

Guidance Notes for Irish Stream Students

JUNE AND DECEMBER 2009

If you live in the Republic of Ireland, or are an Irish national resident in another country, you may wish to sit papers adapted to reflect Irish legislation and practice.

The main purpose of these Guidance Notes is to highlight the modifications made to individual papers in the ACCA Qualification in order to reflect legislation and practice in the Republic of Ireland.

Modifications are made in one of two ways.

1 Adapted Papers

At the time of registration, you may choose to follow either the International, the Irish or the UK Stream for the accounting, auditing and law papers. The Irish Stream papers are adapted from the UK papers. They are checked by Inspectors who are conversant with Irish legislation and practice to ensure that they are suitable for Irish Stream students. Where there are differences in legislation and practice between the UK and the Republic of Ireland, the papers are adapted, to make them relevant to Irish students.

Papers which may be adapted in this way are:

Fundamental

Paper F3 (IRL) Financial Accounting
Paper F4 (IRL) Corporate and Business Law
Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting
Paper F8 (IRL) Audit and Assurance

Professional

Paper P2 (IRL) Corporate Reporting
Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance

As the five accounting and auditing papers are adapted from the main UK papers, you should refer to the UK Syllabus and Study Guide published both on the ACCA website at www.accaglobal.com. There is a separate Irish syllabus for the law paper (Paper F4 (IRL)). Students should obtain advice on any relevant additional reading from their tutors.

These Guidance Notes outline the relevant areas of difference between UK and Irish legislation and practice, and explain how papers F3, F4, F7, F8, P2 and P7 may be adapted for Irish Stream students.

2 Variant Papers

In certain subjects, it is more appropriate for students to sit a completely separate paper specifically written to encompass the law and best practice of the Republic of Ireland. These papers are called variant papers.

At the time of registration, you may choose whether to sit the UK papers or the Irish variants.

Separate Irish variant papers are available for:

Fundamental

Paper F6 (IRL) Taxation

Professional

Paper P6 (IRL) Advanced Taxation

The Syllabuses, Study Guides and reading lists for Paper F6 (IRL) and Paper P6 (IRL) are published on the ACCA website at www.accaglobal.com.

Please note that for the following papers you will be examined in accordance with the UK syllabus published on the website at www.accaglobal.com.

F1 Accountant in Business
F2 Management accounting
F5 Performance Management
F9 Financial Management
P1 Professional Accountant
P3 Business Analysis
P4 Advanced financial management
P5 Advanced Performance Management

EXAMINABLE LEGISLATION

Finance Acts

If you are sitting Paper F6 (IRL) Taxation or Paper P6 (IRL) Advanced Taxation in 2009, the Finance Act 2008 is examinable.

Companies Acts

If you are sitting Paper F3 (IRL) Financial Accounting, you should note that the Companies Act 1963 and the Companies (Amendment) Act 1986 are examinable.

If you are sitting Paper F4 (IRL) Corporate and Business Law, Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting, Paper F8 (IRL) Audit and Assurance, Paper P2 (IRL) Corporate Reporting or Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance, you should note that the following additional legislation is also examinable: Companies (Amendment) Act 1982, Companies (Amendment) Act 1983, Companies Act 1990, Companies (Amendment) Act 1990, Companies (Amendment) Act 1999, Companies (Amendment) No 2 Act 1999, Company Law Enforcement Act, 2001, Companies (Auditing and Accounting) Act, 2003, Investment Funds, Companies and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2005, and Investment Funds, Companies and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2006. Knowledge is also required of the Registration of Business Names Act 1963.

Students should note that Statutory Instrument No.201 of 1992 "The European Communities (Companies: Group Accounts) Regulations 1992" and No. 116 of 2005 "European Communities (IFRS and miscellaneous amendments) Regulations 2005" is examinable in Papers F7 (IRL) and P2 (IRL). References to the Companies Acts 1963 to 2006 should be assumed to include these regulations.

Students sitting Paper F4(IRL) Corporate and Business Law should also note that while they may be required to answer questions on the general principles of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1986 and the Companies (Amendment) Act 1990, they will NOT be required to have a knowledge of the detailed requirements of these Acts for this paper.

UK Financial Services Act 1986

Irish stream students are not required to be aware of the requirements of the UK Financial Services Legislation. The Financial Services Act 1986 is not therefore examinable in Paper F4 (IRL) Corporate and Business Law, Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting, Paper F8

(IRL) Audit and Assurance, Paper P2 (IRL) Corporate Reporting or Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance. The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 is, however, now examinable.

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING DOCUMENTS

If you are sitting any of the following papers - Paper F3 (IRL) Financial Accounting, Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting, Paper F8 (IRL) Audit and Assurance, Paper P2 (IRL) Corporate Reporting, Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance - you will be examined on the UK Accounting and Auditing Standards (International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland)).

You should refer to the examinable documents published in *student accountant* to identify the material which may be tested in your selected paper(s). This list is updated every 12 months and appears in the February issue. The examinable documents are also published on the website at www.accaglobal.com and are updated in January each year.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

Paper F3 (IRL) Financial Accounting

Questions relating to the accounts of limited companies should be answered in accordance with the main provisions of the Companies Act 1963 and the Companies (Amendment) Act 1986. Since these provisions are broadly the same as those of the Companies Act 2006 in the UK, no major adaptations are made to the UK paper.

Paper F4 (IRL) Corporate and Business Law This is an adapted paper based on the legal framework of the Republic of Ireland. It is adapted from the English law paper (Paper F4(ENG)). You will find full details of the Syllabus, Study Guide and reading list on the ACCA website at www.accaglobal.com.

Paper F6 (IRL) Taxation and Paper P6 (IRL) Advanced Taxation

These are variant papers based on the tax systems of the Republic of Ireland. They are completely separate papers from the UK papers with a separate syllabus and separate lists of publications. You will find full details of the Syllabus, Study Guide and reading list on the ACCA website at www.accaglobal.com.

The Finance Act 2008 will be examinable at both the June and December 2009 examination sessions.

Papers are set in Euro.

Students should know the definition of reckonable income for PRSI, Health contributions/levy purposes.

Advance Corporation Tax (ACT) is not examinable but Dividend Withholding Tax (DWT) may be examined.

They should also have a knowledge of the different PRSI classes in particular classes A and S.

Finally they should know the taxation provisions applying both to short-term and long-term (including pensions) Social Welfare benefits.

Students should note that terminal loss relief for sole traders is examinable.

For Paper P6 (IRL) Advanced Taxation, candidates should note that marks will be specifically awarded for format of solutions, letter writing and report writing skills.

Paper F8 (IRL) Audit and assurance and Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance

These two papers will be adapted to incorporate differences between legislation and practice in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland.

The main differences are in the following areas:

- i requirements of the Companies Acts relating to the responsibilities, powers, duties, appointment, reporting requirements, removal and retirement of auditors;
- ii Companies Acts requirements relating to the contents of the audit report
- iii The exception from the requirement to have accounts audited - Companies (Amendment) No 2 Act 1999 and subsequent amendments.

Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting and Paper P2 (IRL) Corporate Reporting

These papers will be adapted to incorporate differences between legislation, taxation and accounting practice in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. The major differences are in the following areas:

- i the Irish system of taxation and its treatment in company accounts
- ii the tax treatment of Irish capital allowances with regard to finance leases
- iii Companies Act requirements in respect of distributable profit
- iv legal requirements relating to merger accounting
- v requirements of the Companies Acts relating to the preparation and content of annual financial statements, including disclosure requirements and the content of directors' reports
- vi Companies Act requirements relating to capital reductions and reorganisations
- vii Companies Act requirements relating to receivership, examinership and liquidation
- viii control and regulation of mergers and takeovers.

FORMAT OF THE EXAM PAPERS

The formats of the exam papers for Paper F3 (IRL) Financial Accounting, Paper F4 (IRL) Corporate and Business Law, Paper F6 (IRL) Taxation, Paper F7 (IRL) Financial Reporting, Paper F8 (IRL) Audit and Assurance, Paper P6 (IRL) Advanced Taxation, Paper P7 (IRL) Advanced Audit and Assurance and Paper P2 (IRL) Advanced Corporate Reporting are the same as the formats of the exam papers for the UK Stream equivalents.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

To help you with your studies you should refer to *student accountant* for:

- Articles by the Examiners on important topics in the syllabus
- Articles of general educational value written by a range of contributors
- Examinable documents which contain useful guidance on individual exam papers eg
 - syllabus clarifications;
 - list of examinable documents for the Accounting, and Auditing papers;
 - changes in the format of the exam paper, with reasons for the change

The examinable documents are updated every 12 months and appear in the February issue of *student accountant*. The examinable documents are also published on the website at www.accaglobal.com and are updated in January each year.

- Examiners' reports for UK and adapted papers are published in the April and October issues of *student accountant* and on the ACCA website, which describe the general performance in all papers at the previous exam sitting, highlighting in particular the most common errors made, and problems encountered by students
- Examiners' reports for variant papers are usually posted onto ACCA's website, www.accaglobal.com, in February and August each year.
- ACCA's 'Student Handbook' and the 'Qualification Syllabus', which contain, amongst other things, ACCA's exam regulations, detailed examination syllabuses and relevant study references for each paper.

Irish Stream students may obtain further information and advice from ACCA's Irish Office. The contact detail is as follows:

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The Office is open from 9.00am until 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Staff are available to help students who may have queries or problems ranging from exemption from ACCA's examinations, experience for membership, training schemes, vacancy lists, information on colleges, details on Open Learning and district/functional society activities amongst others.