

## Global Learning Providers' Conference 2017

### P5 Advanced 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.

- **When Strategic Business Leader comes in, do you think this will make the P5 pass rate go up?**

*We hope so. Strategic Business Leader requires the same skills that a candidate needs to be successful at P5. The change may also help to remove any element of confusion that candidates have between P3 and P5.*

- **Would you recommend students take Strategic Business Leader before P5 or not?**

*The answer to this is likely to depend on candidates' particular circumstances, but as an initial feeling some candidates may find the skills required to complete Strategic Business Leader help to bridge the gap between F5 and P5.*

- **With not all questions being published, the examiner report is more crucial for learning providers but it lacks specifics about the questions. Could more specifics about the question requirements be included?**

*Because the questions are not all published ACCA do not go into specifics in the examiner report, but it does draw on the areas candidates are not performing well on and what the main issues are from the question. This tends to be fairly consistent from session to session.*

- **When the sample questions are published, there isn't necessarily an even split between the exam sessions. Would it be better to have two questions from each?**

*When selecting the questions to be published, the main consideration is to publish the ones which are most useful for illustrative purposes and also to show different types of questions in consecutive samples. It is likely to be less helpful to candidates and learning providers if there was a restriction to have two questions from each exam.*

- **ACCA's policy of not publishing all the questions is not helpful for learning providers and there is a feeling that it is the hard questions which are not getting published. Can this be changed?**

*ACCA are still publishing the same number of questions in a year as before. Rather than flood the website with all of the questions it was decided to focus on those questions which are the most useful. Indeed it is actually usually the case that the harder questions are published.*

- **Where questions ask for evaluation of performance measures how should candidates approach these types of requirements?**

*Candidates should ensure that they go through each measure provided in the scenario and actively engage with the specific measures provided, ensuring that they also consider any omissions in the information provided. Candidates should ensure that they consider*

*whether any other measures would be relevant or reasonable to include based on the context of the scenario. Where a requirement asks candidates to evaluate the performance measures their answer should be written to persuade the user of the appropriateness of the existing system or to demonstrate that the current system is not fit for purpose.*

- **Modified internal rate of return (MIRR) is covered differently in the P4 and P5 syllabi and exams. Can these be aligned?**

*There is some overlap between P4 and P5 and given the nature of MIRR it has to be included in the P5 syllabus. It is unlikely that this will be tested in the same detail as would be expected in P4 and so in P5 we would use only the formula method.*

- **Why are management accounting exams so badly answered and what can be done to improve pass rates?**

*Candidates need to provide answers which are more focussed and tailored to the requirements set. Many candidates seem to have a predisposition for rote learning or learning various formulae and models but are not able to engage with the information provided in the question and therefore do not provide an answer with sufficient depth. Candidates need to be reminded that the focus of the exam is on the evaluation of information and that evaluation needs to be relevant to the user in question. Very effective points can be made quickly and succinctly and candidates need to concentrate on adding clarity to their points.*

- **Many candidates are perhaps not confident enough to apply effective critical thinking, how can this skill be developed?**

*Candidates should ensure that they practice lots of past exam questions and specifically questions that require critical thinking should be brought into the classroom to demonstrate that this can be an effective approach to tackling a P5 question.*

- **Many candidates look at the model answer and lose confidence due to the fact that they don't believe they can reproduce this level of detail in the exam. Is this the level that is expected from candidates?**

*The model answers are produced to give candidates a complete solution which covers all the relevant technical points. This is not what is expected under exam conditions and for many questions there are many more marks available. Candidates should use the model answers as a guide and as a learning tool and should not be dissuaded by the level of detail provided.*

- **Some candidates, who perhaps work in industry, may bring their own ideas to the question resulting in a different approach or solution. Can these candidates still score well in the exam?**

*The important part of any candidate answer is the justifications applied to their recommendations or conclusions and that their ideas are relevant in the context of the question. As such candidates can pass and score well even if they are suggesting a different conclusion to the model answer.*

- **How can candidates ensure that they are scoring the professional marks?**

*Professional marks are available for the formal structure of an answer and therefore candidates should ensure they are using headings and subheadings with an appropriate introduction. Marks are awarded for the clarity of the answer and candidates should make sure that they are using professional language at all times and should take time to review their answer to consider if it is clear and understandable.*

- **For candidates where English is not their first language how would you recommend that they ensure they are replicating professional language?**

*Candidates should write simply and directly in a way that would be considered suitable in any professional environment.*

- **Is it possible to have a quantitative measure which is considered to be forward-looking?**

*In the March 2017 exam order book information was provided so candidates had an idea of what future business the company had planned. In addition EVA could also be considered to have forward-looking elements as it recognises the capitalisation of key activities like marketing spend to generate future benefits.*