; delegation of authority; budgetary and financial control; management of change for delivery of the plan; develop strategic plan for the organisation.
- Monitoring of the plan to ensure ongoing improvement: customer satisfaction, the use of on-going consultation with stakeholders for the duration of the plan for effective delivery of service; methods of consultation and communication of results;
- Monitoring processes internal and external, their purposes and effectiveness; timing of reviews; revision of the plan; use of Quality Systems including Customer Service Excellence (CSE), ISO and EFQM.

Project Management

Principles of project management including change management; content of project plans; critical path analysis; methods of reducing project lengths.

Effective Management of Human Resources and working with people

Management of human resources to carry out the purposes of the organisation and plan within the culture of the organisation and external influences.

- Recruitment and selection methods; job descriptions and person specifications; contracts of employment; relevant employment legislation including equal opportunities, its content and implementation; Human Rights Act and European legislation and practice; develop productive working relationships with colleagues including external ones and stakeholders; build and manage teams; appraisal of staff performance including quality; dealing with failing performance; disciplinary procedures; design, purpose and monitoring of staff policies; development of staff; deal with conflict; lead and participate in meetings.
- Health and safety issues.

Effective Membership of Service Delivery Team

- Leadership styles;
- Team-building; promotion of good relations within the team;
- Communication: types of communication and their effectiveness;
- Motivation: financial and non-financial;
- Training: identification of training needs, effective training techniques, monitoring and evaluation of training..

Self Development and Management

- Relationships with other managers including development of personal networks and the corporate team; benefits of membership of professional organisations; responsibility for own training and continuing professional development. Management of own resource including time management. Provide leadership for the team. Develop culture of the team.

Facilitating Change, including Transformation

- Encourage Innovation. Lead, plan and implement change.
- The main principles behind:
 - Types of change
 - Change techniques
 - The change process
- The significance of being a “learning organisation”
- The importance and impact that culture has on an organisation’s ability to change.

Note: Knowledge Requirements

Practical examples of Management will be required in the examination, although this will need to be supported by relevant theory wherever possible. Generally, knowledge of one major established theory/ theorist per topic is required as a minimum.

It is essential to be able to demonstrate relevant workplace experience and knowledge of best practice.

Relevant outline knowledge of the Law is required only. In those instances in which the Law is relevant to define competence (for example, equal opportunity or the rights and management of disabled people in the workplace) then the extent to which the Law is required will be limited to the knowledge of primary statute and similar, as opposed to detailed knowledge of, for example, caselaw.

Diploma: Management Case Study

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- apply the academic underpinning knowledge and understanding acquired in previous studies to solving practical professional problems, and
- find alternative solutions to problems and examine problems in different ways.

Content:

Given the nature of the module there is no specified syllabus other than that indicated in other Diploma modules

The case studies will involve the need to undertake additional research into subjects which may be outside the students' chosen fields of study and/or areas of professional activity.

Assessment

The module will be assessed by means of an examination (3 hours), where candidates are required to produce answers to two out of three case studies. Case Study Advanced Information will be issued to candidates approximately two weeks prior to the examination to allow time for research and related activities. The Case Studies will seek to simulate practical problems and issues likely to be encountered in practice. Each case study will be from a different subject area and the mix of areas may change from assessment to assessment.

Diploma: Revenues & Local Taxation Administration and Public Sector Finance

Aim

To provide a detailed understanding of Revenues and Local Taxation Administration and Public Sector Finance, and their application.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies, students should be able to:

Revenues and Local Taxation Administration

- To demonstrate an understanding of the possible organisational structures for the Revenues office and apply the principles and procedures which are the basis for the effective organisation and management of a revenues function.
- To demonstrate an understanding of the origin and sources of revenues available to local authorities and the methods of setting taxes, fees, charges and rents.
- To demonstrate an understanding of the law and regulations of local taxation by way of practical procedures.
- Apply the law and regulations of revenues other than local taxation by way of practical procedures.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the law and procedures relating to the recovery, enforcement and insolvency of both statutory and non-statutory debts and their application.
- Evaluate the benefits, purposes and costs in relation to the selection and use of information technology systems for revenues applications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and significance of staff selection, development and retention.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of, and interrelationship between, performance, cost and cash flow.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the needs and requirements of external and internal customers including communication and access to the revenues service.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the requirement for Government returns and statistics and Taxbase estimates and grant claims. The application of performance indicators and the importance of performance management, business planning, scrutiny and reporting to elected members.

Financial Management in the Public Sector

- The nature of Revenue Expenditure.
- The nature of Capital Expenditure.
- Treasury Management processes.
- The purpose and structure of revenue and capital budgets.
- The working of Financial Controls.
- Sources of Income.
- How rents, fees and charges operate.
- The nature and purpose of audit; types of audit; general principles.
- Role and operation of the finance department and responsible finance officer.

Content

Organisational structures for the Revenues office

- Different organisational structures taking account of local operating considerations.
- The physical security and health and safety issues within a Revenues Office
- The measures needed to ensure compliance with data protection legislation and the security of personal information for both paper and IT systems.
- Disability discrimination policies and procedures.
- Insurance requirements for a revenues organisation including fidelity insurance.
- The organisation of a revenues office: including the distribution of duties, management controls.
- The application of management techniques, office procedures, purchase supplies, and office services.
- The methods of payment and collection, cash handling, banking and security; identification of individual debtors.
- The billing and collection systems in relation to all revenues; the methods of billing and collection, the design of, stationery and form design.

The origin and sources of revenues available to local authorities and the methods of setting taxes, fees, charges and rents

The setting of the council tax and the non-domestic rate multiplier including and any other residuary taxes and supplements; the setting of fees and charges traffic management charges including parking and vehicle congestion charging and any other source of revenue income; the powers of the local authority to set and collect rents on HRA and non-HRA properties; housing revenue account and rents for commercial properties; the impact of national policies and political objectives on rents, fees and charges.

The law and regulations of local taxation

The law in the administration of local taxation; the key issues in relation to liability allowances, exemptions, reliefs, discounts and other reductions; evidence concerning liability disputes, policy issues, and decision making; procedures for the exercise of discretion; the appeal process available in local taxation to ensure compliance within the legislation and administrative procedures.

The law and regulations of revenues other than local taxation

The law in the administration of revenues; the key issues; the appeal process available in revenues administration to ensure compliance within the legislation and administrative procedures.

The law and procedures relating to the recovery, enforcement and insolvency of both statutory and non-statutory debts and their application

The enforcement and debt recovery systems, all relevant court procedures, evidence, advocacy; statutory and common law remedies for debt enforcement; the debt arrangement schemes (Scotland only) debt relief orders (England and Wales only); the principles of insolvency law; the control of arrears, debt monitoring, tracing and management of irrecoverable sums and the application of write off procedures; the merits of internal against external enforcement agents and the codes of conduct for both.

The benefits, purposes and costs in relation to the selection and use of information technology systems for revenues applications

The purchase or replacement of IT systems; compliance with the European and the local authority tender procedures; the application of information technology in relation to the full range of revenues office procedures.

Staff selection, development and retention

Recruitment and selection procedures and documentation for posts within a revenues office taking account of organisational policies and procedures (including equality and discrimination issues); induction and training regime for newly appointed staff; appraisal process for staff including identification of their training and mentoring needs and how this links with improving staff motivation and morale; situations that will initiate action using an authority's absence management strategy; the interrelationship between an organisation's code of conduct and the grievance, discipline and whistle blowing procedures.

Performance, cost and cash flow

Areas within the revenues collection that could be improved and analyse the options and financial implications for improvement; the role of quality checks within the monitoring regime; how local and national inspection regime indicators can be used to plan service improvements; how internal and external Auditors can be involved to improve controls and security; controls and processes for the reconciliation of revenues expenditure and income to other financial systems.

External and internal customers including communication and access to the revenues service

Access by existing and potential customers to the revenues services including information leaflets, forms and enquiry facilities, taking account of local diversity and the opportunities offered by IT and local partners; how the Revenue Service fits into local and national anti poverty and social inclusion strategies; the potential benefits and constraints of service level agreements with strategic organisations and partners necessary to the provision of a Revenues Service; the use of key performance indicators to drive continuous improvement to customer service.

Government returns and statistics and Tax base estimates and grant claims; performance indicators and performance management, business planning, scrutiny and reporting to elected members

Appropriate government returns and the importance of their role in relation to local government finance; the procedures for estimating the tax base for council tax; the application of performance targets and statistics to revenues administration; the use of business and service plans; the procedure for reporting and scrutiny by elected members.

Revenue expenditure

Types of expenditure; different methods of analysis; methods of accounting for support services; capital charges and control by central government; methods of accounting for trading services; the content and purpose of Medium Term Financial Plans.

Capital expenditure

Definition of Capital Expenditure; financing methods, controls and charges; asset management plans; Public / Private partnership; the Prudential Code, PFI, Capital Appraisals.

Treasury management processes

Definition of Treasury Management; TM functions; features of borrowing and investing; analysis of cash flow, TM strategy and statutory receipts.

Revenue and Capital budgets

The purpose of revenue & capital budgets; the method of preparation of revenue and capital budgets; the role of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in budget preparation; the content of Annual Accounts; the role of elected members in financial management and financial planning.

Financial controls

Central Government controls; the role of the Chief Financial Officer; the organisation and role of the Finance Department; external and internal auditing principles; the functions of internal controls.

Sources of income

The various sources of local authority income apart from borrowing and capital income.

Rents, fees and charges

The powers of the local authority to set and collect rents on HRA and non-HRA properties; the housing revenue account, rents for commercial properties; fees and charges, discretionary/mandatory charges; the impact of national policies and political objectives on rents, fees and charges.

Audit

Organisation and method of audit; a typical audit programme; types of audit records; the need for security arrangements; the need for computer audits; internal control and internal check; procedures for the prevention and detection of fraud in revenues administration.

Finance Service and Responsible Finance Officer

Duties undertaken by the Finance Service and the role of the S151/S95 Officer based on the CIPFA code of best practice for both.

Diploma: Valuation for Rating

Aims

- To provide a basic knowledge and understanding of the legislation and case law as it applies to Valuation for the non-domestic rating system in England and Wales.
- To provide a basic knowledge and understanding of rental adjustment and analysis techniques and the various methods of valuation used to value non-domestic property for rating purposes.
- To apply the above knowledge and understanding in calculating rateable values of common and lesscommon types of property.

Learning Outcomes – Rating legislation and case law

On completion of their studies, students should be able to:

- Understand and be able to apply the four ingredients of rateable occupation.
- Define the hereditament and understand why this is important.
- Recognise composite hereditaments and be able to value the non-domestic element.
- Know and be able to discuss Schedule 5 exemptions.
- Know, understand and be able to apply the definition of rateable value.
- Know and understand the factors that must be taken into account at the Material Day.
- Appreciate the difference between repair and improvement.

Learning Outcomes – Valuations for Rating

On completion of their studies, students should be able to:

- Apply investment valuation techniques in the analysis of premiums or inducements.
- Apply the comparison method of valuation: rent selection, adjustment and analysis and the weighting of evidence.
- Apply the Contractor's Basis method of valuation and know its limitations.
- Apply the Receipts and Expenditure method of valuation and know its limitations.
- Apply a basic understanding of the valuation of plant and machinery where this adds additional value to the overall value of the hereditament.
- Know, understand and apply appropriate method(s) of valuation in the assessment of various types of property.

Content

Legislation and Case Law

The hypothetical tenancy; vacant and to let; fresh to the scene; reasonable prospect of continuance; rebus sic stantibus; mode or category of occupation; the Antecedent Valuation Date (AVD); the Effective Date; the Material Day; tone of the list; empty property rate; Completion Notices.

Valuations for Rating

Investment valuation techniques in the analysis of premiums and inducements (stepped rents; rent free periods; capital contributions; reverse premiums). Valuation and Investment Tables.

Rental (or comparison) method: Rental analysis; adjustment for repairs; insurance; rates; services; chattels; plant and machinery; user covenants; incentives; tenant's fit out costs; tenant's voluntary and conditional improvements; key money; premiums. Order of adjustment; adjusting for time to AVD.

An understanding of the methods of valuation applied to different types of property.

Contractors Basis: The five stages 1. Estimated replacement cost of construction; substituted building; grants. 2. Adjusted replacement cost; obsolescence. 3. Land value. 4. Decapitalisation rates. 5. Stand back and look.

Receipts and Expenditure: Accounts and adjustment of them. Receipts: Income from all sources including grants and donations; sponsorships and TV rights. Expenditure: Cost of purchases; working expenses; allowable and non-allowable expenses; divisible balance; tenant's share. Stand back and look. Local Authority Overbid; hereditaments that generate a loss. Shortened method (percentage of gross receipts).

A basic understanding of the valuation of plant and machinery where this adds additional value to the overall value of the hereditament.

Diploma: Welfare Benefits Administration and Public Sector Finance

Aim

To provide a detailed understanding of the administration of Welfare Benefits, Council Tax Reduction, residual Housing Benefit and Public Sector Finance, and their application.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

Welfare Reform including Universal Credit, Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Administration

- The possible organisational structures for the HB/CTR office and apply the principles and procedures which are the basis for the effective organisation and management of these functions.
- The importance and significance of staff selection, development and retention.
- The importance of, and interrelationship between, performance, inspection, control and subsidy regimes.
- The needs and requirements of external and internal customers including communication and access to the HB/CTR service.
- The processes in relation to the roll out, implementation and administration of Universal Credit, including the impact on Housing Benefit. Liaison with the DWP and third sector. Funding and processes, such as for Personal Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support.
- The processes in relation to the application of fraud prevention and detection measures in HB/CTR.
- The importance of performance management in HB/CTR administration, financial management in the public sector.
- The nature of revenue expenditure.
- The nature of capital expenditure.
- Treasury management processes.
- The purpose and structure of revenue and capital budgets.
- The working of financial controls.
- Sources of income.
- How rents, fees and charges operate.
- The nature and purpose of audit; types of audit; general principles.
- Role and operation of the finance department and responsible finance officer.

Organisational structures for the HB/CTR office

- Different organisational and partnership structures, taking account of local operating considerations, the functions to be included within the HB/CTR service remit.
- The physical security and health and safety issues within a HB/CTR Office.
- The measures needed to ensure the security of claimant information for both paper and IT systems.
- Disability discrimination policies and procedures.
- Insurance requirements for an HB/CTR organisation.
- The organisation of an HB/CTR organisation, including: the distribution of duties and management controls.
- The application of management techniques, office procedures, purchase supplies and office services.
- The purchase or replacement of IT equipment or IT systems including compliance with the authority's tender procedures.

Staff selection, development and retention

Recruitment and selection procedures and documentation for posts within a HB/CTR office taking account of organisational policies and procedures (including equality and discrimination issues); induction and training regime for newly appointed staff; appraisal process for staff including identification of their training and mentoring needs and how this links with improving staff motivation and morale; situations that will initiate action using an authority's absence management strategy; the interrelationship between an organisation's code of conduct and the grievance, discipline and whistle blowing procedures.

Performance, inspection, control and subsidy regimes

The rules relating to all aspects of Housing Benefit subsidy; areas within the Benefit Cost and Administration Subsidy that could be improved and analyse the options and financial implications for improvement; the role of quality checks within the monitoring regime; how local and national inspection regime indicators can be used to plan service improvements; how internal and external Auditors can be involved to improve controls and security; controls and processes for the reconciliation of benefit expenditure to other financial systems.

External and internal customers including communication and access to the HB/CTR service

Access by existing and potential claimants to HB/CTR services including information leaflets, forms and enquiry facilities, taking account of local diversity and the opportunities offered by IT and local partners; how the Service fits into local and national anti poverty strategies including other Welfare Benefits administered by the authority such as Local Welfare Provision schemes, national benefits that offer automatic entitlement to benefits, premiums and services; the potential benefits and constraints of service level agreements with strategic organisations and partners necessary to the provision of an HB/CTR Service (e.g. DWP, DCLG, Job Centre Plus, Pension Service, Rent Service and the Third Sector); the use of key performance indicators to drive continuous improvement to customer service.

The practical issues in administering Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction legislation

The law in the calculation of HB and CTR; the key issues in relation to measurement of need; assessment of resources, application of costs and and HB overpayments; the rules in relation to the recovery of HB overpayments; backdating of HB; other discretionary elements of the benefit legislation, DHP and procedures taking account of best practice and the local authority's policies; procedure to ensure that the DHP cash limit is not exceeded whilst ensuring a fair distribution within the council's policy; monitoring of the reconsideration and appeal process to ensure compliance with the legislation and administrative procedures. Discretion, decision making and appeals in relation to HB/CTR Administration. Good practice in decision making and use of discretionary powers, including addressing good cause in HB and DHPs as well as discretionary powers such as S13A (1) (c) in CTR; good practice in dealing with and submitting appeals to the Valuation Tribunal and First Tier Tribunal.

The processes in relation to the roll out and implementation and administration of Universal Credit.

An appreciation of the roll out of the Full Service of Universal Credit, replacing one of the six legacy benefits, and the impact on Housing Benefit (including administration) and Council Tax Reduction. Liaison with the DWP, preparation, how to claim, who can claim, housing costs including when paid for by Housing Benefit, DHP and customer liaison. Links to the third sector. The administration of Personal Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support for Universal Credit customers. The full roll out of Universal Credit (by 2022).

The application of fraud prevention and detection measures in HB and CTR

Procedures for the detection and prevention of fraud; service level agreements and liaison with DWP (SFIS), Job Centre Plus, Pension Service and other organisations in the context of HB fraud prevention and detection; fraud prevention powers in relation to Council Tax Reduction. Processes for interviews under caution, prosecution and administrative penalties; the relationship between the fraud team and the benefits section; the procedures and organisation of a fraud team.

Performance management in HB and CTR

The importance of performance management in HB/CTR; the importance of business planning; the reporting and scrutiny functions in relation to elected members and other stakeholders.

HB and CTR expenditure

Types of expenditure; different methods of analysis; methods of accounting for support services; capital charges and control by central government; methods of accounting for trading services; the content and purpose of Medium Term Financial Plans.

Capital expenditure

Definition of Capital Expenditure; financing methods, controls and charges; asset management plans; Public / Private partnership; the Prudential Code, PFI, Capital Appraisals.

Treasury management processes

Definition of Treasury Management; TM functions; features of borrowing and investing; analysis of cash flow, TM strategy and statutory receipts.

Revenue and Capital budgets

The purpose of revenue & capital budgets; the method of preparation of revenue and capital budgets; the role of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in budget preparation; the content of Annual Accounts; the role of elected members in financial management and financial planning.

Financial controls

Central Government controls; the role of the Chief Financial Officer; the organisation and role of the Finance Department; external and internal auditing principles; the functions of internal controls.

Sources of income

The various sources of local authority income apart from borrowing and capital income.

Rents, fees and charges

The powers of the local authority to set and collect rents on HRA and non-HRA properties; the housing revenue account, rents for commercial properties; fees and charges, discretionary/mandatory charges; the impact of national policies and political objectives on rents, fees and charges.

Audit

Organisation and method of audit; a typical audit programme; types of audit records; the need for security arrangements; the need for computer audits; internal control and internal check; procedures for the prevention and detection of fraud in revenues administration.

Finance Service and Responsible Finance Officer

Duties undertaken by the Finance Service and the role of the S151/S95 Officer based on the CIPFA code of best practice for both.

Diploma: Council Tax Law and Practice

Aim

To provide a detailed understanding of the law of Council Tax and its application.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- The content and meaning of council tax legislation and associated case law relating to liability;
- The meaning for council tax purposes of sole or main residence and how the term has been interpreted by case law;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to exemptions from Council Tax;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to discounts and disregarded persons;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to the award and administration of relief for properties that are home to a disabled person;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to billing for council tax;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to the collection process;
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to debt enforcement.
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to valuation and the valuation list.
- Legislation and case law relating to completion notices for new dwellings.
- Legislation and associated case law relating to appeals.
- Council tax legislation and associated case law relating to the imposition of penalties.
- Legislation relating to obtaining information for council tax purposes and the protection of data
- The role played by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to council tax.
- The accounting arrangements within a local authority for council tax (and non-domestic rate income) including the Collection and General Funds, settlement of precepts and the relationship with the National Rates Pool.

Content

Liability

Daily liability; Dwelling; Chargeable dwelling; the different valuation bands; the hierarchy of liability; Joint and several liability; Liability of spouses; caravans and boats; Resident' and 'Owner'; liability for owners of certain properties as prescribed by regulations.

Sole or main residence

Sole or main residence; deciding on a person's main residence; the effect of decided cases in relation to sole or main residence.

Exemptions

The concept of an exempt dwelling; exemption without time limit of unoccupied property; time limited exemption of unoccupied dwellings; exemption as a result of a special condition; exemption because there is a relevant absentee; exemption due to occupation by specified persons; steps taken by a billing authority to identify exempt dwellings.

The assumptions that billing authorities must make; the duty to correct assumptions; in relation to exemptions; penalties in relation to exemptions; appeal rights relating to penalties connected to exemptions.

Discounts and disregarded persons

The discounts prescribed by legislation; the criteria to be fulfilled for 25% discount and double (50%) discount or a reduced double discount; the power for the 50% discount to be set at a lower percentage.

The classes of persons disregarded for discount purposes; identification of discount entitlement; assumptions made in determining discount; the duty to correct assumptions; penalties in relation to discounts; appeal rights against imposition of penalties.

Disabled person's relief

The meaning of: 'eligible person'; a qualifying individual; Required to meet the needs of a qualifying individual.

The criteria in relation to facilities within a dwelling; the rules for calculation of the relief; the right of appeal against decisions on disabled person's relief.

Billing

The rules governing the setting of the Council Tax each year and the procedures that the billing authority must follow; how sums for precepting authorities are included within council tax; the duty to publicise the setting of the Council Tax; the powers for an authority to offer reductions for payment by a lump sum or for payment other than by cash; the requirement to issue demand notices; the duty to issue a demand notice as soon as practicable and relevant case law; the rules on the content of demand notices and supporting information.

The alternative schemes governing due dates for payment including payment by instalments or by agreement; the calculation of instalments under the statutory schemes; adjustment of liabilities and the issue of notices; the treatment of overpayments.

Collection

The duty to issue reminder notices where payment is overdue; the effects of reminder notices; the rules that restrict voting by an elected member whose council tax is in arrears.

The process of making an application for a liability order: Laying complaint; Issue and service of summonses; Evidence required at a liability order hearing; Defences that may be raised against the issue of a liability order; Disallowed defences

The requirements that must be met for a magistrates' court to issue a liability order; the rights to appeal a magistrates' court decision.

Debt enforcement

The powers for information to be requested from a debtor following the issue of a liability order.

The methods of recovery authorised by a liability order: Attachment of earnings; Attachment of members' allowances; Deduction from welfare benefits; Charging orders; Taking Control of Goods; Insolvency

The process of application for a warrant of commitment and the powers of the court; the relevant case law concerned with enforcement processes; recovery through a court of competent jurisdiction as an alternative to enforcement through the magistrates' court.

Valuation and Valuation List

The statutory assumption of valuation; the role of the Listing Officer; the right and time limits for the making of proposals to alter the valuation list; the responsibilities of the Listing Officer in relation to proposals.

The Valuation List: Contents of the List; Material Increase; Material Reduction; Relevant Transaction; Effective dates of alterations to the List; Limitations on alterations to the List; Right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against entries in the List.

Completion Notices for New Dwellings

The circumstances in which a completion notice is required; the procedures to be followed in relation to completion notices; the service requirements; the content of the notice.

Appeals

The rights of appeal against decisions of a billing authority on: Chargeable or exempt dwelling; Liability; Calculation of sums due; Penalties; Completion notices.

The initial appeal process; the right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against decisions of the billing authority.

The organisation of the Valuation Tribunal (VT); the VT procedure for appeals from decisions of the Listing Officer and for appeals from decisions of the billing authority; the rights of further appeal.

Penalties

The various circumstances in which a penalty may be imposed by a billing authority; the power to impose a further penalty; the right of appeal against imposition of a penalty.

Obtaining Information and Data Protection

The council tax regulations empowering billing authorities to obtain and supply information; the power to impose penalties for non-compliance; the powers relating to the use of information by billing authorities; the statutory rules governing the use of the information and the duty to safeguard personal data.

Local Government Ombudsman

The structure of the ombudsman service; the remit of the service in relation to council tax; the powers for the ombudsman to conduct an investigation; the key concepts of maladministration and injustice; the powers the ombudsman has to determine or award compensation; the power for a local authority to make payments or award other compensation where maladministration has occurred.

Accounting arrangements within a local authority for council tax (and non-domestic rate income) including the Collection and General Funds, settlement of precepts and the relationship with the National Rates Pool.

The statutory accounts of a local authority; the practical operation of each of the accounts including items of income and items of expenditure; the internal accounting treatments to be followed by a local authority; how council tax income is accounted for with the major, and any local, precepting authorities; the arrangements by which a billing authority settles its NDR income with the National Rates Pool.

Diploma – Law of Property

Aim

To provide an understanding of the principal areas of law affecting contracts, land and leasehold property.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- The nature and provisions of Contract Law.
- The nature and provisions of Land Law.
- The features of Leasehold Property and associated Law.

Content

Contract Law

The general nature of the law of contract; the law on the formation of contract; the rules for determining a party's intention to create legal relations; the doctrine of consideration; the doctrine of privity of contract; the law governing terms of contract; the law governing exemption clauses; the law of misrepresentation; duress and undue influence; illegal contracts; the law on discharge of contract; remedies for breach of contract.

Land Law

The legal concepts of real property and personal property; the significance of legal and equitable property interests; the principal ways in which interests in land can be created expressly or by proprietary estoppel; the ways in which third party rights in both registered and unregistered land can be protected; the law relating to trusts of land; the nature of easements and profits; the nature of covenants affecting a freehold estate; the nature of a mortgage; the nature of a leasehold estate; how a trespasser may become entitled to an estate in land.

Leasehold Property

The key features of leasehold property; the formal requirements for the creation of a lease; the express covenants of a lease; the obligations implied in a lease; the obligations and duties imposed on landlord and tenant in relation to third parties; termination and remedies; the operation of the Rent Act 1977 in relation to residential leases; the operation of the Housing Act 1988 in relation to residential leases; the regulation of long residential tenancies; the regulation of business tenancies.

Diploma: Non-Domestic Rate Law and Practice

Aim

To provide a detailed understanding of the law of Non-Domestic Rate and its application.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- The historical context and background to the development of rating.
- The legislation and associated case law relating to exemptions from non-domestic rates.
- Non-domestic rate legislation and associated case law relating to rateable occupation.
- Non-domestic rating legislation and associated case law relating to liability to rates on unoccupied properties.
- The calculation of the multipliers and business rates supplements.
- The legislation governing the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID), the administration issue, and collection of the BID levy.
- Non-domestic rate legislation and associated case law relating to reliefs.
- Non-domestic rate Legislation on transitional adjustment schemes in respect of general revaluations.
- The legislation and associated case law relating to billing for non-domestic rates.
- Legislation and associated case law relating to collection processes.
- Legislation and associated case law relating to debt enforcement.
- Legislation and associated case law relating to valuation and the local and central Rating Lists.
- Legislation and associated case law relating to completion notices.
- The calculations to allow interest on refunds arising from an alteration of the rating list.
- The role played by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to non-domestic rate.
- The accounting arrangements within a local authority for non-domestic rate (and Council Tax) income including the Collection and General Funds, settlement of precepts and the relationship with the National Rates Pool.

Content

Historical background and context

The historical development of rating; the relevance of case law decided prior to the implementation of NDR in 1990; the continuing development of NDR since 1990.

Exemptions

The following exemptions, referring to case law where appropriate:

- Agricultural land and buildings.
- Fish farms.
- Places of religious worship and ancillary buildings.
- Property of Trinity House.
- Sewers and accessories.
- Land and structures relating to water courses maintained by a drainage authority.
- Parks.
- Property used for the disabled.
- Air raid protection works.
- Swinging moorings.

- Road crossings over watercourses.
- Property occupied by visiting forces.

Understanding that the exemption relating to property in enterprise zones is only relevant when such zones exist; toll roads and congestion charging schemes; the power for the Secretary of State to confer exemption by regulation.

Rateable occupation

The statutory basis for liability on occupied property; the significance of case law in establishing the four ingredients of rateable occupation;

With reference to appropriate case law, understanding of:

- Actual occupation.
- beneficial occupation.
- exclusive occupation.
- Non-transient occupation or degree of permanence.

The concept of:

- Paramount occupation.
- Seasonal occupation.
- Reserved occupation.

The liability to rates for premises occupied by servants, agents and caretakers; the criteria where self contained holiday accommodation may be liable to rates; the criteria where bed and breakfast accommodation may be liable to rates.

Liability to rates on unoccupied properties

The statutory basis for liability on unoccupied property; the meaning of 'relevant hereditaments' for the purpose of unoccupied property rates; the distinction between qualifying industrial hereditaments and other properties.

The initial three-month and six-month exemption periods.

The exemptions from unoccupied property rates including:

- Occupation prohibited by law.
- Action by the Crown or a public authority to prohibit occupation or acquire the property.
- Listed buildings.
- Ancient monuments.
- Representatives of deceased persons.
- Insolvency and debt administrations.

The exemption based on minimum rateable value and how this has been varied over recent years; the zero rating of unoccupied property owned by a charity or a community amateur sports club.

Calculation of the multipliers and business rates supplements

The factors that determine the calculation of the annual multipliers for each rate period.

Distinguishing between the small business multiplier and the ndr multiplier.

The powers for a business rate supplement to be levied by upper tier authorities.

The arrangements for calculation of a multiplier for The Common Council for the City of London.

Business Improvement District (BID), administration of BID, collection of the BID levy

The aim of a Business Improvement District; the process for the creation of a BID; the arrangements for administration of a BID; how a BID levy is calculated; alternative methods for collection of the BID levy. Enforcement procedures.

Reliefs

How mandatory reliefs are applied by variation of the liability calculation; the criteria for mandatory rate relief in respect of charities and community amateur sports clubs; the duty of certain billing authorities to maintain a rural settlements list; mandatory rate relief in respect of certain hereditaments in rural settlements; the power to award discretionary relief to charities and non profit-making bodies; the power to award discretionary relief in rural settlements.

The criteria to be met for hardship relief to be awarded.

For small business relief:

- The criteria for relief to be awarded.
- The administration process.
- Calculation of the relief.
- Relationship with other mandatory reliefs.

The rules on rate relief for partly unoccupied properties.

Transitional adjustment schemes in respect of general revaluations

The intention and scope of the transitional adjustment scheme.

The following matters:

- Relevant period, relevant day and relevant year.
- Base liability.
- Notional chargeable amount.
- Appropriate fraction.
- Uplift for small business supplement.

The rules where RV changes require a certificate from the valuation officer.
Explain the rules in relation to split or merged hereditaments.

Billing for non-domestic rates

The calculation of the liable amount and the assumptions to be made; liability in relation to different structures of business organisations including joint and several liability.

- The requirement to issue demand notices.
- The duty to issue a demand notice as soon as practicable and relevant case law.
- The rules on the content of demand notices and supporting information.

The rules governing due dates for payment including payment by instalments or by agreement; the rules governing the service of demand notices and other notices other than summonses; the need to adjust liabilities and to issue further notices adjusting the sum demanded.

Collection processes

The duty to issue a further notice as notification of an unpaid instalment and the consequences of such notices; the circumstances in which a reminder notice is issued.

The process for agreeing a charge on a property as security for unpaid rates.

The process of making an application for a liability order:

- Laying complaint.
- Issue and service of summonses.
- Evidence required at a liability order hearing.
- Defences available against the issue of a liability order.

The requirements that must be met for a magistrates' court to issue a liability order; the rights to appeal a magistrates' court decision; Enforcement through a court of competent jurisdiction as an alternative to the liability order procedure.

Debt enforcement

The powers available to a billing authority following the issue of a liability order; the rules governing Taking Control of Goods; the use of insolvency as an enforcement process; the application for a warrant of commitment in relation to an individual ratepayer, and the powers of the court.

Relevant case law concerned with enforcement processes.

Valuation and the local and central Rating Lists

The powers and duties of the Valuation Officer.

The definition of rateable value including the assumptions to be made; the alternative methods for valuing properties including the use of rental evidence and where such evidence is not available; the criteria for property to be included in the local Rating List; the criteria for property to be included in the Central List; who is entitled to make a proposal to alter a Rating List and the process; the procedure for agreed alterations to the Rating List; the right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against entries in the Rating List.

Completion notices

The circumstances where a completion notice is to be issued for a new building.

The content of a completion notice; the methods of service; agreement of completion dates; the right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal and VT powers.

Calculations to allow interest on refunds arising from an alteration of the rating list

The conditions for interest to be payable on the refund of an overpayment.

- Relevant period.
- Subsequent period.
- Repayment day.

The interest calculation and figures to be used; the circumstances in which income tax is deductible from interest.

Local Government Ombudsman

The structure of the ombudsman service; the remit of the service in relation to non-domestic rate; the powers for the ombudsman to conduct an investigation; the key concepts of maladministration and injustice; the powers the ombudsman has to determine or award compensation; the power for a local authority to make payments or award other compensation where maladministration has occurred.

Accounting arrangements within a local authority for non-domestic rate (and council tax) income including the Collection and General Funds, settlement of precepts and the relationship with the National Rates Pool.

The statutory accounts of a local authority; the practical operation of each of the accounts including items of income and items of expenditure; the internal accounting treatments to be followed by a local authority; how council tax income is accounted for with the major, and any local, precepting authorities; the arrangements by which a billing authority settles its NDR income with the National Rates Pool.

Diploma: Welfare Benefits Law and Practice

Aim

To provide a knowledge and understanding of:

- Major social policy areas and political changes relating to Welfare Benefits.
- Specific types of benefits.
- The background to and prescribed areas of Local Council Tax Reduction.
- The areas of local discretion relating to Local Council Tax Reduction.
- The law and processes relating to Universal Credit.
- Specific residual areas relating to Housing Benefit Law

Learning Outcomes

On completion of their studies students should be able to:

- State the major policy issues relating to Welfare Benefits.
- Provide detailed information on the different types of Welfare Benefits available, how they are claimed and how they interact.
- Describe and evaluate the prescribed areas of Local Council Tax Reduction.
- Describe and evaluate the areas of local discretion of Local Council Tax Reduction.
- The law and processes relating to Universal Credit.
- Describe the legislative background relating to Universal Credit.
- Describe the management of residual areas relating to Housing Benefit Law and Administration.

Content

A. Welfare Benefits

1. Overview of social policy: Main policy issues underlying Welfare Benefits.
2. The broad Welfare Benefits framework: the different types of benefits available (detailed entitlement knowledge of a benefit is not required unless listed below), understanding of means tested benefits and their structure, contributory and non-contributory benefits.
3. The main legacy benefits (an understanding of): income support, job seekers allowance, employment and support allowance, personal independence payments and attendance allowance, pension credit).

B. The general principles and law relating to Local Council Tax Reduction, including discretionary elements

1. Aims of the scheme from a government perspective including protected groups.
2. Background to the creation of local CTR schemes i.e. the original “default” scheme adopted by many in England / the Welsh scheme / Scottish scheme as appropriate for regional variation.
3. The Prescribed Requirement Regulations including:
 - a. The detail of how CTR is calculated – allowances, the family, the treatment of income and capital, non-dependants and deductions, the taper under these regulations.
 - b. Time and manner of claiming, evidence and information, decisions and notification.
 - c. Date on which entitlement will start.
 - d. Payment
 - e. Duty to notify changes, date of changes, amendment and withdrawal of claims.
 - f. Adjustments.
 - g. Appeals.
4. General principles of a local scheme (principles of a discretion / calculation / assessment / notification / payment).

C. The Law relating to Universal Credit

NB Parts of this section will have less content until the scheme progresses and will then increase in content as the Housing Benefit section (below) reduces.

Understand the law and processes relating to:

1. The migration from legacy benefits to UC..
2. The application for UC – who, where, when, how? A detailed understanding of the calculation of UC – allowances, qualifying criteria for each of the elements income, capital, disregards.
3. The treatment of self-employed under UC.
4. Changes in circumstances – what, when, how?
5. Payment of UC – frequency, how and who?
6. Overpayments of UC.
7. The conditionality and sanction regime.

D. Specific Housing Benefit Law in respect of both working age and pensionable age claimants

1. A detailed understanding of the calculation of HB to include:
 - Who is entitled.
 - Liability – including those who are treated as liable or not within Regs 8 & 9.
 - Occupation of the home including temporary absence, HB on 2 homes and entitlement prior to occupation.
 - Claiming HB.
 - Dates.
 - Backdating.
 - Applicable amounts.
 - Household and non-dependants.
 - Income.
 - Capital.
 - Eligible rent only associated with exempt accommodation.
 - Service charges.
 - The Social Sector Size Criteria.
 - The calculation and taper.
 - The Benefit Cap.
 - Payment.
 - Changes in circumstances – revisions and supersessions.
2. Decisions, notification and appeals.
3. Discretionary Housing Payments.
4. Overpayments.
5. Appeals.

N.B. The above module does not cover any aspects of specialist areas such as Persons from Abroad, Students, Self-Employed, Subsidy, or rent/housing costs associated with Registered Rents, Rent Officer decisions, Local Housing Allowance.