

# Certificate in Pension Scheme Member Guidance Test Specification

As part of the preparation for the oral assessment candidates must complete the online study programme which includes learning materials for each module of the qualification.

The online learning programme is supported by the following assignment types:

- (1) Test Assignment (Modules 1-4); and
- (2) Case Study Assignments (Modules 5-11).

These assignments include the following question types:

Question Type	Question Type description	Marks per Question
A	<b>Self-contained single answer multiple choice questions where candidates are requested to select the correct option from a choice of four.</b>	<b>1 mark</b>
B	<b>"Scenario" type where candidates are presented with a scenario and requested to write a short answer to each question presented in the scenario</b>	<b>1 to 15 marks</b>

## Test Assignment

This will include questions of Type A as denoted in bold above. Sample illustrative questions are provided at the end of this Test Specification. It will test the content of the following modules:

- 1 - Information, Advice and Guidance on Pension Benefits
- 2 - Options Available from Different Pension Schemes
- 3 - Financial Considerations when making Pension Benefit Decisions
- 4 - Lifestyle Factors that impact on Pension Benefit Decisions

The test will be of 45 minutes duration, as follows:

40 Type A questions (approx.10 questions per module) The nominal pass mark will be 80%.

## Case Study Assignments

There are 7 individual case study assignments. Each will include questions of Types B as denoted in bold above. Sample illustrative questions are provided at the end of this Test Specification. The case studies will test the content of the following modules (a separate case study for each):

- 5 - Joining an Occupational Pension Scheme
- 6 - Leaving an Occupational Pension Scheme
- 7 - Transferring Pension Benefits
- 8 - Divorce and Pension Benefits
- 9 - Pension Scheme Death Benefits
- 10 - Pension Scheme Retirement Benefits
- 11 - Annuities and Pension Benefits

Each case study will include 7 to 15 Type B questions. Each assignment will be of 50 marks in total. The recommended completion time for each assignment is one hour. The nominal pass mark for the case studies is 80%. Further details on the operation of the assignments and online learning programme can be found in the guidance notes.

## Sample Questions

**Type A - self-contained single answer multiple choice questions [select correct option from choice of 4].**

1. Workers aged 16 to 21 or State pension Age to 74 and earning over the minimum earnings threshold amount are
  - a. Non-Entitled Workers.
  - b. Eligible Jobholders.
  - c. Entitled Workers.
  - d. Non-Eligible Jobholders.
2. In a DC pension plan, the benefits provided
  - a. depend on employer contributions and the employee's final salary.
  - b. are determined solely by total contributions by employee and employer
  - c. will never be subject to tax.
  - d. depend on total contribution and investment return less any charges.

## **Type B – "Scenario" type short answer questions**

Scenario – stage 1

You are an administrator in a large third party administration firm and you are working on the helpline for customer pension enquiries. You receive a phone call from a Mr Grange who advises that his step-father Mr James, a current employee of ABC Limited, died in hospital two days ago. Mr Grange informed the employer immediately prior to contacting you and was referred to you by the employer Mr Grange is unsure what he needs to do about registering Mr James' death.

1. What information should you tell Mr Grange on what he will need to do in respect of registering the death?

(4 marks)

Scenario – stage 2

Mr Grange confirms that he has been issued with a certificate from the hospital and will register the death as outlined. Your Scheme procedures require the collection of the original death certificate and birth and marriage certificate of any spouse/civil partner. A Scheme Beneficiary Data Questionnaire must also be completed and returned.

2. What information should you request/obtain at this point and what reasons would you give? You should consider what other suggestions you could make that might be helpful to Mr Grange.  
(4 marks)
  
3. What other information should you request/obtain at this point (not from Mr Grange or other beneficiaries) and why? (3 marks)

CPSMG assessment mechanism

Section	Learning	Assessment	Indicative % of Final Mark
1	<p><b>Core knowledge modules:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information, Advice and Guidance on Pension Benefits</li> <li>2. Options available from Different Pension Schemes</li> <li>3. Financial considerations when making Pension Benefit Decisions</li> <li>4. Lifestyle factors that impact on Pension Benefit Decisions</li> </ol>	<p>A single MCQ test with a set boundary pass/fail score</p>	10%
2	<p><b>Application modules:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Joining an Occupational Pension Scheme</li> <li>6. Leaving an Occupational Pension Scheme</li> <li>7. Transferring Pension Benefits</li> <li>8. Divorce and Pension Benefits</li> <li>9. Pension Scheme Death Benefits</li> <li>10. Pension Scheme Retirement Benefits</li> <li>11. Annuities and Pension Benefits</li> </ol>	<p>7 short assignments marked externally by a PMI tutor</p>	20%
3	<p><b>Member interaction module:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Communicating with Pension Scheme Members Seeking Guidance</li> </ol>	<p>Telephone Call Assessment</p>	70%

Sections 1 and 2 have to be completed before moving to Section 3. Every element has to be passed, and the percentages will describe either pass/merit/distinction based on the examiner's marks for each section.

Once Sections 1 and 2 are passed then the learner only needs to re-sit Section 3.