

The ACCA logo is a red square with the letters 'ACCA' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a modern building's interior, featuring a curved, multi-level structure with a blue and yellow color scheme. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is clean, professional, and futuristic.

ACCA

Common Project Report Errors

ACCA PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT APPRENTICESHIP
(LEVEL 7)

Think Ahead

Common Project Report Errors

When writing your answers to the four Project Report (PR) questions, make sure that you avoid these common errors.

1. CHOOSING AN INAPPROPRIATE SCENARIO

One of the main reasons that apprentices fail the PR is that they base their responses on a routine or simple scenario where the skill or behaviour that they are describing and evaluating is too low level and does not achieve the Level 7 standard.

Take your time choosing an appropriate scenario for each of your four PR responses. A different scenario needs to be selected for each response. Make sure that you choose a scenario that:

- Clearly shows the skill or behaviour being tested
- Is not just a routine part of your job that is fairly straightforward
- Clearly shows your role (not just that of your team or manager)
- Gives you scope for solid evaluation and critical examination
- Provides you with an opportunity for reflection on lessons learned

Double check that your chosen scenario provides you with enough material to score marks in the marking rubric. Pay particular attention to the evaluation and critical examination sections. Remember that these sections make up 70 of the 100 marks available in each of your PR responses.

2. INCLUDING TOO MANY SCENARIOS

Apprentices sometimes fail because they have written about a number of scenarios within a single PR response. Including too many scenarios means that there is too much breadth and not enough depth to the response.

When answering the question on building relationships, the scenario you choose should focus on building a single relationship – not a description of numerous relationships that you have built. The same applies to the question on continuous improvement – focus on a single theme where you have improved, not a list of all the areas that you have worked on as part of your job. This is important, because if you do include too many scenarios you will not be able to evaluate and critically examine them to the correct level of detail within the word limit. The key is one scenario to a detailed level, not numerous scenarios at a superficial level.

3. UNCLEAR DESCRIPTION OF APPRENTICE'S ROLE IN SCENARIO

Sometimes apprentices do not explain their own role clearly. This makes it difficult for the assessor to determine whether the apprentice has achieved competence in the skill or behaviour.

Make sure that you clearly explain your role and your actions within your PR responses. Make it very clear what you did as an individual. Avoid scenarios where your involvement was limited, and the skill or behaviour was actually achieved by your manager or your team. You are being personally assessed in the Project Report on whether you have achieved competence, so make sure you explain your actions and the judgements that you made clearly.

4. THEORETICAL RESPONSE NOT BASED ON WORK EXPERIENCE

Apprentices sometimes fail as the response they have provided is based on theoretical knowledge that they have gained through a training course or through studying for an ACCA exam.

The PR is based on your work experience. The skills and behaviors being assessed must be displayed by you in your job role and not through theoretical study. Make sure that your response is very specific to a work-related scenario.

5. LIMITED LINK TO PROFESSIONAL SKILL/ BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes apprentices perform poorly because the PR response does not link sufficiently to the professional skill or behaviour that is being assessed in the question.

Check that your response covers the skill or behaviour in the question. Questions on ethics and integrity especially can sometimes cause problems. The ethics and integrity question response should be based on an ethical dilemma. Basing your response to the ethics and integrity question on how you have complied with data protection legislation or kept information confidential would not normally be an ethical dilemma, meaning that your response would not link to the skill and your marks would be limited. Check the definitions of each skill and behaviour in [Appendix 1 of the Guidance for Apprentices](#) on the website to ensure that your answer meets the definition.

6. LIMITED JUDGEMENT IN SCENARIO

Apprentices can perform poorly when their PR responses do not adequately cover the judgements that have been made.

It is important that you check your draft PR responses against the [marking rubric](#) before you submit it. You need to include details of the judgements that you made. This should be included in the evaluation section of your PR response.

7. LACK OF CRITICAL EXAMINATION

Apprentices can perform poorly when their PR responses do not include a critical examination.

It is important that you check your draft PR responses against the [marking rubric](#) before you submit it. You need to include a critical examination of what went well, what went badly and what you might do differently next time (links to lessons learned below). This should be included in the critical examination of lessons learned section of your PR response.

8. LACK OF REFLECTION ON LESSONS LEARNED

Apprentices can perform poorly when their PR responses do not include reflection of lessons learned.

It is important that you check your draft PR responses against the [marking rubric](#) before you submit it. You need to include lessons that you have learned from the experience and include thoughts on what you would do differently in the future. There is more scope for this when you choose a scenario in which things have not always gone well. This then gives you opportunities to consider why things did not go well and how you could have prevented this. Lessons learned should be included in the critical examination of lessons learned section of your PR response.

9. EXCEEDING WORD COUNT LIMIT

There is an overall 4,000 word count limit for the PR. This is specified in the Level 7 Accountancy/Taxation Professional Apprenticeship assessment plan. As a guide, to help you avoid breaching the overall word count limit, we advise the each of the four PR responses is between 700 and 1,000 words in length. PR responses that are below 700 words are unlikely to be of the required depth or contain the required detail to score enough marks to be competent. Having a PR response that is well above 1,000 words means that you are in danger of having to reduce the length of another response to meet the overall word count limit. Make sure that you check your responses are below the overall 4,000 word count limit before submission.

10. POOR COMMUNICATION

We assess the communication skill in each of the four PR responses through the marking rubric. As part of assessing communication we assess the structure of the response, the language used and the conclusion reached. We advise that you check the following before submission:

- Check you have not included your name, your firm's name or named any clients or colleagues in your responses. This is to maintain confidentiality.
- Check that you have not made excessive use of jargon that an assessor may not understand. It is acceptable to use terms that would be recognisable by accountants, but avoid using jargon or acronyms that are specific to your firm or industry as these may not be known to the independent assessor who may then find it difficult to understand your PR response.
- Make sure that your PR responses are written in a professional tone and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Check that what you have written makes sense.
- Use the headings in the rubric to structure your responses. You can include these headings in your response to remind yourself of what should be covered in each section. Remember that the headings are:
 - Background and context
 - Description of role, responsibilities and actions
 - Evaluation of professional skill/ behaviour being assessed
 - Critical examination of lessons learned and Conclusion.

