



Command verbs used in the Associate and Fellowship exams

Command verbs are the words in your exam questions that tell you what the examiner wants you to do.

Also referred to as 'action words', command verbs are normally the first word in each question, although they do not include direct questioning words such as 'what', 'why', or 'who', usually used in multiple choice questions

The alphabetical list below is designed to help you understand what each command verb is asking you to do

Some of these verbs can be used in more than one context and there are examples to help you understand the distinction.

By understanding these command verbs, you are on your way to understanding the exam question

It is essential that you carefully read each exam question (several times) before answering. Once you understand the question, restrict your answer to respond to exactly what has been asked.

It is also important to make sure that the time you spend on each question reflects the number of marks awarded to it. Where the question is asked in the context of a given scenario or situation, remember to adapt and tailor your answer to reflect the details of the scenario.

requirement beginning with:	Definition
Analyse	Break down into component parts
Assess	Judge the effectiveness, implications, relevance, importance, suitability and/or value of
Calculate	Ascertain or reckon mathematically. (Note that only the result of the calculation is required to gain full marks, unless the phrase “showing all workings” is included. When this phrase is not included in the question, it is still advisable to include some workings so that partial marks can be gained for the use of correct methodology, even if the final result is incorrect)
Carry out	Perform / do the specified test or task
Comment on	Give brief conclusions on
Compare	Highlight the similarities and differences between
Contrast	Highlight the differences between
Define	Give the exact meaning of
Demonstrate	Prove with certainty or exhibit by practical means
Derive	Develop a result from first principles (or from the given starting point)
Describe	Express, fully and clearly, the details/facts of. (e.g. “Describe the benefits payable under a term assurance policy” (bookwork) or “Describe the risks arising...” under a specific given scenario (application to the given context, which is likely to include specified products, operating environment, stakeholders and/or events).)
Determine	Find the solution by argument or calculation, making clear your reasoning. (e.g. “Determine the type of event that has occurred, based on the data provided” (application) or “Determine the most appropriate course of action for the company, within the given constraints” (higher

order skills.)

Discuss	Write about in some detail, taking into account different issues or points of view
Draw	Produce a representation of...a diagram, graph, chart etc. (e.g. "Draw a diagram to illustrate the profit-maximising price" (bookwork) or "Draw a scatterplot" (application required).)
Estimate	Calculate a result, using judgement to decide on suitable assumptions and/or approximations. (Used when the result is not definitive. Assumptions made should be expressed clearly and intermediate workings should be shown.)
Evaluate	Judge the suitability of something for a given purpose
Explain	Make clear the meaning or purpose or details of, or the justification for
Express	Write down the result in the specified terms
Identify	Distinguish one or more relevant items from a set of alternatives
Justify	Provide reasons to support
Label	Attach a name to unidentified terms ...on a graph, chart, diagram, table. (e.g. "Label the axes" (bookwork) or "Label the curves which correspond to each of the given scenarios" (application required).)
List	Make a list of
Outline	Describe briefly without elaboration or explanation
Perform	Undertake the specified test
Plot	Illustrate the given information or data using a chart or graph. (Note: "Plot" implies that more accuracy is required than "Sketch".)
Prepare	Make or get ready for use
	Select and then communicate a solution, action


Propose	or range of possible solutions/actions. (Justification is not expected unless explicitly asked for, e.g. “with reasons”.)
Prove	Demonstrate the truth of what is indicated, through mathematical argument
Recommend	Select and then communicate a preferred solution or course of action. (Justification is not expected unless explicitly asked for, e.g. “with reasons”.)
Set out	Write down in a structured way
Show	Demonstrate the given result to be correct
Simplify	Give an equivalent, but simpler, version of a mathematical expression
Sketch	Produce a rough graph, chart or diagram of
Solve	Find a mathematical answer to
State	Express the details/facts of... without elaboration
Suggest	Communicate a range of solutions, actions or reasons without elaboration. (This is normally used in a situation where there is insufficient information provided to form a definitive recommendation or proposal, e.g. “Suggest possible reasons” or “Suggest possible actions”.)
Test	Check or examine something. (e.g. “Test the hypothesis that...”).
Verify	Demonstrate to be true
Write down	Provide exactly what has been asked for, without explanation or elaboration

Related documents

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