Social Value Associate (Level One Exam)

Frequently Asked Questions

**Why should I become a Social Value Associate?**

The Social Value Associate accredits your knowledge and skills in impact measurement and management in line with international best practice. Social Value International is a globally recognized leader in this field with established partnerships with the Impact Management Project, UNDP, OECD, Capitals Coalition, and World Business Council for Sustainable Development amongst others.

This qualification itself is ideal for anyone who needs to think about a broader definition of value in their work, value that includes social and environmental value not just economic. There are two broad categories of people; those that prepare accounts of value (doing the measurement) and those who use the accounts (making the management decisions). This qualification is designed for both groups.

For practitioners, for whom measurement, data collection and writing reports is a regular task, this is the first step on the ladder, and it is recommended that after achieving level one they progress to the level 2 and 3 practitioner statuses. These more thoroughly test the technical knowledge required and the practical application of the principles in preparing an account of value.

SVI also recognizes that quite often the decision makers are not the people preparing the account. These people will use the ‘account of value’ to inform the decisions they want to make that are based on a broader definition of value. The level one status helps these people know enough about the SVI framework, its benefits and to advocate for application of the principles. The subsequent practitioner levels (2 and 3) might not be something that these people ever do.

**What does the exam test?**

The exam tests for a theoretical understanding and knowledge of Social Value International’s framework for accounting for value specifically the Principles of Social Value. Passing the exam demonstrates that the individual understands the urgency that underpins the social value movement and the basic propositions that underpin SVI’s framework of accountability and maximizing value.
The exam is designed to, primarily, test and then recognize where individuals clearly understand SVI’s key concepts, The Principles of Social Value and the SVI Framework. It also tests and recognizes an individual’s alignment with our shared philosophy or mindset required to change the way the world prepares an account of value and use it to make decisions that address inequality and wellbeing of people and planet. Whilst there are some questions that test for understanding of some technical knowledge and competence in preparing an account of value, this is not the main purpose of the exam.

“The Level 1 Associate Status is less about testing technical competence and more about testing whether individuals ‘get it’, whether they understand what the principles are designed to do.” – Ben Carpenter, CEO, Social Value International

In addition to passing this exam, all applicants must also sign a commitment to good practice. This is like an oath or ethical commitment that other professions use. Signing this demonstrates the individual’s commitment to implement the SVI framework in their practice whether that is preparing accounts of value or by using them.

**What’s the structure of the exam, what kind of questions are asked?**

The exam is split into 6 sections mirroring the modules of the popular Social Value and SROI Practitioner Training (accredited by SVI).

Section 1 – Key concepts and purpose of the SVI Framework

Section 2 – Identifying stakeholders and outcomes (Principles 1, 2 and 4)

Section 3 – Measuring the amount of changes (Principles 2 and 4)

Section 4 – Valuing changes to outcomes (Principle 3)

Section 5 – From outcomes to impact, how to avoid overclaiming (Principle 5)

Section 6 – Reporting & embedding social value into decision making (Principle 6 and 7)

These sections also align to the stages of doing an SROI and reflect a typical ‘impact management cycle’ therefore can be seen as a sequential and practical way to go through the principles. As each principle is raised, the exam includes the following types of questions:

- What is the purpose of this principle? What does it do? (Testing that applicants understand the reason why it exists and are able to link it back to the basic propositions underpinning the SVI Framework)
• Definition of some key terms (testing some basic technical understanding)
• What does application of this principle look like in practice (testing some technical and practical understanding of the principle)

SVI Associate status does not require applicants to make any calculations. All questions are either; multiple choice, True/False or ‘fill in the gaps’. One point is available for each question.

**How do I pass the exam?**

A pass mark of at least 70% is required in each section.

The questions are a mixture with approximately 80% of exam marks testing for the overall understanding of the principles and SVI propositions and 20% of exam marks are earned via responses to more technical questions about the application of the principles. The time limit for this exam is 90 minutes.

**Do I need to sit training before completing the exam?**

Different people like to learn in different ways, which is why we offer two routes to achieving your Social Value Associate Status.

If you feel like you would benefit from attending a course to help you develop and expand your knowledge, then the Accredited Social Value Training programs, delivered either in a classroom or through e-learning, can help prepare you for the exam.

If however, you already have the appropriate social value and impact management knowledge then the direct route allows you to register for the exam with Social Value International without taking our formal Accredited Training.

It is important to note if you are planning on progressing through the Social Value Professional Pathway, then attendance on a SVI Accredited Training is required in order to pass Level 2 or Level 3.

**How should I prepare for the exam?**

To become an Social Value Associate it is expected that you will have a reasonably well-developed theoretical understanding of social value, impact management and the SVI Framework for accounting for value guided by the Social Value Principles.

To develop this understanding, you can:
- Participate in an accredited training program
- Work through the SVI E-Learning Zone ‘Practitioner Package’
- Revise using the SVI Standards and Guidance
- Read and work through the ‘SVI Social Value and Impact Management Exam Details and
  o Reading list’

**How long does the Social Value Associate status last?**

Your status as a Social Value Associate will last 2 years.

To apply for SVI Practitioner status renewal, the applicant must hold a current membership of Social Value International or one of its joint member networks before the point of application.

The applicant must provide a document (no longer than one page of A4) outlining their continued work and development in social value.

**Are there further opportunities for career progression?**

Yes! Not only will this internationally recognized qualification demonstrate to current and future employers your knowledge and skills in social value and impact management, but SVI have also developed further opportunities for progression within our Professional Pathway.

After being awarded your Social Value Associate Status you can progress to become a Level 2 Accredited Practitioner or Level 3 Advanced Practitioner. You will also be eligible for delivering short Social Value, Impact Management or SROI courses accredited by SVI.

On top of this, SVI often sends exclusive opportunities to our pool of Associates and Accredited Practitioners.

**Do Social Value International offer any support or benefits to Social Value Associates?**

Social Value International offers all Social Value Associates guidance and support through exclusive SVI events and networking opportunities and our global team are on hand to support you throughout your journey.

You also be added to the SVI members area Practitioner Group, and will be searchable in the SVI directory.