

Think Ahead

ACCA



F4 Corporate and Business Law (ENG) – a guide to using the examiner's reports

ACCA's self-study guide for F4 is a fantastic resource designed especially to help you if you are taking F4. 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.






F4 Corporate and Business Law (ENG) – a guide to using the examiner's reports

Part of getting started is getting to know your exam and we recommend that you use the examiner's reports as a resource here.

In addition, when you come to the revision phase we strongly recommend that you come back to these reports and look at them in more detail.

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ENGLISH (ENG)

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The examiner's reports for the F4 English (ENG) version can be downloaded from the 'Related documents' section of this page.

Please note that the examiner's reports for F4 English (ENG) also cover the Ireland (IRL) and Scotland (SCT) versions.


EXAM SUPPORT RESOURCES


Return to the exam resource finder to locate other materials to help with your studies


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You can access the examiner's reports for F4 by clicking on the image above. 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!



Examiner's reports

What are the examiner's reports?

The reports are produced every six months 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 when you are revising for 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 exam you need to try to avoid the pitfalls that have led to students failing F4.

What are we going to do now?

In this guide we are going to show you how to use the examiner's reports as part of your revision phase.

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Step 1 – Read the last four examiner's reports

Read through each of the last four examiner's reports for F4.

- ✓ 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 December 2016 report there is a comment on poor levels of analysis and application skills in Section B of the exam.

Examiner's report

F4 (ENG) Corporate & Business Law
For Paper Variant exams December 2016

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Section B

This element of the examination requires both analysis and application, which skills traditionally have not been to the forefront of candidates' abilities. Unfortunately, it has to be recognised that such weaknesses remain. The questions under the structure seek to encourage candidates to demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to, apply particular legal principles and concepts. However, as with Section A, this apparent reduction in what is required, introduces a compensating difficulty, that candidates must focus on and succinctly address the issue raised by the question: irrelevant information simply will not be rewarded and it is a matter of fact that the shorter, more detailed, questions have a tendency to starkly expose any lack of knowledge or application on the part of candidates.



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:

Analysis and application skills

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
D16 Section B	Analysis and application skills	This element of the examination requires both analysis and application, which skills traditionally have not been to the forefront of candidates abilities. Unfortunately it has to be recognised that such weaknesses remain.

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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 over the following pages 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 'How to avoid the pitfalls' and we will talk about this in Step 3.

Reference	Theme	Context	How to avoid the pitfalls
J15 Q32	Lack of detailed knowledge (cont.)	This 1 mark question was on a detailed area of agency of estoppel and it appeared that most candidates did not have the required knowledge to identify the correct answer. This illustrates the need for students to study the syllabus in enough depth to deal with these types of questions.	
D16 Section B J16 Section B D15 Section B J15 Section B	Analysis and application skills	Section B requires both analysis and application, which have traditionally not been strengths of candidates. Questions have a tendency to expose any lack of knowledge or application on the part of individual candidates.	You should look to develop your analysis and application skills for Section B of the exam. Extensive question practice and revision of the syllabus will support this process.
D16 Section B J16 Section B D15 Section B J15 Section B	Prepared answers (paper based exams only)	Some candidates provide general answers to highly specific questions or to particular areas of the syllabus, indicating that they have merely rote learned these general answers rather than carefully reading the question and answering what has been set.	You should carefully and thoroughly read every question twice through to ensure you are answering the question that has been set, rather than the one you would have liked to be set. Do not rely on prepared, memorised answers for your exam as these are unlikely to address the question set and will not score good marks.



Take note

Note that some of the comments contained in the examiner's reports, such as using prepared answers instead of addressing the question that was set, apply only to the paper based examinations.

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Reference	Theme	Context	How to avoid the pitfalls
D16 General J16 General D15 General J15 General	Keep answers succinct (paper based exams only)	Some candidates produced unnecessarily extended answers to questions in Section B of the exam.	You should ensure that you write clear, concise answers to Section B questions that fully address the question that was set but don't then go on to provide unnecessary information. Practising questions with this in mind will help to develop your technique of answering questions succinctly.
D16 Section A J16 Section A D15 Section A	2 mark questions	Candidates answered the less complex knowledge-based 1 mark questions better than they answered the more complicated 2 mark questions, which often require the use of analysis and application skills.	You should split your time between the 1 and 2 mark Section A multiple choice questions so that you develop a good technique in answering both types. This requires a combination of broad syllabus knowledge and good question technique. Refer to the technical article on how to answer multiple-choice questions for more guidance on this area.
D16 Section A J16 Section A D15 Section A	Syllabus knowledge	Candidates must have a thorough knowledge of the entire syllabus as all aspects of the syllabus can be examined in one exam.	You should cover all areas of the syllabus as part of your study plan. If you are unsure what depth of knowledge is required in a particular area, use question practice to guide you as to the likely nature of questions in the real exam as well as the specimen exam . Refer to the most up to date syllabus and study guide to ensure you know exactly what the syllabus contains.
D16 Section A J16 Section A	Difficult syllabus areas	The syllabus areas of the English legal system and of tort have always proved problematic for candidates and generally give rise to some of the least well answered questions. Although sometimes challenging, these areas will always be examined.	You should ensure that your study, revision and question practice incorporates these syllabus areas and that you thoroughly prepare for them in order to ensure the best chance of correctly answering any questions in the real exam. Review the technical articles on the Supreme Court and on key aspects of the law of contract and the tort of negligence for more guidance on these areas.
J15 Section A	Read questions carefully	Candidates sometimes pick the wrong distractor either because they have misread the question or because they have read it quickly and assumed it was asking about something they wanted to come up.	You should carefully and thoroughly read every question twice through to ensure you are answering the question that has been set, rather than the one you would have liked to be set.

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Reference	Theme	Context	How to avoid the pitfalls
D16 Q2	Lack of detailed knowledge	This 2 mark question required a detailed knowledge of abnormal damages for breach of contract and the question wording also required careful reading, as did the distractors.	Ensure that your knowledge base is well spread amongst all syllabus areas to minimise the situations in which knowledge is weak. Review the technical articles relevant to the English variant for more guidance and explanation on specific syllabus areas.
D16 Q37		This 2 mark question on defences to action in tort required application of knowledge to a situation and a detailed knowledge of what may prevent a claim for damages.	
J16 Q8		This 2 mark question combined knowledge of binding precedent with knowledge of the court structure. The combination of these two areas proved problematic for candidates, most of whom went for an answer that indicated good knowledge of binding precedent but weaker knowledge of hierarchy of the courts.	Refer to the most up to date syllabus and study guide to ensure you know exactly what the syllabus contains.
J16 Q15		This 1 mark question tested a straight-forward fact regarding which standard of care applies to the concept of 'neighbour' within the law of tort. Most candidates chose an incorrect answer that displayed a lack of knowledge regarding tort.	Consolidate your understanding of these syllabus areas through extensive and rigorous question practice on Section A and Section B questions.
J16 Q18		This 2 mark question on the doctrine of revocation in contract law was tricky and required careful thought. It asked which statement about revocation of an offer is ALWAYS correct and candidates didn't consider the use of 'always' in the question as they should have done. The correct answer was actually the least popular with candidates.	
D15 Q12		This 2 mark question on fraudulent trading under the Insolvency Act 1986 was acknowledged by the examiner as being very difficult and requiring detailed knowledge of this area of law. It was unlikely that candidates could get this right just through common sense or question technique.	
D15 Q20		This 2 mark question is on the conceptually difficult area of foreseeability within tort, which has historically been badly answered. This was a factual question but again it required a detailed knowledge of this area of the syllabus.	

Continued ►

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D16 Section B J16 Section B D15 Section B J15 Section B	Analysis and application skills	This element of the examination requires both analysis and application, which skills traditionally have not been to the forefront of candidates abilities. Unfortunately it has to be recognised that such weaknesses remain.	You should look to develop your analysis and application skills for Section B of the exam. Extensive question practice and revision of the syllabus will support this process.
D16 Section B J16 Section B D15 Section B J15 Section B	Prepared answers (paper based exams only)	Some candidates provide general answers to highly specific questions or to particular areas of the syllabus, indicating that they have merely rote learned these general answers rather than carefully reading the question and answering what has been set.	You should carefully and thoroughly read every question twice through to ensure you are answering the question that has been set, rather than the one you would have liked to be set. Do not rely on prepared, memorised answers for your exam as these are unlikely to address the question set and will not score good marks.

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Step 3 – Question practice

The key to passing F4 is question practice. Make sure you refer to the self-study guide for hints and tips but keep in mind what the examiner's reports have said. You want to try to avoid the pitfalls so use the advice given in the table at step 2 when practising your 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!