

Think Ahead

ACCA



F4 Corporate and Business Law (ENG) –

a guide to reflection for retake students

ACCA's retake guide for F4 is a fantastic resource designed especially to help you if you are retaking 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.

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

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

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 F4 (ENG) 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 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 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 guide we are going to show you how to use the examiner's reports in reflecting where you went wrong last time.

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

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

ACCA

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.

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

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.

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

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	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	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.



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.

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

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.

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

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 ►

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

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	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.

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

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 F4.

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

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

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

Analysis and application skills

At Step 3 above, then note down below

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.

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

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 guessing answers.

Did you run out of time?

- ✗ It's more likely to be poor exam technique if you ran out of time, so make sure you allocate your time across the sections of the exam so you don't miss out on any marks.

REFLECT

PLAN

QUESTION
PRACTICE

FINAL TIPS

APPENDIX
- LINKS