

Think Ahead

ACCA



F6 Taxation (UK) –

a guide to reflection
for retake students

ACCA's retake guide for F6 is a fantastic resource designed especially to help you if you are retaking F6. Hopefully you have already had a chance to take a look at this but if not you can find it by clicking on the image above.

The first step towards success in your retake is to understand where you went wrong through a process of reflection...

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So, how do you reflect on what went wrong last time?

The key is to review the examiner's reports, which can be found [here](#). We suggest that at the very least you take a look at the last four – but of course you can look at as many as you like!



Understand where you went wrong

Students usually fail an exam because they do not have the necessary knowledge OR they have poor exam technique OR a combination of both – the first step to success in studying for your retake is to understand the reason you failed.

In this section we will help you to understand where you went wrong and then in the next two sections we will take you through what you should do to ensure you pass your retake exam.

- Review the last four available [examiner's reports](#) for F6 (UK) in detail

➤ These provide you with feedback on students' performance in each exam, highlighting problem areas that students need to improve on and telling you what the examining teams are looking for – work through the reports carefully, trying to identify whether the issues highlighted were issues for you in your exam

Remember that students often make the same mistakes exam sitting after exam sitting and you will see that the examining teams talk about the same key knowledge areas and the same issues around exam technique time and time again. Really think about whether you have made these mistakes as, once you know what caused you to fail, you can work on improving that area. We will show you how in the next two sections



Examiner's reports

What are the examiner's reports?

The reports are produced after each exam sitting and provide an analysis of students' performance – what they did well and what they didn't do so well.

They tell you which parts of the exam students found challenging and identify some of the key areas where students appear to lack knowledge as well as where they have demonstrated poor exam technique. The reports refer to specific questions in the exam, looking in detail at areas which caused difficulty. They also provide lots of useful tips.

How will the reports help you if you are retaking your exam?

If you review several of these reports you will notice that there are some key themes which the examining team comment on again and again. Typically students fail for the same reasons exam sitting after exam sitting.

For you to succeed in your retake you need to try to understand where you went wrong last time and then plan what to do differently next time round.

What are we going to do now?

In this document we are going to show you how to use the examiner's reports in reflecting where you went wrong last time.

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Step 1 – Read the last four examiner's reports

Read through each of the last four examiner's reports for F6.

- ✓ As you go through them note down any themes you notice which come up more than once.
- ✓ Also try to note down any areas where the examining team is providing advice – for example, you may see in the June 2016 report there is some advice to candidates about studying the entire syllabus and not relying on 'question spotting' in a few selected syllabus areas.

Examiner's report

F6 (UK) Taxation
June 2016



Specific Comments (from paragraph 2 of the report)

It was very pleasing to see that once again almost all candidates attempted all of the questions. Candidates preparing for the next examination of F6UK are advised to work through the specimen paper, past exam papers and sample questions discussed here and to carefully review how each of the correct answers were derived. Section A questions aim to provide a broad coverage of the syllabus, and future candidates should aim to revise all areas of the F6UK syllabus, rather than attempting to question spot. The following question is reviewed with the aim of giving future candidates an indication of the types of questions asked, guidance on dealing with exam questions and to provide a technical debrief on the topics covered by the specific questions selected.



Take note

You may need to read through each of the reports a couple of times – but to get you started you might note down:

*Breadth of syllabus and
question spotting*

You will see this pops up several times, for example in the June 2016 report.

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Now use this page to note down other themes or advice you notice which come up... include a reference to the report – so the exam sitting and the question number, the theme and then a bit of context (see example below)

Reference	Theme	Context
J16 General comments	Breadth of syllabus and question spotting	Section A questions aim to provide a broad coverage of the syllabus, and future candidates should aim to revise all areas of the F6UK syllabus, rather than attempting to question spot.

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Step 2 – Common themes identified by the examining team over the last four exam sittings

Now compare your list with our list over the following pages – how many did you identify?

Spend some time looking through the reports again with the table below at your side, to make sure you understand where each of the points comes from. You will see we have also included an additional column 'What to do differently next time' and we will talk about this in Step 4.

Reference	Theme	Context	What to do differently next time
J16 General comments	Breadth of syllabus and question spotting	Section A questions aim to provide a broad coverage of the syllabus, and future candidates should aim to revise all areas of the F6UK syllabus, rather than attempting to question spot.	ACCA tests the breadth of the syllabus as well as depth and so it is important that you do not leave any syllabus areas out in your revision.
J16 Section A		This was a difficult question, but demonstrates the need to cover the whole syllabus. Even if the specific rules (and quarter days) were not known, some logical thought would have eliminated some, if not all, of the alternatives.	Practise section A objective test questions from the approved content provider question banks to help ensure you have breadth of knowledge. Where you are not sure of the answer use elimination to narrow down the options available to you.
M16 Section A		This was a fairly challenging question, but should demonstrate to candidates the need to cover the whole syllabus during their studies, including administration.	Watch the study support video Gaining the easier marks for some further tips on answering questions in section A. Make sure you have worked through all of the technical articles and study support videos related to F6 as these cover the areas that students have found challenging in the past as well as new subject areas.
M16 Section B Q2	Superfluous detail and overly lengthy workings	Part (b) required the default surcharge implications of the late submission of VAT returns and payment of the related VAT liabilities. This was reasonably well answered, although answers were often far longer than necessary for the available marks.	Ensure that you use the mark allocation as a guide to the number of points you need to make in your answer. The markers cannot award more marks than those available and so by writing unnecessary detail you are wasting valuable exam time.



Take note

Note that this table is based on the examiner's reports for June 2016, March 2016, December 2015 and September 2015 – if you are sitting exams from December 2016 you may find some different references.

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Reference	Theme	Context	What to do differently next time
J16 General comments	Breadth of syllabus and question spotting	Section A questions aim to provide a broad coverage of the syllabus, and future candidates should aim to revise all areas of the F6UK syllabus, rather than attempting to question spot.	ACCA tests the breadth of the syllabus as well as depth and so it is important that you do not leave any syllabus areas out in your revision.
J16 Section A		This was a difficult question, but demonstrates the need to cover the whole syllabus. Even if the specific rules (and quarter days) were not known, some logical thought would have eliminated some, if not all, of the alternatives.	Practise section A objective test questions from the approved content provider question banks to help ensure you have breadth of knowledge. Where you are not sure of the answer use elimination to narrow down the options available to you.
M16 Section A		This was a fairly challenging question, but should demonstrate to candidates the need to cover the whole syllabus during their studies, including administration.	Watch the study support video Gaining the easier marks for some further tips on answering questions in section A. Make sure you have worked through all of the technical articles and study support videos related to F6 as these cover the areas that students have found challenging in the past as well as new subject areas.
M16 Section B Q2	Superfluous detail and overly lengthy workings	Part (b) required the default surcharge implications of the late submission of VAT returns and payment of the related VAT liabilities. This was reasonably well answered, although answers were often far longer than necessary for the available marks.	Ensure that you use the mark allocation as a guide to the number of points you need to make in your answer. The markers cannot award more marks than those available and so by writing unnecessary detail you are wasting valuable exam time.
M16 Section B Q3		This was well answered, but many candidates produced extremely long answers for what should have been a simple set of workings. For example, the capital allowance was simply a 100% annual investment allowance on the purchase of a new asset and did not require a detailed capital allowances computation.	Determine which calculations you need to do before you start writing your answer and think carefully about the most efficient way to lay out your workings– do not be tempted to calculate things unnecessarily. Use marginal rates where appropriate to avoid unnecessarily lengthy calculations.
M16 Section B Q5		The question was fairly well answered, although far too many candidates wasted time on workings which were much longer than necessary.	Have a look at the “Five minutes with the examining team” video for F6 which provides some useful guidance on this, and other, points.
D15 Section B Q3		This section was well answered, but candidates need to appreciate that where requirements are just for one mark or two marks, then only very short precise answers are required.	

Continued ►

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Reference	Theme	Context	What to do differently next time
D15 Section B Q5	Superfluous detail and overly lengthy workings (cont.)	Given that the husband's personal allowance restriction would be reduced, the answer was simply the amount of interest at 60%. However, half page answers were quite common. Once again, working at the margin (where appropriate) could have saved an enormous amount of time.	
S15 Section B Q2		A number of candidates simply copied out (and often explained) the taper relief table from the tax rates and allowances. This was a time consuming approach to gaining one mark.	
S15 Section B Q5		Candidates need to appreciate that their answers should be as clear as possible and workings should be clearly shown, although these should be kept to the minimum required. For example, only one working was needed for the property income.	
S15 Section B Q5		Candidates are advised that the use of marginal tax rates can often be used to answer such requirements and this is good practice for those candidates who are planning to attempt the advanced taxation paper.	
J16 Section B Q2	Answering the requirement	This demonstrates the need to relate answers to the information given rather than just writing everything known on a particular subject.	Read through each requirement twice to ensure you understand what you need to do. Do not be tempted to spend time writing everything you know about a topic as this will not gain marks.
M16 Section B Q2		Although there were a number of satisfactory answers to this section, answers often strayed from VAT into discussing corporation tax aspects of groups, which was not relevant to the requirement set.	Make a plan before you start writing your answer – note down the points you want to include and then be strict with yourself and do not stray from your plan.
D15 Section B Q4		Although candidates generally managed to eventually reach the correct answer, far too many listed every conceivable piece of information that a VAT invoice should contain – rather than focusing on the requirement. But unfortunately, they were not answering the requirement which was solely concerned with payments and due dates.	

Continued ►

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Reference	Theme	Context	What to do differently next time
S15 Section B Q4	Answering the requirement (cont.)	Although many candidates demonstrated satisfactory knowledge here – a large number wasted a significant amount of time by also performing calculations for the three existing partners, despite the requirement only concerning the new partner.	
D15 Section B Q2	Planning	This section should have been quite straightforward to answer, but it needed some planning beforehand. The majority of candidates wasted time by calculating the tax liabilities under each option, rather than just applying (an obvious) marginal rate of 40% to the profit reduction.	Ensure you plan the necessary calculations for each part of the question before writing your answer. If you don't plan there is a risk that you will produce too many detailed calculations, wasting valuable time and not gaining any additional marks.
D15 Section B Q6		Although not computationally difficult, the question did require some prior thought.	Watch the study support video Gaining the easier marks to obtain some further tips around planning for this exam as well as the "Five minutes with the examining team" video for F6.
S15 Section B Q2	Clear workings	Although many candidates demonstrated satisfactory knowledge here – workings were often badly laid out, hard to follow, and repeated the same points. In addition, many candidates failed to use proper workings and accordingly became confused mid-way through their calculations.	Make sure that all of your workings are clearly laid out and referenced so that they are easy to follow. Consider asking a peer or tutor to check through an answer to a practice question to see if they can follow your workings. Review how the workings are laid out in model answers and try to follow the approach they take.
S15 Section B Q4		Once again, many candidates' workings were not well-laid out. Many candidates prepared tax computations for both years for which figures were provided, before realising that all that was required was a loss memorandum.	

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Step 3 – Where did you go wrong?

Have you identified where you went wrong last time?

- Lack of knowledge
- Poor exam technique
- A combination of the two

If you really are not sure, then assume it was a combination of the two, and move on to the next section where we will help you to plan the time between now and your retake.



Take note

Now you need to be honest with yourself and think about which of the statements in the table at step 2 reflect where you may have gone wrong.

Use the space below to note down which of these areas you think could be the reason you failed last time you sat F6.

Some of the points are related to exam technique and some are about a lack of knowledge.

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Step 4 – How to change your approach

Having identified where you think you went wrong you now need to do something about it!

As you will have seen from the retake guide, the key to changing your approach and improving your chances of success next time is to practise questions. This is absolutely vital.



Take note

Refer back to the statement(s) you included at step 3 and compare this (these) to the table we provided at step 2. Make a note below of 'What to do differently next time' based on the statement(s) reflecting where you went wrong last time. So, for example if you have noted down

Breadth of syllabus and question spotting

At Step 3 above, then note down below

ACCA tests the breadth of the syllabus as well as depth and so it is important that you do not leave any syllabus areas out in your revision.

Practise section A objective test questions from the Approved Content Provider question banks to help ensure you have breadth of knowledge. Where you are not sure of the answer use elimination to narrow down the options available to you.

Watch the study support video [Gaining the easier marks](#) for some further tips on answering questions in section A.

Make sure you have worked through all of the [technical articles and study support videos](#) related to F6 as these cover the areas that students have found challenging in the past as well as new subject areas.

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And finally...

For further guidance and tips around how to improve your chances of success with your retake, return now to the retake guide.

Reflect – Other hints to help you understand where you went wrong



Tips for success

Join events in the ACCA Learning Community

- ✓ ACCA regularly hosts events in the Learning Room which you can access via the Learning Community. These are planned around your exams and cover technical topics as well as more general exam technique.

Take advantage of any new resources provided specifically for you, to help you with your retake

- ✓ ACCA is continually producing new resources developed specifically to help you pass your exam whether it be the first time or a retake, so keep an eye on [Student Accountant](#), and the [technical articles](#) on the website (where you will find not only specific syllabus areas covered but also exam technique articles and study support videos).
- ✓ If you haven't done so already make sure you have personalised your edition of [Student Accountant](#) to ensure you receive advice specific to your exam.



Why did you fail?

Marginal fail?

- ✗ If you scored a marginal fail (between 45% and 49%) last time it is likely that you failed because of poor exam technique.

Very low mark?

- ✗ If you scored a very low mark (perhaps under 25%) last time then it is more likely that your mark is due to lack of knowledge.

Did you struggle to come up with answers?

- ✗ It's more likely to be a lack of knowledge if you felt that you were either guessing answers or had struggled to come up with ideas.

Did you run out of time?

- ✗ It's more likely to be poor exam technique if you ran out of time, perhaps missing out whole questions or parts of questions or not finishing the exam.

REFLECT

PLAN

QUESTION PRACTICE

FINAL TIPS

APPENDIX - LINKS