Global Learning Providers' Conference 2017

F5 Performance Management

This document summarises the Question and Answer discussion which took place in the examiner's workshop at the Global Learning Providers' Conference on 26-27 April 2017.

- **Will there be a difference in the examining of graphs between paper and computer based exams (CBE)?**

  There are three areas in F5 under which graphs are relevant: linear programming, break-even analysis and decision trees. For both paper and computer based exams candidates will not be expected to draw these graphs, however questions can include these graphs and candidates will be expected to interpret them and comment on their construction.

- **In a CBE if candidates have a matching question which they get 75% right, they will still get no marks. Isn't this unfair?**

  This is accounted for under ACCA's psychometric model, which is calibrated for the difficulty of the questions which a candidate receives. This is a rigorous process which ensures a candidate will receive a fair result irrespective of the questions they received.

- **Why are seeded questions used in CBE?**

  ACCA uses seeding to get information about the difficulty of questions ahead of their use as marked content in exams. This is used to ensure each exam is of the appropriate difficulty and rigour and that each candidate receives a fair result. Seeding is for the benefit of all candidates.

- **Should candidates worry about the time spent on seeded questions which do not contribute to their mark?**

  Questions used in seeding have been through the same stringent quality assurance processes as the marked content has, so this content will not require an excessive amount of time to answer.

- **Where both paper and computer based exams are running, how should candidates prepare?**

  The material to be learned is the same, regardless of the exam format. CBE candidates must prepare and should practice the different question types they can expect to see and should familiarise themselves with the CBE functionality ahead of the exam. Candidates should make extensive use of the learning support produced by ACCA for CBEs which can be found on the website.

- **The change of exam format at F5 has meant there is a steeper learning curve up to P5 and there is a feeling that F5 has been watered down. Can you comment on this?**

  Pass rates have been consistent since the introduction of the CBE format, and it is not the case that F5 has been watered down. The skills required to pass may be slightly different but the exam is still as challenging as it has ever been. The well-written objective test questions in Sections A and B of the exam are designed to challenge candidates and in

particular the use of the performance analysis questions in section C of the exam are used to ensure that there isn't a bigger gap between F5 and P5.

- **The pass rate for March 17 was lower than previous sittings, are you able to comment on the specific reasons for this?**

  Across the board overall performance in March 17 was poorer than in other diets. Specifically for F5, performance on variance analysis was very badly attempted by the majority of candidates. Despite this topic being examined in F2 this continues to be an area where candidates struggle.

- **In relation to variance analysis is it the calculations or the narrative where candidates struggle?**

  The calculations are often not handled well, especially in relation to planning and operating variances. Candidates seem calculate standard variances only. This lack of calculation then results in candidates finding it difficult to provide appropriate discussion. Candidates often appear to have learned the relevant formulas but without detailed understanding of what the variances mean.

- **In relation to Section C questions, is it ok for candidates to use bullet points in their answers?**

  As long as their points are properly explained, and go beyond a few words, then bullet points can be an appropriate way for candidates to present their answers.