The New 2012 ISTQB Advanced Level Syllabus
A News Update

Introduction

A long-awaited upgrade of the 2007 Advanced Level syllabus is approaching market readiness. Following market surveys of various stakeholders including training providers, businesses, and students, the scoping work commenced which has led to the creation of the 2012 version of the Advanced Level syllabus.

This document provides a brief overview of the changes made and the release plan being followed by ISTQB.
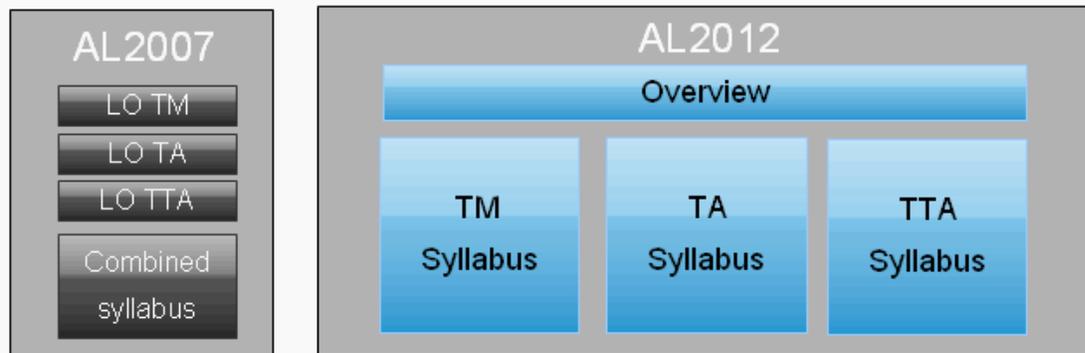
Improved Scoping

A principal objective of the new Advanced Level syllabus is to ensure that there is no overlap between any current ISTQB syllabi.

The Advanced syllabus adds to the Foundation Level and fits neatly with the topics managed at the Expert Level (Test Management, Improving the Test Process, Test Automation, etc.).

In addition, the consistency and clear scoping between the three Advanced Level modules has been substantially improved.

Clearer Organization of the Syllabus

The 2012 Advanced Level syllabus has been created as three stand-alone syllabi (one document for each module syllabus) and a single overview document.

This structure makes it clearer for everyone (students, training providers and exam creation teams) to understand what is expected and what is to be covered. This is also consistent with the modular structure of the Expert Level.

In the future, individual Advanced modules may evolve separately if needed.

Business Outcomes Now Form the Basis for the Advanced Syllabi

Each Business Outcome provides a statement of what can be expected from a person who achieves the Advanced Level in the particular subject area (e.g., an Advanced Test Manager). The Business Outcomes are listed in the Overview document.

Business Outcomes are specifically directed to the business needs of industry and will particularly benefit businesses who are considering investing in developing the skills of their staff at the Advanced Level.

The Learning Objectives of each Advanced syllabus implement, and are traceable to, the Business Outcomes for that syllabus. Learning Objectives are the measurable statements that form the basis of the exams, and as such provide demonstrable proof that a student has met the specific requirements of the Business Outcomes.

Improved Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives have been improved by removing potential misinterpretations and by splitting certain "compound" learning objectives into individual parts.

Learning Objectives are now uniquely numbered and placed at the start of each syllabus chapter, in line with Foundation and Expert Level syllabi.

Changes to the Test Management Syllabus

The principal subjects covered remain the same. However, the content has been improved.

Redundancies with the Foundation Level syllabus have been removed (e.g., reviews).

The Expert Level syllabi "Test Management" and "Improving the Test Process" are now available. Scoping and alignment with these syllabi has taken place.

The defect management chapter is no longer based on IEEE-1044 and focuses more on setting up a defect management lifecycle and using defect data for process improvement.

Changes to the Test Analyst Syllabus

The major concentration of this syllabus remains on the testing techniques and test process.

Domain analysis and user stories are new to the specification-based techniques section.

Content has been significantly revised to align the scope with Foundation, other Advanced Level syllabi and Expert Level Test Automation.

The Test Management and Tools chapters are relatively short and cover only the specific issues relating to the Test Analyst.

The defect management chapter is no longer based on IEEE-1044 and focuses more on defect categorization and performing initial root cause analysis of defects.

Changes to the Technical Test Analyst Syllabus

A significant refocus on the technical aspects of testing has been completed. As a result it is now expected that candidates must be able to read and understand pseudo-code.

The basic aspects of testing and the testing process are now covered in other syllabi.

The Test Management chapter is relatively short and covers only the specific issues relating to the Technical Test Analyst.

Testing techniques remains a significant part of the syllabus and accounts for approximately 1/3 of the training time. Six techniques are covered, including basis path testing and API coverage. The LCSAJ technique has been removed from the syllabus.

Content has been significantly reduced due to scoping with the other modules (in particular Test Analyst).

Release Plan

The ISTQB Advanced Level syllabi are being implemented according to a formal release plan and process. This has already included three review cycles (one internal Working Group and two global Member Board reviews) leading to a proposed market release of a Beta version of the three syllabi in June 2012. Training Providers and Exam Providers can use the Beta version of the syllabi as a basis for updating/creating courses and exams.

The release process ensures that critical supporting deliverables are available on a timely basis, including updates to the Glossary, Accreditation Process, and the Exam Structure and Rules. Sample exam questions are also being made available.

The earliest possible live release date for the syllabi is October 2012 with December 2012 being the earliest date for new exams. There will be a six month period during which the old syllabus, courses and exams will be phased out for English Language versions, with a three month lag for non-English versions. An additional three months will be allowed for exam re-takes against the 2007 syllabus.

Note for Existing Training Providers Regarding Accreditation

Please note that due to the scale of the changes in the 2012 Advanced Level syllabi, full re-accreditation of courses will be required.

Disclaimer

All the information in this news release is subject to change. It is intended to provide an update for interested ISTQB stakeholders so they are aware of the planned milestones as well as to provide an overview of content, structure, rationale and approach taken in the development of the Advanced Level Syllabi. The planned deliverables and milestones are subject to ISTQB General Assembly approval and the ISTQB takes no responsibility for any actions taken by anyone based on this news release.