

Revised Scheme of Education and Training: Benchmarking CA Education with the Best

I got the opportunity of launching this dynamic course, which will improve the financial education in our country...I am hopeful the new course will boost the financial skills of people joining this profession...," heralded our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi while launching the ICAI's Revised Scheme of Education and Training on the occasion of CA Day on July 1, 2017. Indeed, the new CA course is dynamic and all encompassing, that benchmarks the Indian accounting education with the best in the world.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, so rightly said Nelson Mandela. Our comprehensive CA education has the same potential in addition to sustained and future-oriented growth of our profession. With a vision that accountancy profession and accountancy education should constantly go hand in hand with global academic, technological and economic advancements, the revised scheme of education and training was the need of the hour as the ICAI's answer to the demands made on the profession in the present era of all-round changes. Developed in line with International Education Standards (IES) issued by International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and inputs from various stakeholders, the new course is designed to be a stepping stone for accounting students to leapfrog into a future of unlimited potential as multi-dimensional Chartered Accountants and 360 degree Business Solution Providers.

The role of a Chartered Accountant is evolving continually to assume newer responsibilities in a dynamic environment. In the given dynamic scenario, the potentiality of the Chartered Accountancy education system, to meet the diverse range of expectations of various stakeholders from the profession, has become the focal point. The Revised Scheme of Education and Training has been developed in this very backdrop, which is in sync with the requisites of the dynamic global business environment. In this scheme, the technical competence, professional skills, professional values, ethics and attitudes expected from a Chartered Accountant have been redefined and upgraded in order to gear up aspiring Chartered Accountants to take up newer roles.

The ICAI's Revised Scheme of Education and Training has been designed in accordance to the requirements of the Revised IESs. Revised IES 1 requires that entry requirements to Professional Accounting Education (PAE) programs should be such that it allows entry only to those who have a reasonable chance of success. In line with these requirements, the methodology of assessment in two out of four papers of the Foundation course has been stepped up from 'objective' to 'descriptive' to assess the communication and presentation skills of aspiring entrants at the entry level itself. Further, two new subjects, namely, Business Correspondence and Reporting and Business and Commercial knowledge have been introduced at the entry level.

At the Intermediate level, there would be one dedicated paper for 100 marks on Cost and Management Accounting. A new subject "Economics for Finance" is being introduced at the intermediate level to give an insight on macro-economic aggregates and measurement of national income, public finance, money market and international trade. The objective is to introduce the subject of economics with more orientation towards public finance and money market.

The core paper on Financial Reporting at the Final level would be largely Ind-AS oriented. Further, the syllabus of this paper includes contemporary topics like accounting for e-commerce, accounting for carbon emissions and carbon credits, analysis of financial statements, integrated reporting and CSR accounting. Also, International Taxation has been included as a separate part for 30 marks in the paper on Direct Tax Laws at the Final level. The core paper for 100 marks would thus be on Direct Tax Laws and International Taxation.

At the Final level, with the introduction of electives, students will get the option of choosing their career profile. These value additions would go a long way in enhancing the technical competence of aspiring chartered accountants. In effect, the subjects across the three levels—Foundation, Intermediate and Final adequately cover the competence areas under Revised IES 2—Technical Competence.

Further, the Integrated Course on Information Technology and Soft Skills (ICITSS) [comprising of Orientation Course and Information Technology Training (ITT)] and Advanced ICITSS [comprising of General Management and Communication Skills (GMCS) and Advanced ITT] have been so designed that the aspiring chartered accountants are adequately equipped with the professional skills required as per Revised IES 3.

The technical competence, professional skills, professional values, ethics and attitudes acquired by a student can be demonstrated in the written examination as well as in the course of mandatory three years practical training which a student has to undergo simultaneously with the theoretical education.

The new scheme would have 'Transparent Examination System' and vibrant course structure, giving students the option for choosing their career path. To keep the course curriculum dynamic and in tune with the times, it will be regularly reviewed while the ICAI would be promoting *e-Shiksha*. The Scheme of the Course FAQs and a detailed implementation schedule are also available on ICAI website www.icai.org. The detailed paper-wise exemption plan will be notified in due course.

It is expected that the new course will go a long way in making students—the next generation CAs—more dynamic, multifarious, industry-friendly and practical in their newer strategic roles as watchdogs and enablers of compliance and fiscal discipline in the service of the society and the nation. ■

Editorial Board ICAI – Partner in Nation Building