

FA Study support guide

▪ Plan ▪ Prepare ▪ Pass

Financial Accounting (FA)



▪ Plan ▪ Prepare ▪ Pass

Welcome to your guide helping you to study for your Financial Accounting exam

Why use this guide?

- ✓ Structured approach to show you how to succeed
- ✓ Signposted resources and how to use them
- ✓ Tips for success to help you through your studies
- ✓ Interactive clickable checklists to keep you on track

This guide is applicable for exams from September 2018 to August 2019.

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Stages of study

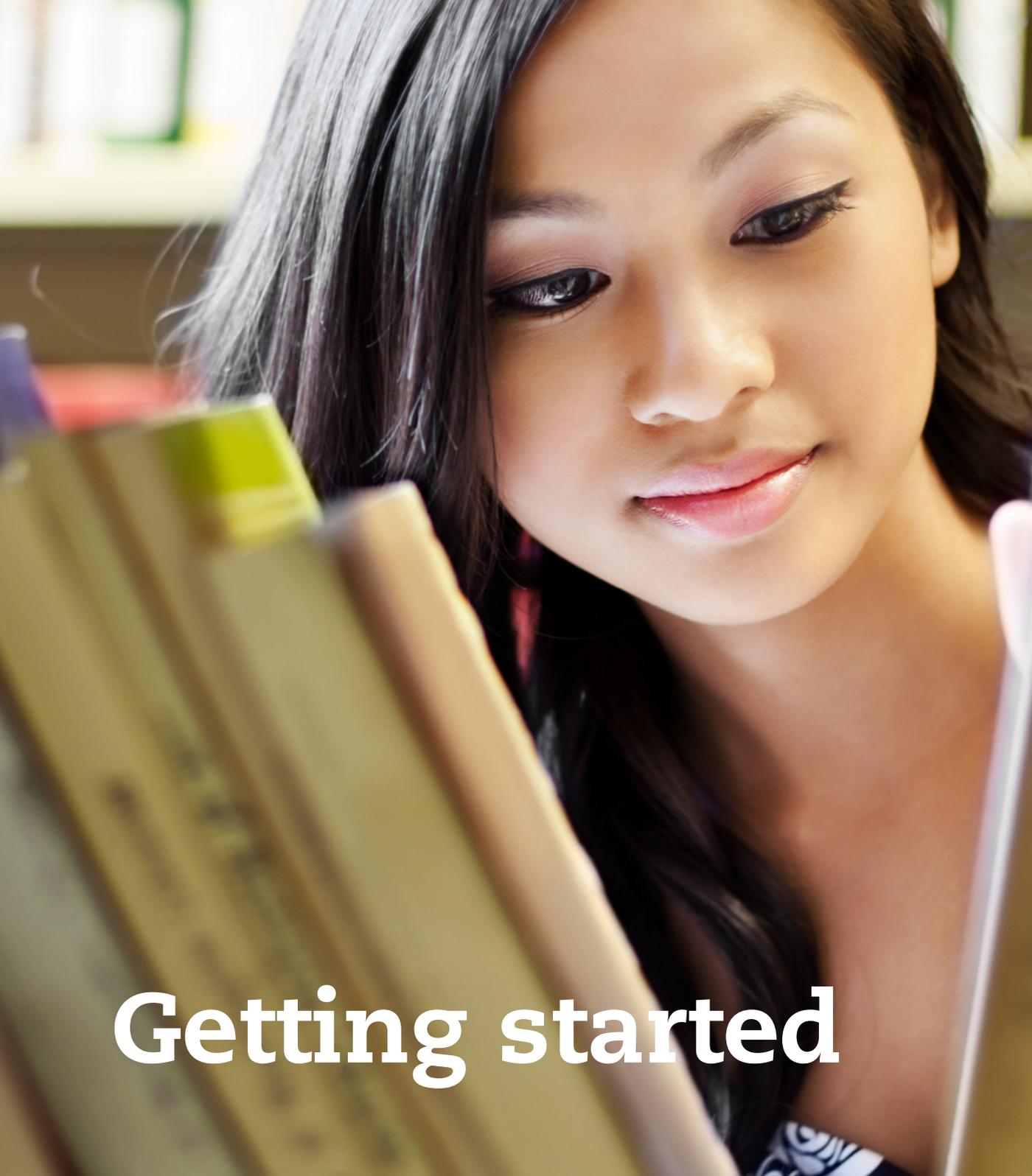
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Getting started

Your checklist

- Enter for your exam
- Buy an Approved Content Provider study text and question & answer bank
- Draw up your study plan
- Get to know your exam

Getting started – Tips for success

We strongly recommend that you buy an FA [Approved Content Provider](#) Study Text and Question and Answer Bank to ensure exam success. These provide:

- the most up to date content and syllabus coverage
- tests, quizzes and other support designed to help you prepare for your exam
- past exam questions updated for changes to the syllabus, question style and exam format as well as practice questions and answers and full mock exams to ensure you are fully prepared for your exam

You may want to consider attending a face to face or online tuition course with one of ACCA's [Approved Learning Partners](#) for all or part of your studies or signing up for [ACCA-X](#) for all or part of your learning.



Students who use approved content materials are more likely to pass than those who don't.



Tips for success

- ✓ In most places you can now take FA by our flexible on-demand CBEs. Search for a local [on-demand CBE centre](#) using our centre list and contact them directly to book your exam on a date that suits you.
- ✓ Use the [ACCA Learning Community](#) to link up with fellow students around the world studying the same exam as you – get tips, join discussions and share ideas and advice. You can also access live Q&A sessions and presentations.
- ✓ Spend some time familiarising yourself with the free resources available via the [exam resource finder](#) on the [student section](#) of the ACCA website – we will provide you with specific guidance on when and how to use these resources during the relevant stages of study.
- ✓ Remember to personalise your edition of [Student Accountant](#) so you receive FA specific information as you need it.
- ✓ If you think you could benefit from building your English language skills to help you succeed in your exam take a look at the [BPP English Language support for ACCA](#) which is a free online programme specifically designed to support you through your exams.

Getting started – Draw up your study plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 5	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 6	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 7	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 8	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 9	REVISION						
Week 10	REVISION						
Week 11	REVISION						
Week 12	REVISION AND FINAL PREPARATION						

Evening study period
 Daytime study period
 Other commitments

Study plan checklist

- Calculate the number of weeks from now until your exam date and draw up a plan – see the example to the left and a possible proforma for you to use on the page 7
- You may need to add or take away weeks depending on your own circumstances
- Block out days/half days/evenings already committed to family/social events
- Plan study periods – evenings/half days/full days, aiming for roughly one evening/half day per chapter of your study text
- If possible leave a four week period for the revision and final preparation phases

Getting started – Draw up your study plan



Tips for success

When drawing up your study plan

- ✓ Be realistic and consider when you are best able to study – maybe early mornings work better for you or perhaps shorter study periods more often.
- ✓ Once you have prepared your plan stick to it!
- ✓ Consider building in an extra study period after every few chapters to review and consolidate your learning.
- ✓ Take a 5 – 10 minute break every hour to help maintain your motivation and concentration.
- ✓ Use this plan whether you intend to self-study through all the phases or mix with some tuition from an [Approved Learning Partner](#).



Students who use ACCA's learning support resources achieve higher pass rates than those who don't.

Getting started – Your study plan

Print out and write down when you will study, relax and revise!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							
Week 6							
Week 7							
Week 8							
Week 9	REVISION						
Week 10	REVISION						
Week 11	REVISION						
Week 12	REVISION AND FINAL PREPARATION						

Evening study period
 Daytime study period
 Other commitments

Colour boxes in your preferred highlighter colours.

Getting started – Get to know your exam

- Review the [syllabus and study guide](#) and the [examinable documents](#) for FA / FFA

➤ These give you an understanding of the aims and objectives of the exam, learning outcomes and exam structure as well as a comprehensive list of the documents examinable for the current exam sittings

- Scan the FA [specimen exam](#)

➤ The specimen exam provides you with a clear picture of how FA will be assessed and how the exam is structured as well as the likely style and range of questions that you could see in the real exam

- Review the [examining team's guidance](#)

➤ Using these resources at the start of your studies will help you understand the focus of the exam by concentrating on the exam structure, question style, exam technique and tips as well as pitfalls to avoid – see extracts from the examiner's approach article over the page

- Review the [examiner's reports](#) from the last four sittings

➤ These provide feedback on students' performance after each exam session, highlight problem areas that students need to improve on and tell you what the examining teams are looking for; these are critical to your success in passing FA – take a quick look at [FA – A guide to using the examiner's reports](#) for an overview of some of the most common challenges students face

- View the study support video [FA/FFA MTQ](#) advice

➤ View this video for pointers to some of the key skills you will need to pass FA as well as more information about the exam structure and exam technique

- Scan the [exam technique and syllabus updates](#) articles

➤ The articles here cover answering multiple-choice questions, computer-based exam technique and how to prepare for knowledge modules exams – you will need to come back to these during the revision phase but they will provide you with guidance that will be helpful in attempting questions throughout the learning phase

Getting started – What the examiner has said about FA (extract from the 'Examiner's guidance – Structure of paper' article)



Comments on techniques to answer questions:

OWN FIGURE RULE

You will only be penalised once for making a mistake, even though this mistake may have knock-on consequences for other responses in your answer.

The CBE multi-task questions are computer marked. The questions are designed so that each response is independent – ie it is not reliant on your answer to an earlier part of the question.

This is demonstrated [in this example](#) from the sample paper, where candidates are asked to produce a consolidated statement of profit or loss. The calculation of profit attributable to the owners of the parent company is examined by asking candidates to select the correct formula from a drop-down box. The answer to this is not dependent on any of the other number entry responses included in the consolidated statement.

COMPLETING PROFORMAS

For candidates sitting the CBE exam proformas will be provided as necessary. You should be aware of a number of conventions involved when completing these.

The proformas will include the terms 'less' and 'add' as illustrated in [this proforma statement of profit or loss](#).

This means that you do not need to show any minus figures in the number entry boxes (for example for cost of sales).

You may distinguish between revenue and expenses by using either the terms 'add' or 'less' or by using positive and negative figures however it would be helpful to adopt a consistent approach.

- The basis on which numerical information is expressed will be made clear. Make sure that you have noted the terms in which the information is expressed. In the illustration above the answer column is headed up with \$000. This means for example that \$200,000 would simply be entered as 200. If the answer was expressed in \$ (rather than \$000) \$200,000 would be entered as 200000. (Notice that the full figure is entered but a comma is not required.)

- Use of positive and negative responses. Care must be taken when entering positive and negative responses. This issue is particularly relevant to CBE multi-task questions on the statement of cash flows where the requirement extends to a two-step process. An illustration is given [here](#).





Learning phase

Your checklist

- Work through the control sheet which has been designed to give you a structured approach to your learning phase to ensure you:
 - gain the knowledge you need; and
 - learn how to apply that knowledge to pass the exam

Learning phase – Get the most out of your control sheet

“

Students who use ACCA’s learning support resources achieve higher exam scores than those who don’t.

”

Use the control sheet relevant to the Approved Content Provider’s materials you have purchased:

- ✓ BPP Learning Media – page 13
- ✓ Kaplan Publishing – page 14

Tick the box **Content** in the control sheet once you have:

- ✓ Read through the introduction to the chapter
- ✓ Actively read and understood each chapter’s content
- ✓ Noted any additional commentary and exam focus tips provided
- ✓ Worked through and understood examples and illustrations of concepts given

Tick the box **Quiz/Test** in the control sheet once you have:

- ✓ Attempted the quiz at the end of the chapter (if you are using BPP material) or the test your understanding questions throughout the chapter (if you are using Kaplan material)

Tick the box **Questions** in the control sheet once you have:

- ✓ Attempted the questions referred to in the Question Bank (if you are using BPP materials) or the practice questions at the end of the text (if you are using Kaplan materials)

Tick the box **ACCA related resources** in the control sheet once you have:

- ✓ Read / viewed the related ACCA article(s) / video(s) signposted
- ✓ Note that ACCA produces new articles and videos throughout the year and so you should always check the [technical articles](#) page on the website to ensure you have seen all of the related resources

Learning phase – Tips for success



Tips for success

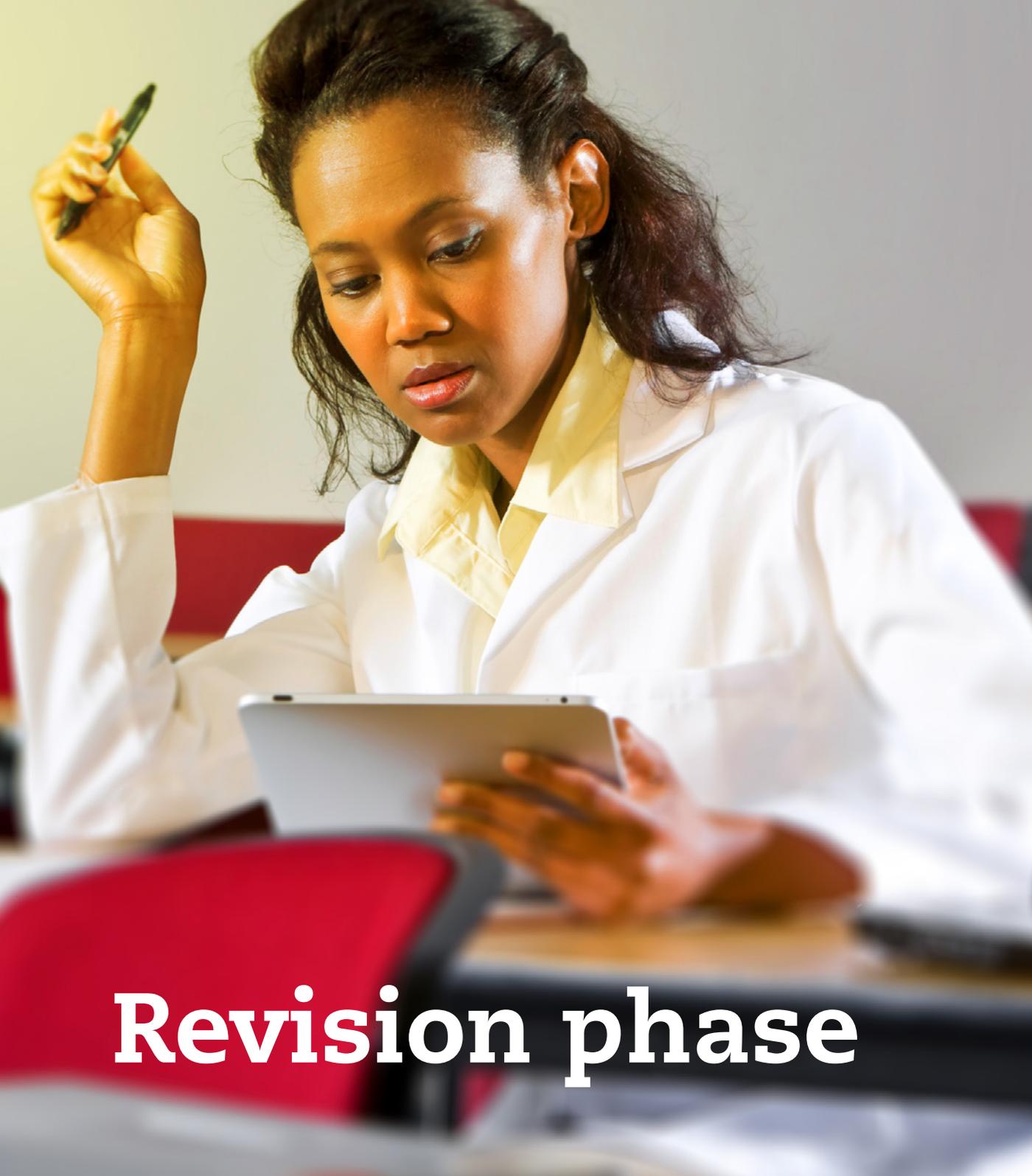
- ✓ Actively read the material – ask yourself ‘do I understand this?’ If not re-read and re-work examples – if you still struggle, make a note and come back to it.
- ✓ Scan headings before going into the detail to give you an idea of the content first and consider highlighting, underlining, making notes, drawing pictures or mind maps – whatever helps you to remember.
- ✓ Consider using the additional resources provided by the [Approved Content Providers](#) including for example passcards or pocket notes to help you remember the key knowledge areas.
- ✓ Always work through the questions signposted – it is vital that you practise questions throughout the learning phase as this will ensure that you are applying the knowledge you learn as you progress.
- ✓ Make sure you use the ACCA resources to help your understanding – these give you real insight to help you in your exam.
- ✓ If you find you are not covering all of the material in each study period, build some extra time into your study plan – everyone works at a different pace.
- ✓ Keep an eye on [Student Accountant](#) for any relevant articles.
- ✓ Visit the [ACCA Learning Community](#) regularly to view new video content and to join online study events.
- ✓ There are [PER \(Practical Experience Requirement\) objectives](#) associated with specific syllabus areas and, if possible, you should try to gain experience in these alongside your studying as this will help you to put your studies into a workplace context and reinforce what you have learned.
- ✓ Try to read a good quality business journal or newspaper regularly and use this to help bring your studies to life by linking your learning into what you are reading.

Learning phase – Control sheet for BPP Learning Media

Chapter	Content	Quiz/Test	Questions	ACCA related resources
	✓ tick the boxes below when complete			
Introduction				
1 Introduction to accounting				
2 The regulatory framework				
3 The qualitative characteristics of financial information				
4 Sources, records and books of prime entry				
5 Ledger accounts and double entry				• Trade receivables and revenue
6 From trial balance to financial statements				
7 Inventory				• Adjustments to financial statements
8 Tangible non-current assets				
9 Intangible non-current assets				
10 Accruals and prepayments				• Adjustments to financial statements
11 Provisions and contingencies				
12 Irrecoverable debts and allowances				• Adjustments to financial statements
13 Sales tax				
14 Control accounts				
15 Bank reconciliations				
16 Correction of errors				
17 Incomplete records				
18 Preparation of financial statements for sole traders				• Discounts
19 Introduction to company accounting				• Adjustments to financial statements
20 Preparation of financial statements for companies				
21 Events after the reporting period				
22 Statements of cash flows				• Cash flow statements
23 Introduction to consolidated financial statements				• Preparing simple consolidated financial statements
24 The consolidated statement of financial position				• Preparing a group statement of financial position
25 The consolidated statement of profit or loss				• Preparing simple consolidated financial statements
26 Interpretation of financial statements				

Learning phase – Control sheet for Kaplan Publishing

Chapter	Content	Quiz/Test	Questions	ACCA related resources
	✓ tick the boxes below when complete			
Introduction				
1 Introduction to financial reporting				
2 The regulatory framework				
3 Double entry bookkeeping				
4 Recording basic transactions and balancing the ledgers				
5 Returns, discounts and sales tax				• Discounts
6 Inventory				
7 Non-current assets: acquisition and depreciation				
8 Non-current assets: disposal and revaluation				
9 Intangible non-current assets				
10 Accruals and prepayments				
11 Receivables				• Trade receivables and revenue
12 Payables, provisions and contingent liabilities				
13 Capital structure and finance costs				
14 Control account reconciliations				
15 Bank reconciliations				
16 The trial balance, errors and suspense accounts				
17 Preparing basic financial statements				• Adjustments to financial statements
18 Incomplete records				
19 Statement of cash flows				• Cash flow statements
20 Interpretation of financial statements				
21 Consolidated statement of financial position				• Preparing simple consolidated financial statements • Preparing a group statement of financial position
22 Consolidated statement of profit or loss and associates				



Revision phase

Your checklist

- Revisit areas you struggled with during the learning phase
- Ensure you are confident with the knowledge needed to pass the exam
- Make sure you are able to apply that knowledge in questions

Revision phase – Question practice

- Exam-standard question practice is vital now
- Work through as many questions as possible and all mock exams included in the [Approved Content Provider](#) question and answer banks – remember these are best for question practice as they include past exam questions updated for syllabus and format changes
- Work through the [specimen exam](#) – this will provide you with a clear picture of what the exam will look like making sure you know what to expect on the day



Tips for success

- ✓ Consider blocking time in your study plan for specific questions or mock exams to ensure you cover everything.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to attempt questions you have already done – especially the ones you found tricky first time round.
- ✓ It is really important that you do some questions in full, to exam time – time management is often an issue and the more you prepare yourself the better you will perform in the exam.
- ✓ To keep motivation high, break some questions into individual parts, write plans or notes for some parts and do others in full.
- ✓ Work through the answers carefully – pay attention to areas you got wrong and understand where you went wrong – it is better to do a few questions well than lots of questions badly.
- ✓ Try not to look at the answers before really attempting the question – you won't be able to do this in the real exam!

Revision phase – Key resources

- Review the [examining team's guidance](#) again in the context of what you have learnt
- Remind yourself of areas that students often struggle with and obtain tips on how to ensure you do not make the same mistakes by reviewing the [examiner's reports](#) from the last four sittings again, this time working through the [FA – A guide to using the examiner's reports](#) to really benefit from the valuable advice provided
- View the study support video [Paper FA/FFA MTQ advice](#) again
- Read the [exam technique and syllabus updates articles](#) – this time linking into what you have learnt
- Make sure you read the [study skills articles in Student Accountant](#) covering topics such as how to overcome exam anxiety as well as checking the [Student Accountant Hub](#) for any new technical articles related to FA



Students who use 5 minutes with the examining team videos are more likely to pass than those who don't.



Tips for success

- ✓ Don't give up easily – if you really cannot understand something then consider posting a question on the [ACCA Learning Community](#) – if you found it difficult so will others.
- ✓ Don't miss the [specimen exam](#) – this is a full example of the exam in CBE format and replicates the exam environment – attempt in full to time.
- ✓ Think about purchasing a [Practice Test](#) – practice makes perfect and, even better, you get personalised feedback diagrams highlighting your strengths and weaknesses, so you can refine your revision. See the [Practice tests video](#) on the student section of the website for more information on how useful these can be for your revision.

Revision phase – What the examiner has said about FA (extract from December 2017 examiner's report)

Comments on section B:

In this section candidates are required to prepare detailed answers which test their understanding and ability to draft financial statements. Candidates must ensure that they use the correct format to present their answers and know how to apply various accounting techniques. Neat and logical workings should always be presented so that, even if the final answer is wrong, marks can be awarded for the correct method used.

The following comments explain how candidates might be able to improve their future performance when answering questions that test the preparation of a consolidated statement of financial position:

- ✓ Carefully read through the information provided.
- ✓ Always ensure that you show your workings and reference them to the figures in the financial statements.
- ✓ Give the financial statements its correct title i.e. 'Consolidated statement of financial position at (date)'.
- ✓ Use the correct format for a consolidated statement of financial position, there is usually one mark available for presentation.
- ✓ The assets and liabilities of the parent and the subsidiary are added together on a line-by-line basis.
- ✓ Calculate the goodwill and clearly show the workings.
- ✓ The investment in the subsidiary (shown in the parent's SoFP) is replaced with the goodwill figure.
- ✓ The share capital and share premium balances are not added together; only the balances related to the parent are used in the consolidation.
- ✓ The group share of the subsidiary's profit is calculated and added to the groups retained earnings. Clearly show workings for the calculation of retained earnings.
- ✓ If there is intra-group trading, then adjust the receivables and payables that cancel each other out.
- ✓ Any dividends paid by the subsidiary to the parent should be adjusted, as the net effect to the group is zero.
- ✓ Adjust for any unrealised profits on sales of inventory between the parent and the subsidiary.

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Final preparation

Your checklist

- You are clear on the knowledge you need to pass the exam as well as how to apply that knowledge
- You have the skills you need to pass the exam – eg time management

Ensure you are familiar with:

- the exam format
- the style of questions
- the way the marks are allocated
- what specific syllabus areas are likely to be tested and in which questions

Final preparation – Tips for success

“ An extract from the syllabus and study guide for FA: ”

The syllabus for Paper Financial Accounting (FA)/FFA, introduces the candidate to the fundamentals of the regulatory framework relating to accounts preparation and to the qualitative characteristics of useful information.

The syllabus then covers drafting financial statements and the principles of accounts preparation. The syllabus then concentrates in depth on recording, processing, and reporting business transactions and events.

The syllabus then covers the use of the trial balance and how to identify and correct errors, and then the preparation of financial statements for incorporated and unincorporated entities.

The syllabus then moves in two directions, firstly requiring candidates to be able to conduct a basic interpretation of financial statements; and secondly requiring the preparation of simple consolidated financial statements from the individual financial statements of group incorporated entities.

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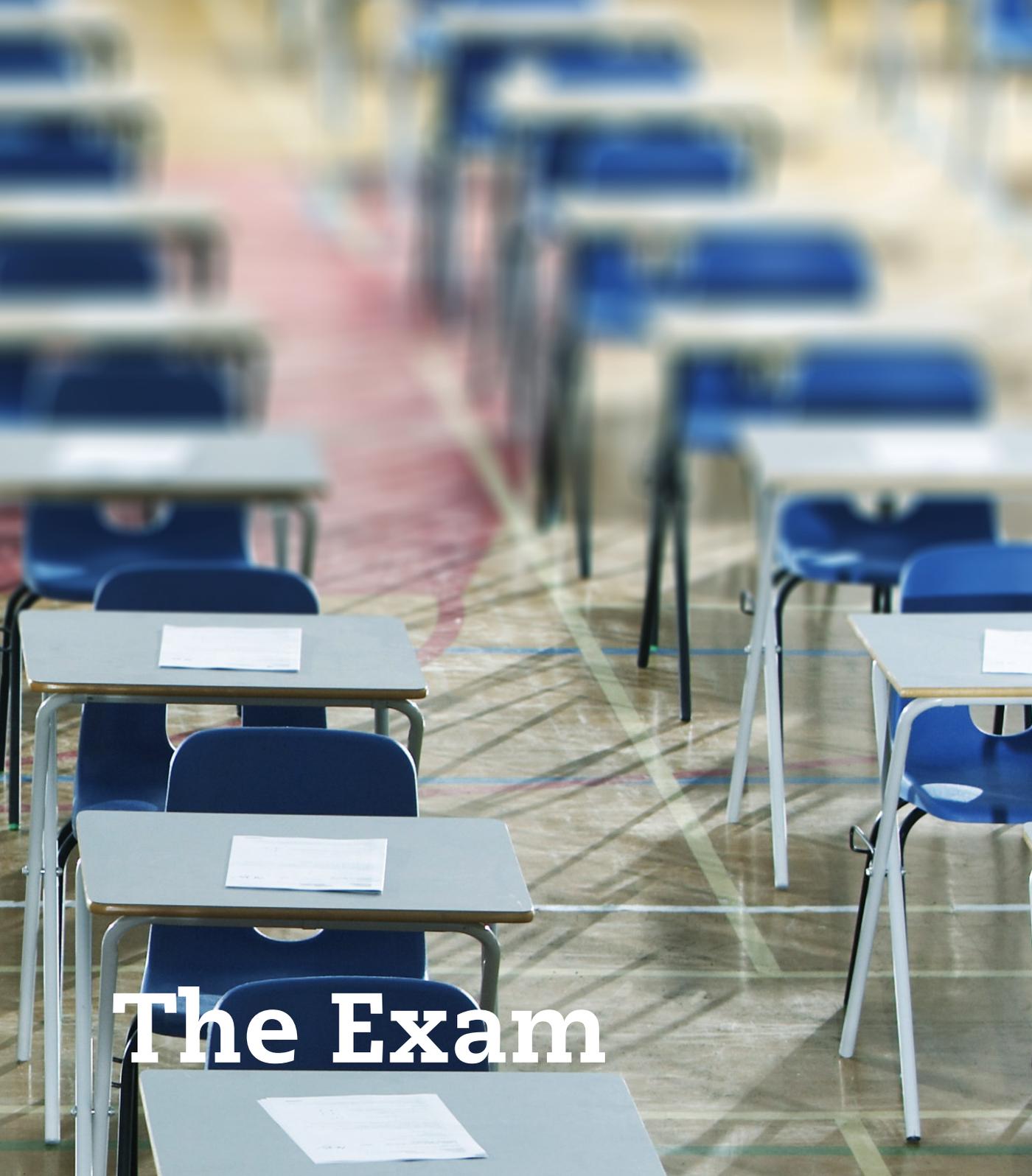
Students who use specimen resources are more likely to pass than those who don't.

”



Tips for success

- ✓ Go over questions again that you found difficult during the revision phase and make sure you attempt at least one mock again in full to time.
- ✓ If you are unsure about the exam format, the style of questions or what specific syllabus areas are likely to be tested in which questions, read the [syllabus and study guide](#) again.
- ✓ If you are not sure about how the marks are allocated review the [specimen exam](#) again.



The Exam

Your checklist

- Make sure you are ready to walk into your exam

The Exam – Tips for success

Tips for success

Very few students enjoy taking exams but there are things you can do to make the experience less stressful!

- ✓ Identify where the CBE centre is.
- ✓ Plan your route to the CBE centre, considering the time of day you will be travelling and any potential issues.
- ✓ Have in place a back-up plan in case of traffic problems or public transport delays.
- ✓ Ensure you have all the equipment you need for the exam (black pens, calculator etc).
- ✓ Don't forget to take your exam docket with you as well as your student identification.
- ✓ Eat properly before you leave for the exam.
- ✓ Sleep properly – do not spend the night before doing last minute late night revision – you will perform so much better if you are alert and well rested (and in any case, last minute revision will only cause you to panic!).
- ✓ Try not to get into discussions with fellow students just before the exam about what might come up – again this will only cause you stress.

Once the exam is over:

- ✓ Relax.
- ✓ Don't over analyse – you cannot change anything now!

Good
Luck!

Appendix – Links

GETTING
STARTED

LEARNING
PHASE

REVISION
PHASE

FINAL
PREPARATION

THE EXAM

APPENDIX
– LINKS

Appendix – Links

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04, 06	Approved Learning Partners	https://learningcommunity.accaglobal.com/#discover/1
04	ACCA-X	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/your-study-options/acca-x-online-courses-from-acca.html
04	On-demand CBE centre	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-entry-and-administration/computer-based-exams/on-demand-cbes/booking-an-on-demand-cbe.html
04, 12, 17	ACCA Learning Community	https://learningcommunity.accaglobal.com
04	Exam resource finder	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources.html
04	Student section	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student.html
04, 12	Student Accountant	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/employer/supporting-trainees/sa-direct.html
04	BPP English Language support for ACCA	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/bpp-english-language-course.html
08	Syllabus and study guide	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/syllabus-study-guide.html
08	Examinable documents	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/examinable-documents.html
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08, 17	FA – A guide to using the examiner's report	http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/ACCA_Global/Learning%20Providers/exam-reflection/Reflections-1st_F3-Financial-Accounting-FORM.pdf
08	FA/FFA MTQ	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/acca-qual-student-journey/qual-resource/acca-qualification/f3/technical-articles.html
08, 17	Exam technique and syllabus updates articles	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/acca-qual-student-journey/qual-resource/acca-qualification/f3/technical-articles.html
09	In this example	http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/satechnical/f3ffa_1.gif
09	This proforma statement of profit or loss	http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/satechnical/f3ffa_2.gif
09	Here	http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/satechnical/f3ffa_3.gif

Appendix – Links

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12	PER (Practical Experience Requirement) objectives	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/practical-experience/performance-objectives.html
13, 14	Trade receivables and revenue	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Adjustments to financial statements	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Discounts	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Cash flow statements	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Preparing simple consolidated financial statements	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Preparing a group statement of financial position	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/technical-articles.html
17	Paper FA/FFA MTQ	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/acca-qual-student-journey/qual-resource/acca-qualification/f3/technical-articles.html
17	Study skills articles in Student Accountant	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/sa/study-skills.html
17	Student Accountant Hub	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/sa.html
17	Practice Test	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-entry-and-administration/preparing-for-exams/practice-tests.html
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20	Syllabus and study guide	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f3/syllabus-study-guide.html

