

This document explains the workspace and response options used in Strategic Professional CBEs, and gives guidance on how to best use the exam functionality to navigate through the exam and answer questions.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIC PROFESSIONAL CBEs LIKE?

Strategic Professional CBEs use the same kind of technology found in today's workplace, including specially designed spreadsheet, word processing and presentation slide response options. This means the exams closely reflect how a modern finance professional works, boosting your employability skills.

The following section of the guide tells you more about the workspace and response options, and how they work.



THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTION PRACTICE

Question practice is key to exam success. Use ACCA's <u>Practice Platform</u> to practice constructing answers for Strategic Professional CBEs, using the functionality available in the exam.

The workspace and response options

The following pages provide information on the workspace item, such as available functionality and guidance which should be followed when constructing your response within the workspace.

1 WORKSPACE OVERVIEW



Your exam consists of one case study. This case study is split into three tasks, each of which have their own workspace.

A workspace is the area within the computer-based exam which contains all of the case study content, the tasks and the response options within which you will construct your responses.

All workspace response options will be expert marked.

The workspace contains introductory information about the case study on the right hand side of the screen.

The left hand side of the screen lists a series of buttons under the headings Exhibits, Pre-seen information, the Task and Response Options. When the buttons are selected, the relevant windows are opened and displayed on-screen.

There is a splitter bar which can be used for you to see more or less of the left or right hand side of the screen, as required.

Exhibits

- These contain new information relevant to the case study that you will need to answer the tasks.
- An exhibit may be in the format of a spreadsheet or a PDF which contains text or images.

Pre-seen information

 This is background information on the case study that you will already have familiarised yourself with.

The Task

 This is the task you are expected to complete in the workspace.

Response options

- You will be presented with response options within which to construct your answer.
- A response option may be in the format of:
 - A word processor
 - A spreadsheet
 - Slides.

Each of these response options are explained later in this document.

Important:

Some tasks may specify which response option you should use to answer it, however if this is not specified you can choose which of the response options within which to construct your answer

2 WORKSPACE FUNCTIONALITY

Windows

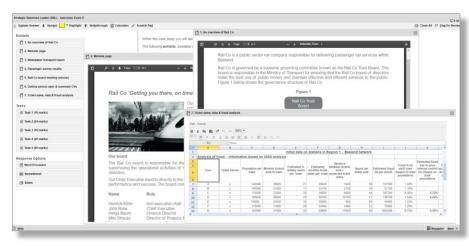
- All exhibits, the pre-seen information, the task and the response option windows can be moved around the screen and resized as required.
- You can bring any window to the front, either by selecting the relevant button on the left hand side of the screen, or by selecting the window itself.
- Some windows will require you to scroll vertically and/or horizontally.
 Always scroll to the bottom of each window and where relevant, to the far-right of the window to ensure you have viewed all content.
- You can close each window individually or close all windows at once by selecting Close All from the top toolbar. This minimises the open windows to the left-hand side of the screen. Any answers you have entered into the response options will be saved, and you can re-open them and change your answers at any time by reselecting the relevant response option button(s).

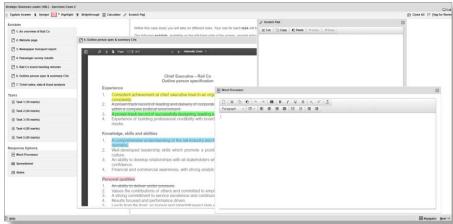
Highlight and Strikethrough

- If you want to select text in a PDF exhibit to highlight or strikethrough it, you need to select the 'text tool' button \(\sum_{\text{\text}} \) at the top of the exhibit.
- If you close windows individually or use the Close All button, any highlighting or strikethrough you have applied will be saved for when the window is re-opened.

Copy and Paste

 You can copy and paste between different elements of the workspace by using the Ctrl-C (Copy) and Ctrl-V (Paste) shortcuts.





- Copy and paste is possible between each of the following areas of the workspace:
 - Response options (eg word processor to slides or spreadsheets, or between different slides).
 - Scratch Pad.
- You can also *copy from* the following workspace areas to those listed above:
 - Introductory information
 - Exhibits
 - Pre-seen information
 - The task

however you cannot copy text from other areas into them.

- When pasting into a spreadsheet response from elsewhere in workspace you must double-click the cell or select the formula bar.
- Formatting will be retained in most cases, however will not be retained for example, when copying from spreadsheet to word processing responses/Scratch Pad.
- Copying from word processing responses/Scratch Pad to a spreadsheet, will copy the text into one spreadsheet cell.

Practice makes perfect

Use ACCA's <u>Practice Platform</u> to try out the functionality outlined on this page and perfect your preferred techniques before the day of the exam.

NOTE:



When using PDF exhibits in the real exam, and you want to select text to highlight, strikethrough or copy, you need to select the 'text tool' button.

3 WORD PROCESSOR RESPONSE OPTIONS

You will either be presented with:

- A blank word processing area within which you enter your answer; or
- A pre-formatted area (a template) within which you should complete your answer.

Functions

- A number of word processing functions are available via the tool bar.
- You can add a selection of currency symbols to your answer by selecting
 \$ Symbol on the top toolbar.



Toolbar icon(s)	Function	Additional guidance/shortcuts		
	Reset	Care should be taken with this icon. Only select this if you want to clear your full response and start again. You will be presented with a message asking you to confirm if you wish to proceed.		
* D D	Cut Copy Paste	Ctrl-X (Cut) Ctrl-C (Copy) Ctrl-V (Paste)		
4 4	Undo Redo	Ctrl-Z (Undo) Ctrl-Y (Redo) These allow you to undo/redo your last action(s). Note: If your last action was resetting your response, Undo will restore a Word Processing response (but will not restore a Spreadsheet response so care must be taken when resetting responses.)		
H	Find and Replace	Ctrl-F		
B / ⊻ \$	Bold Italic Underline Strikethrough	Ctrl-B (Bold) Ctrl-I (Italic) Ctrl-U (Underline)		
x, x	Subscript Superscript			
<u>I</u> x	Clear Formatting			
Paragraph •	Paragraph	You can choose from six font sizes.		
₩ -	Tables	Standard table features including cell, row and column functions.		
EEBB	Left Align Centre Right Align Justify			
= }=	Bulleted List Numbered List	You can enter text as either bulleted or numbered lists.		
₫ 瑾	Decrease Indent Increase Indent			
	Select All	Ctrl-A (no toolbar icon available).		

4 SLIDE RESPONSE OPTIONS

- You will be presented with a number of slides and for each one, an additional slide allowing you to enter your supporting speaker notes.
- In each slide you will either be presented with:
 - A blank response area within which you enter your answer; or
- A pre-formatted area (a template) within which you should complete your answer.
- Each slide will contain the same functionality as is available in the Word Processing response options. See Word Processor Response Options above.

5 SPREADSHEET RESPONSE OPTIONS

You will either be presented with:

- A blank spreadsheet within which you enter your answer; or
- A pre-formatted area (a template) within which you should complete your answer.

Spreadsheet instructions

- The spreadsheet response can only be made up of one worksheet. It is not possible for you to add another worksheet.
- If you have been provided with a preformatted response (template) some data within the spreadsheet may be protected so you cannot change it.
- You cannot enter or delete rows or columns within the spreadsheet. If you wish to re-arrange your answer please use the copy and paste functions.
- If you wish to add cell borders or styles, you can do this by:
 - Right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells, or
 - Selecting the Format Cells function from the Format menu.

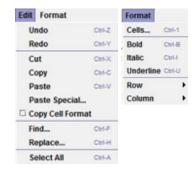
You must select the style and/or colour and then the selected border (eg Outline, Left, Horizontal).

Please only use cell colours in your answer if necessary.

- Selecting cells and using the drag handle to fill other cells (where no formulae are applied) copies and pastes the exact contents of the selected cells. In an example where 1 and 2 have been entered as numbers, the result is 1, 2, 1, 2 instead of the sequence being extended (eg 1, 2, 3, 4).
- You can add a selection of currency symbols to your answer by selecting
 Symbol on the ten tenler.
 - \$ Symbol on the top toolbar.
- Guidance on commonly used spreadsheet functions and formulae is provided below.

Spreadsheet functions

- A number of spreadsheet functions are available via:
 - the Edit and Format menus:



- the toolbar:



The toolbar functions are outlined below:

Toolbar icon	Function	Additional guidance/	
	Reset	Care should be taken with this icon. Only select it if you want to clear your full response and start again.	
		You will be presented with a message asking you to confirm if you wish to proceed.	
% a	Cut Copy Paste	Ctrl-X (Cut) Ctrl-C (Copy) Ctrl-V (Paste)	
		If you are cutting, copying and pasting between cells within the spreadsheet response, you can also use the right click menu options.	
⋖	Format painter	This allows you to copy the format from a selected object or text and apply it to other objects or text.	
10 04	Undo Redo	Ctrl-Z (Undo) Ctrl-Y (Redo)	
		These allow you to undo/redo your last action(s).	
		Note: If your last action was resetting a Spreadsheet response, Undo will not restore your response so care must be taken when resetting responses.	
100% 🕶	Zoom	This allows you to reduce/increase the display of the document.	
11 ▼	Font size		
B / <u>U</u>	Bold Italic Underline	Ctrl-B (Bold) Ctrl-I (Italic) Ctrl-U (Underline)	
A	Font colour		
<u> </u>	Cell fill colour	Please only use cell colours in your answer if necessary.	
		This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells.	
11 11 11	Left Align Centre Right Align		

Toolbar icon	Function	Additional guidance/ shortcuts	
.00	Number formats General Custom	This allows you to format cell numbers. Select 'Custom' to access a number of formatting options.	
	0.00 #,##0 #,##0.00	This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells.	
G	Currency formats General Custom £###0;[Red] £#,##0 £#,##0.00;£#,##0.00 £#,##0.00;[Red] £#,##0.00 ##0;##0 ##0;[Red] #,##0 ##0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;##0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0.00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00 ###0,00;###0,00	This allows you to select a currency format. Select 'Custom' to access a number of formatting options, including the \$ symbol. This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells.	
%	Percentage formats 0% 0.00%	This allows you to display the cell in a percentage format. Select 'Custom' to access a number of formatting options. This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells.	
1/2	Fraction formats # ?!? # ??!??	This allows you to display the cell in a fraction format. Select 'Custom' to access a number of formatting options. This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells.	
©	Date/Time formats dd/mm/yyyy dd-mmm mmm-yy h:mm AM/PM h:mm:ss AM/PM hh:mm:ss dd/mm/yyyy hh:mm mm:ss [h]:mm:ss	This allows you to select a date/time format for the cell. Select 'Custom' to access a number of formatting options. This function can also be accessed by right-clicking the cell and selecting Format Cells	

6 COMMONLY USED SPREADSHEET FORMULAE

- You must use the = symbol to start a formula in a cell.
- Guidance on commonly used formulae and examples of these are provided in the table below.

Function	Syntax	Description	Example formulae
Sum	=SUM(number1,[number2],)	Adds everything you specify as arguments.	=SUM(B2:B8) adds all the numbers in cells B2 to B8.
	number1 (required) – the first number argument to be added. number2,, (optional) - additional number arguments to be added.	An argument can be, for example, a number, range, cell reference.	=SUM(A1, A3, A5) adds the numbers in cells A1, A3, and A5.
Average	=AVERAGE(number1,[number2],)	Provides the average of everything you specify as arguments	=AVERAGE(B2:B15) provides the average of the numbers in cells B2 to B15.
	number1 (required) – the first number, cell reference or range for which you want the average		
	number2,, (optional) – additional numbers, cell references or ranges for which you want the average		
Square root	=SQRT(number)	Returns a positive square root	est =SQRT(J11)- returns the number 2 if the number in cell J11 was 4
	number (required) – the number for which you want the square root.		
Power	=POWER(number,power)	Returns the number raised to a power	=POWER(3,2) returns the figure 9 (3 squared)
	number (required) – the base number (must be a real number)		=POWER(27, 1/3) returns the figure
	power (required) – the exponent to which the base number is raised.	Can also be used to apply multiple roots.	3 (cube root of 27)
			= POWER(81,1/4) returns the figure 3 (fourth root of 81)
Count	=COUNT(value1,[value2],)	Counts the number of cells that	=COUNT(C4:C8) – if 3 of the cells between C4 and C8 contain numbers, the result will be 3
	value1 (required) – the item, cell reference, or range you want to count numbers within.	contain numbers.	
	value2, (required) - additional numbers, cell references or ranges to be counted.		
Round	=ROUND(number,num_digits)	Rounds a number to the requested number of digits	=ROUND(C4, 2) – this would round the number in cell C4 to 2 digits
	number (required) – the number you wish to round		
	num_digits – the number of digits which you wish to round the number argument to.		
Log	=LOG(number,[base])	Returns the logarithm of a	=LOG(J11,2) – if the number in cell J11 was 8, returns a logarithm of 8 with base 2 (ie 3)
	number (required) – the positive real number for which you want the logarithm	number of the base you specify	
	base (optional) – base of the logarithm. Note - if base is omitted it is assumed to be 10.		
NPV	=NPV(rate,value1,[value2],)	Calculates the net present value	e =NPV(0.1,B12:E12) – discount values in cells B12-E12 at a discount rate of 10%, with B12 being Year 1
	rate (required) – the discount rate given as a decimal	of an investment based on a supplied discount rate and a	
	value1 (required) – the item, cell reference, or range you want to discount cash flows within.	series of future cash flows.	
	value2, (required) - additional numbers, cell references or ranges to be discounted.		
IRR	=IRR(values,[guess])		=IRR(B15:F15,0.12) — calculates the internal rate of return of cells B15-F15 using 0.12 as an estimate, with B15 being Year 0.
	values (required) – the range of cash flows for which you want the internal rate of return.	Calculates the internal rate of return for a series of cash flows.	
	guess (optional) — a rate you think is close to the result of the IRR given as a decimal.		

Function	Syntax	Description	Example formulae
Natural log	=LN(number) number (required) — the positive real number for which you want the natural logarithm	Returns the natural logarithm of a number	=LN(B5) – if the number in cell B5 was 1, returns the natural logarithym of 1 (ie 0)
е	=EXP(number) number (required) – the number for which you want the constant e to be raised to the power of	Returns the constant e raised to the power of a given number	=EXP(D7) – if the number in cell D7 was 2, returns e raised to the power of 2 (ie 7.3891)
Cumulative normal distribution	=NORMSDIST(number) number (required) – the number for which you want the cumulative normal distribution	Returns N(d), the cumulative normal distribution functions needed for the Black-Scholes model of option pricing	=NORMSDIST(G13) – if the number in cell G13 was 1.4, returns the cumulative normal distribution for 1.4 (ie 0.9192)
MIRR	=MIRR(values,finance_rate,reinvest_rate) values (required) — the range of cash flows for which you want the modified internal rate of return finance_rate (required) — the rate used on the cash outflows reinvest_rate (required) — the rate used on the cash inflows	Calculates the modified internal rate of return for a series of cash flows. The finance and reinvestment rates will usually be same rate — the cost of capital	=MIRR(B25:F25,0.12,0.12) — calculates the modified internal rate of return of cells B25–F25 using 0.12 as the finance rate and the reinvestment rate, with B25 being Year 0

Exam functionality explained

NAVIGATION

- The task number you are viewing is displayed in the top display bar. You can hide or restore this display by selecting

 □.
- You can navigate between screens by selecting Next→ or ←Previous or by clicking
 on a task number from the Navigator or Item Review screens.
- You can revisit tasks and change your answers at any time during the exam.

FLAG FOR REVIEW

- If you wish to revisit/review any of the tasks later in the exam, click P Elag for Review.
- Click the button again to remove the flag.

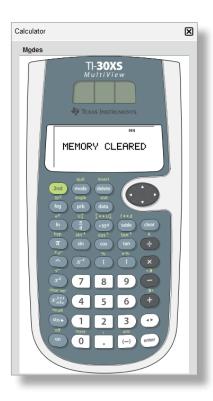
HELP FEATURE

- Click **?** Help to access:
 - A copy of the exam instructions.
 - Help and guidance on workspaces.

CALCULATOR

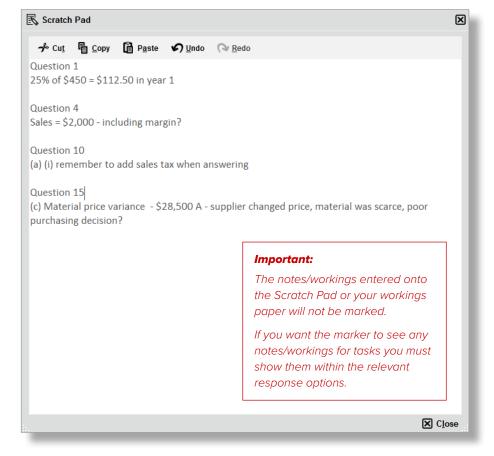
 You have the option to use the on-screen standard or scientific calculators by selecting Calculator.

Note that you are also permitted to use your own calculator providing it does not have the facility to store or display text.



WORKINGS/SCRATCH PAD

- You may use an on-screen Scratch Pad to make notes/workings by selecting Scratch Pad.
- You can cut and copy text from the Scratch Pad and paste into your response options using the Ctrl-C (Copy), Ctrl-X (Cut) and Ctrl-V (Paste) shortcuts, or the on-screen buttons. Note: When pasting into a spreadsheet response you must double-click the cell or select the formula bar.
- The Scratch Pad retains all notes/ workings entered for all workspaces.
 These are available for the duration of the exam but will not be submitted for marking.
- You will also be provided with paper for notes/workings should you prefer to use it. This will be collected at the end of the exam and must not be removed from the exam room.



SYMBOL

 You can add a selection of currency symbols to your answers by selecting

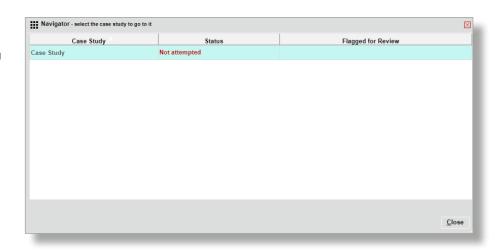
\$ Symbol on the top toolbar.

NAVIGATOR SCREEN

- This screen allows you to jump to any task in the exam.
- It also allows you to see the status of each task and whether it has been viewed, attempted or flagged for review.

EXITING THE EXAM

- The exam will automatically end when the allocated time has been reached.
- If, however, you wish to end the exam before this time you must:
 - Navigate to the **last task** in the exam.
 - Click <u>N</u>ext→.
- This takes you to the Item Review screen:



Item Review screen

- This screen gives you an opportunity to see the flag and completion status of all tasks and to review your answers before you exit the exam.
- You can select individual tasks you wish to revisit, or quickly access groups of questions from this screen.
- During the item review period
 Navigator is not available however
 you can navigate to tasks by
 selecting Next→, ← Previous
 Review Screen
- Once you end the exam, you cannot revisit the case study.

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