

Certified Tester Advanced Level Test Analyst (CTAL-TA)

Exam Structure and Rules

v3.1.0

International Software Testing Qualifications Board



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Revision History

Version	Date	Remarks
v3.1.0	3 Mar 2021	Separate document for CTAL-TA only, without any substantial changes
2019 v3.0	19 Oct 2019	Major update with overall revision and scope reduction; Separate document for CTAL-TA and -TTA
2012 v2.0	19 Oct 2012	Major update. Joint CTAL-TM/TA/TTA document
2007 v1.0	12 Oct 2007	First version as a joint CTAL-TM/TA/TTA document

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0. General

0.1 Validity

All ISTQB Advanced Level v3.1 examinations (exams) for the Test Analyst module shall comply with the structure and rules described in this document, regardless of language and media.

0.2 Purpose

This document contains structure and rules for the creation and running of exams based on the ISTQB v3.1 Advanced Level Test Analyst syllabus.

0.3 Scope

This document covers:

- the number of questions per examination;
- the length of the examination;
- the distribution of questions per topic (chapter); and
- the distribution of questions per cognitive level.

0.4 Document Responsibility

General responsibility for this document is under the ISTQB Examination Working Group.

0.5 Definitions

- **LEARNING OBJECTIVE (LO):** Learning objectives describe the gain on cognitive competence to be achieved in relation to given content.

1. Advanced Level TA Exam Rules

1.1 Exam Scope

- Rule 1.1.1 The v3.1 Advanced Level Test Analyst examinations shall be based on the v3.1 Advanced Level Test Analyst syllabus [ISTQB_ALTA_SYL]. Answers to examination questions may require the use of material from more than one section of this syllabus.
- Rule 1.1.2 All learning objectives (on cognitive levels K2 to K4) in the syllabus are examinable.

1.2 Exam Format and Duration

- Rule 1.2.1 Each exam shall comprise a set of multiple-choice questions based on the Learning Objectives for the syllabus. The number and distribution of questions has been based on the Learning Objectives and K-levels as defined in the syllabus, and their level of importance as evaluated by the ISTQB®. Details on the exam structure are provided in section 2 below.
- Rule 1.2.2 The points available for a question should reflect the difficulty of the question. A K2 question is to be allocated 1 point. In general, a K3 question should be allocated 2 points and a K4 question should be allocated 3 points. However, K3 questions may be set at 1, 2, or 3 points, and K4 questions may be set at 2 or 3 points at the discretion of the question author. A more difficult question may require the examinee to have a deeper or more nuanced understanding of the material. A less difficult question may be one where the answer is more straightforward.
- Rule 1.2.3 In general, K2 questions are expected to take 2 minutes to read and answer, K3 questions are expected to take 3 minutes and K4 questions are expected to take 4 minutes. The exam setter should keep in mind that this is only a guideline for an average time, and that it is likely that some questions will take longer and others will take less time for examinees to complete.
- Rule 1.2.4 The time allowed for the exam is based on the number of questions and their K-level. The Advanced Test Analyst exam shall comprise 40 questions with a duration of 120 minutes. If the candidate's native language is not the examination language, the candidate is allowed an additional 25% (exam duration = 150 minutes).

1.3 Exam Points and Passing Score

- Rule 1.3.1 A score of at least 65% of the total points is required to pass. The total points for this exam should be set at 80 points. Therefore, a minimum of 52 points is required to achieve a passing score.

1.4 Question Writing

- Rule 1.4.1 For the rules and recommendations for writing multiple-choice questions see the ISTQB - Question Writing Rules & Recommendations [QWRR].

- Rule 1.4.2 All questions shall assess at least one Learning Objective from the Advanced Syllabus under examination. Questions may include supporting material at the K1 level from the rest of the syllabus, incorporate concepts from Foundation syllabus LOs and/or include other Foundation syllabus material at the K1 level. Where questions address more than one LO, then the question should primarily address the highest K-Level LO.

2. Advanced Level Test Analyst Exam Structure

LO	K-Level	Number of Questions per LO	Number of Questions per Chapter	
TA Chapter 1: 1. The Test Analyst's Activities in the Test Process				
TA-1.2.1	K2	1	Exactly THREE questions from TA-1.2.1, TA-1.3.1, and TA-1.4.1	
TA-1.3.1	K2	1		
TA-1.4.1	K2	1		
TA-1.4.2	K4	2	Exactly TWO questions for TA-1.4.2	
TA-1.4.3	K2	1	Exactly ONE question from TA-1.4.3, TA-1.5.1 and TA-1.6.1	
TA-1.5.1	K2			
TA-1.6.1	K2			
Chapter 1 TOTAL			6 mandatory questions	
TA Chapter 2: The Test Analyst's Tasks in Risk-Based Testing				
TA-2.1.1	K3	1	Exactly ONE question, as specified by LO, is required for this chapter.	
Chapter 2 TOTAL			1 mandatory question	
TA Chapter 3: Test Techniques				
TA-3.2.1	K4	1	Exactly SEVENTEEN questions, as specified by LO, are required for this chapter.	
TA-3.2.2	K4	1		
TA-3.2.3	K4	2		
TA-3.2.4	K4	2		
TA-3.2.5	K2	1		
TA-3.2.6	K4	2		
TA-3.2.7	K4	2		
TA-3.2.8	K4	2		
TA-3.3.1	K2	1		
TA-3.3.2	K3	1		
TA-3.3.3	K2	1		
TA-3.4.1	K4	1		
Chapter 3 TOTAL				17 mandatory questions
TA Chapter 4: Testing Software Quality Characteristics				
TA-4.2.1	K2	3	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	
TA-4.2.2	K2			
TA-4.2.3	K2	3	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	
TA-4.2.4	K2			
TA-4.2.5	K2	3	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	
TA-4.2.6	K2			
TA-4.2.7	K4	2	Exactly TWO questions for this LO	

	Chapter 4 TOTAL		11 mandatory questions
TA Chapter 5: Reviews			
TA-5.2.1	K3	3	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO
TA-5.2.2	K3		
	Chapter 5 TOTAL		3 mandatory questions
TA Chapter 6: Test Tools & Automation			
TA-6.2.1	K3	1	Exactly TWO questions, as specified by LO, are required for this chapter
TA-6.3.1	K2	1	
	Chapter 6 TOTAL		2 mandatory questions
	TA TOTAL		40 mandatory questions

Appendix A: Example Exam Structure

The table below shows an example of how a valid Advanced Test Analyst examination could be constructed by following the rules listed in section 2.

LO	K-Level	Points	Mins	Rule	Question Number
TA-1.2.1	K2	1	2	Exactly THREE questions from TA-1.2.1, TA-1.3.1, and TA-1.4.1 are required for this chapter.	1
TA-1.3.1	K2	1	2		2
TA-1.4.1	K2	1	2		3
TA-1.4.2	K4	3	4	Exactly TWO questions for TA-1.4.2 are required for this chapter.	4
	K4	3	4		5
TA-1.4.3	K2	1	2	Exactly ONE question from TA-1.4.3, TA-1.5.1 and TA-1.6.1 is required for this chapter	6
TA-1.5.1	K2				
TA-1.6.1	K2				
TA-2.1.1	K3	2	3	Exactly ONE question, as specified by LO, is required for this chapter.	7
TA-3.2.1	K4	3	4	Exactly SEVENTEEN questions, as specified by LO, are required for this chapter.	8
TA-3.2.2	K4	3	4		9
TA-3.2.3	K4	3	4		10
	K4	3	4		11
TA-3.2.4	K4	3	4		12
	K4	3	4		13
TA-3.2.5	K2	1	2		14
TA-3.2.6	K4	3	4		15
	K4	3	4		16
TA-3.2.7	K4	3	4		17
	K4	3	4		18
TA-3.2.8	K4	3	4		19
	K4	3	4		20
TA-3.3.1	K2	1	2		21
TA-3.3.2	K3	2	3		22
TA-3.3.3	K2	1	2		23
TA-3.4.1	K4	3	4		24
TA-4.2.1	K2	1	2	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	25
	K2	1	2		26
TA-4.2.2	K2	1	2		27
TA-4.2.3	K2	1	2	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	28
	K2	1	2		29
TA-4.2.4	K2	1	2	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	30
TA-4.2.5	K2	1	2		31
	K2	1	2		32
TA-4.2.6	K2	1	2	Exactly TWO questions, as specified by the LO	33
TA-4.2.7	K4	3	4		34
	K4	3	4	35	
TA-5.2.1	K3	2	3	Exactly THREE questions for the two LOs. At least ONE question per LO	36
	K3	2	3		37
TA-5.2.2	K3	2	3		38
TA-6.2.1	K3	2	3	Exactly TWO questions, as specified by LO, are required for this chapter	39
TA-6.3.1	K2	1	2		40
		80	120	40 mandatory questions	

Appendix B: ISTQB® Documents

[ISTQB_ALTA_SYL] ISTQB® Advanced Level Test Analyst Syllabus, Version v3.1

[QWRR] ISTQB® - Question Writing Rules & Recommendations Version 2.3