

# COMPLETING THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS MODULE: THE RIGHT THING TO DO

THE CHOICES WE MAKE IN EVERYDAY LIFE CAN BE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD. BUT WHAT ABOUT IN THE WORKPLACE? MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE HERE CAN TAKE CONSIDERATION AND JUDGMENT. IN A WORD – ETHICS

In matters of ethics, the cases in which a right or wrong answer is absolute are few and far between. But what is a certainty is that ethics is everyone's responsibility – not just those at the top. This makes it even more important to develop and fine-tune your personal ethical awareness so that you can rely on your own judgment on those occasions where you might need to make a call on an important ethical dilemma.

ACCA's Professional Ethics module is not another exam – you get the chance to apply what you have learned in a case study where you experience an audit situation from two points of view: that of the auditor and the corporate financial accountant. And it is not a pass or fail exercise either – you simply have to demonstrate to ACCA that you have completed the module with consideration and provide a unique completion statement.

The module allows you to reflect on your own ethical behaviour and values in a safe environment, with no consequences other than you understanding more about your ethical judgment. The exposure you



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
THE PROFESSIONAL  
ETHICS MODULE AND  
HOW TO COMPLETE IT ►**

will get to a variety of informative and realistic scenarios will help you refine your sensitivity for recognising when ethical issues are at stake. You will also develop the professional confidence you need to ensure high standards of ethics are upheld at all times, even if that means speaking up about the behaviour of third parties such as colleagues, clients or suppliers.

Whether what you read prompts you to recall prior situations that you now realise had profound ethical implications, or to think differently about imminent decisions or actions you are due to take, completing the module should leave you with a keener sense of applying ethics at work.

The module uses current best practices in online learning and you can return to it at any time to 'top up' or check your awareness of professional ethics. A useful resource if you find yourself in an ethical dilemma.

Completion of the Professional Ethics module will become a mandatory membership requirement – no matter when you registered with ACCA – from 1 January 2013.

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A MANDATORY MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT – NO MATTER WHEN YOU  
REGISTERED WITH ACCA – FROM 1 JANUARY 2013**

# THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS MODULE

## WHAT'S INVOLVED?

### GEMMA HAZELDEN

AUDIT EXECUTIVE, GRANT THORNTON UK LLP, UK

**Q** **How did you approach the module?**

I did wonder whether there were right or wrong answers, particularly as ethics is quite a judgment area. I was slightly worried about what might

happen if I did answer a question wrong – would there be repercussions?

Once I had completed the module I realised that my concerns were unnecessary.

worry about what someone else might think.

**Q** **What is your advice to students who are putting off completing the module?**

If you have already left completing the module until you have to do it, my advice would be to make sure you take your time to read the scenarios properly and to spread out the module over a couple of days. You can go in and out of the module several times, so you can take your time completing it. Don't be worried about what answers you are choosing; as long as you can justify why you are making certain decisions, you will be fine.

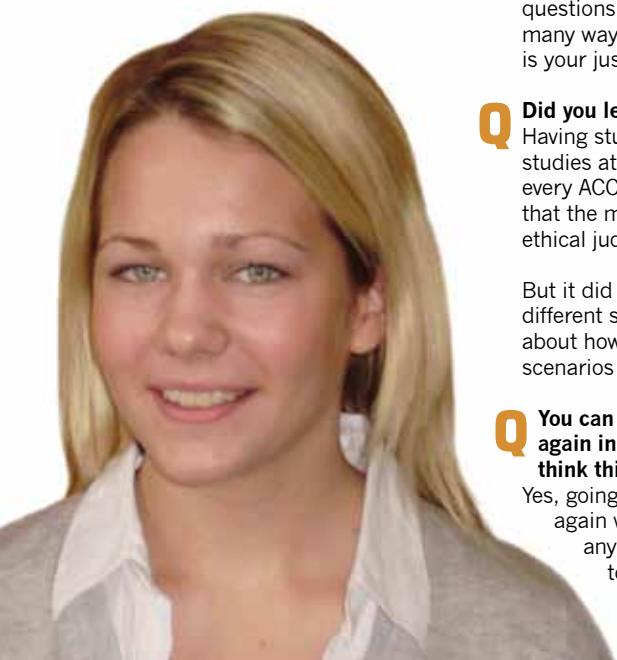
If you are thinking of leaving it until you have to do it, then it will definitely feel like another exam or test. I would recommend completing it as soon as you can to make sure you get the most benefit from it.

**Q** **Did you learn anything new?**  
Having studied ethics in business studies at school and in nearly every ACCA exam, I don't believe that the module changed my ethical judgments.

But it did make me consider different situations, and think about how I might deal with such scenarios in the future.

**Q** **You can access the module again in the future – do you think this will be of help?**  
Yes, going through the module again will help me if I have any concerns and want to get an unbiased opinion. It will give me guidance without having to

If you have an ethical dilemma or gained a better understanding of ethical behaviour and want to appear in an issue of *Student Accountant*, email us at [studentaccountant@accaglobal.com](mailto:studentaccountant@accaglobal.com) ►



NEW ACCA MEMBERS GEMMA HAZELDEN AND SAM ELLIS RECENTLY COMPLETED THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS MODULE. THEY GIVE US THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE MODULE AND ADVISE STUDENTS ON THEIR APPROACH

## SAM ELLIS

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER, SOLAR FUSION LTD, UK

### Q How did you approach the module?

Initially, I thought completing the Professional Ethics module might be like a test and there would be pass/fail scenarios. It was not like that at all – I came away from it thinking it was easy because all you have to do is give honest answers to the questions and take in the advice and information given.

### Q So what did you learn?

The module gave me a good overview of ethical theory and presented real-life examples of situations that are faced by auditors and finance teams. It has improved my understanding of ethical issues and, therefore, enables me to make the right decisions when presented with real-life ethical issues.

### Q Were there any surprises?

I answered the questions in the first section honestly and was surprised that some of them were “not right”. Feedback from the module offered good explanations of ethical factors I hadn’t considered and I am satisfied with the overall outcome.

### Q Having completed the module, how do you think this will help you in the future?

I have faced ethical situations a number of times in practice

when a client wanted certain outcomes that entirely benefited themselves and would often have given them unfair advantage. I always advised them of the damage they could do by obtaining unfair advantage, and that very often made them

### Q What does achieving membership mean to you?

ACCA membership means I have achieved the highest standard of financial education, which is essential for me to progress and develop as an accountant.

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think twice. The fact that I can return to the module will help if I encounter difficult ethical issues at work like this in the future, and I need a place to go to confirm that my thought processes and actions are the right ones.

### Q So what is your advice to students who are putting off completing the module?

Set aside three to four hours one evening or at the weekend to go through the module. This will give you time to absorb the information, to answer the questions thoughtfully and to watch the real-life scenarios.

At no point did it feel like an exam, so try and approach it with a relaxed frame of mind.

