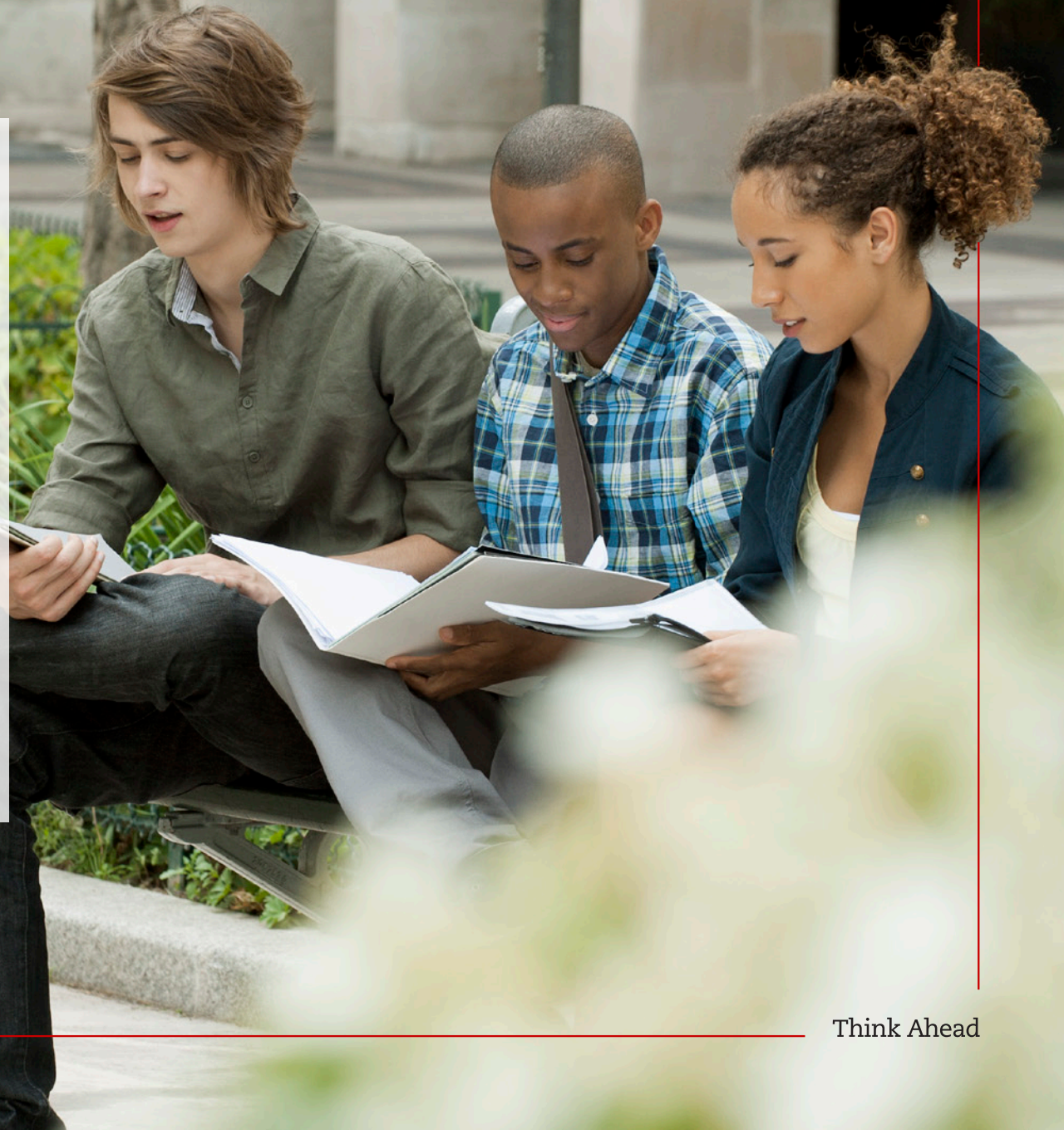


MA Study support guide

▪ Plan ▪ Prepare ▪ Pass

Management Accounting (MA)



▪ Plan ▪ Prepare ▪ Pass

Welcome to your guide helping you to study for your Management 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.

Sections

Getting started 03

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 MA [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 MA 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 MA 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 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](#) ➤ This gives you an understanding of the aims and objectives of the exam, learning outcomes and exam structure

- Scan the MA [specimen exam](#) ➤ The specimen exam provides you with a clear picture of how MA 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 MA – and take a quick look at [MA – 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 [MA/FMA MTQ advice](#) ➤ View this video for pointers to some of the key skills you will need to pass MA 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

- Familiarise yourself with the [formulae sheet](#) ➤ You will be provided with this document in the exam and so you will not need to learn these formulae

Getting started – Understanding the structure of the MA exam (extracts from the examiner's guidance – structure of exam)

Comments on multi task questions (MTQs):

There will be three MTQs in Section B of the paper, one each on the following syllabus areas:

Syllabus area C –
Budgeting

Syllabus area D –
Standard costing

Syllabus area E –
Performance measurement

MTQs are made up of a set of background data and a number of tasks. Most tasks will require reference to the background data, but some will not.



Advice to candidates:

The ACCA website contains specimen papers and extra MTQ practice questions for the CBE for MA/FMA, as well as showcases explaining all of the functionality of the CBE exams. There is also a specimen of the new format paper-based exam. It is strongly recommended that you should work through these questions as part of your preparation the real exams.



Comments on marking and rounding:

Marking

There are no negative marks. The worst a candidate can be awarded is zero. Therefore, they should not leave any answers incomplete. If candidates cannot think of the correct answer, guessing becomes a sensible alternative.

Units of measurement

It is important that candidates present their answers exactly as requested, otherwise the answer will be marked incorrect.

Example: assume the correct answer is \$57,150,000. Because the question asks for the answer in \$000 it must be entered as 57150. If you put 57150000 it would be marked as incorrect.

Rounding

Sensible rounding is acceptable. When appropriate (e.g. when using annuity tables, the present value table, or the annuity formula result in slight variations in the answer) the computer will allow a range of answers.

The most common approach on rounding is to 'round half up' – that is, halfway values and above are always rounded up. For example, by this rule the value 23.5 gets rounded to 24, but –23.5 gets rounded to –23. This approach is adopted in ACCA questions





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.

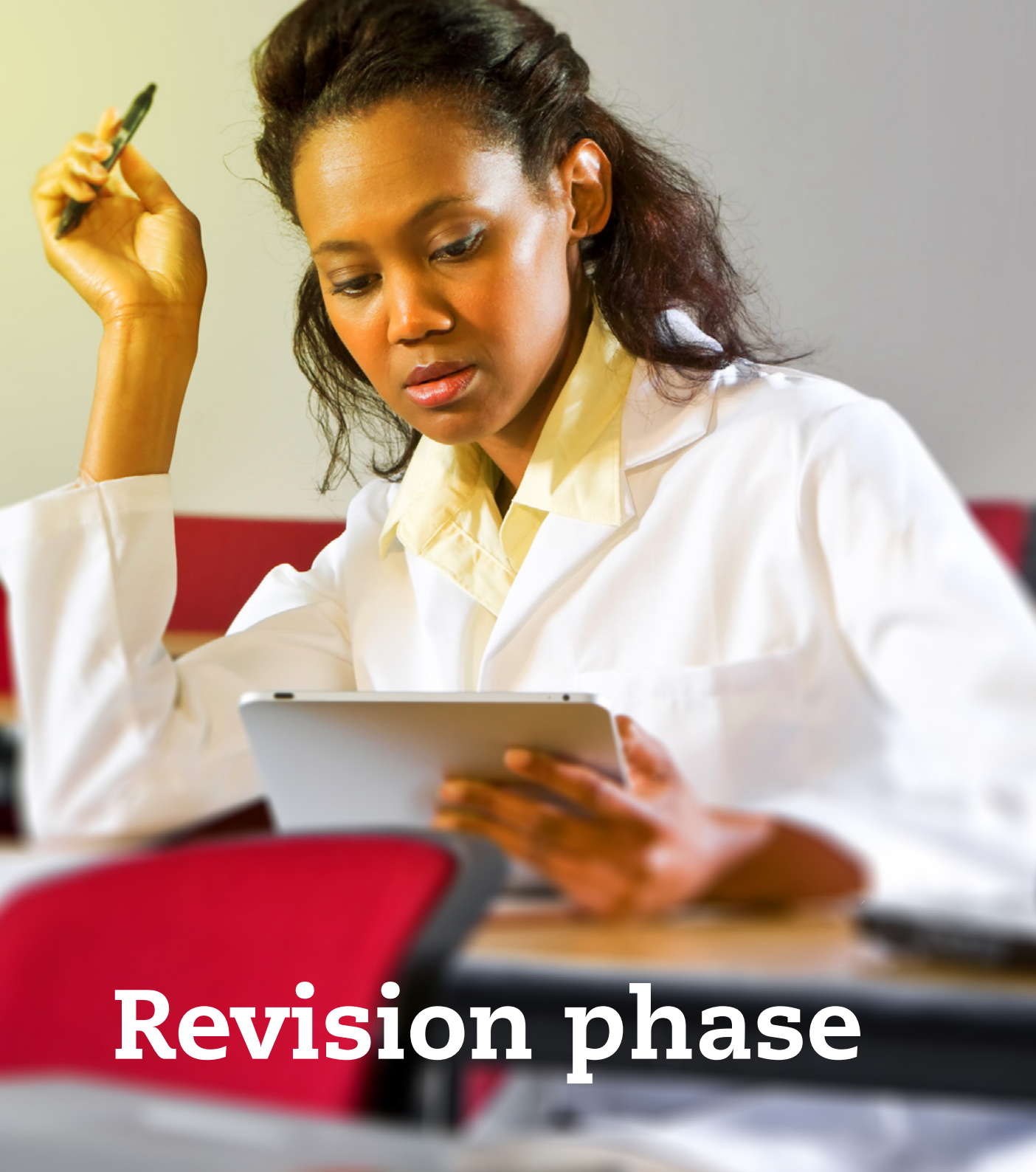
Learning phase – Control sheet for BPP Learning Media

Chapter	Content	Quiz/Test	Questions	ACCA related resources
	✓ tick the boxes below when complete			
Introduction				
1 Accounting for management				
2a Sources of data				
2b Presenting information				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective presentation and communication of information using charts
3a Cost classification				
3b Cost behaviour				
4 Forecasting				
5 Accounting for materials				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory control
6 Accounting for labour				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study support video – Accounting for labour
7a Accounting for overheads				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed overhead absorption
7b Absorption and marginal costing				
8a Process costing				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process costing
8b Process costing, joint products and by-products				
9a Job, batch and service costing				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-apportionment of service cost centre costs
9b Alternative costing principles				
10a Budgeting				
10b The budgetary process				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash budgets
11 Making budgets work				
12a Capital expenditure budgeting				
12b Methods of project appraisal				
13 Standard costing				
14a Cost variances				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed overhead absorption
14b Sales variances and operating statements				
15 Target setting				
16 Financial performance measurement				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio analysis
17 Assessing non-financial performance				

13 When watching the study support video, focus at this stage on the technical aspects – you will watch it again during the revision phase and at that point you will be able to focus more on the exam technique aspects

Learning phase – Control sheet for Kaplan Publishing

Chapter	Content	Quiz/Test	Questions	ACCA related resources
	✓ tick the boxes below when complete			
Introduction				
1 Accounting for management				
2 Sources of data				
3 Presenting information				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective presentation and communication of information using charts
4 Cost classification				
5 Accounting for materials				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory control
6 Accounting for labour				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study support video – Accounting for labour
7 Accounting for overheads				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed overhead absorption • Re-apportionment of service cost centre costs
8 Absorption and marginal costing				
9 Job, batch and process costing				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process costing
10 Service and operation costing				
11 Alternative costing principles				
12 Statistical techniques				
13 Budgeting				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash budgets
14 Capital budgeting				
15 Standard costing				
16 Performance measurement				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio analysis
17 Spreadsheets				



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 [MA – A guide to using the examiner's reports](#) to really benefit from the valuable advice provided
- View the study support video referred to in your control sheet again as well as the video [MA/FMA MTQ](#) – this time focussing on exam technique
- 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 MA



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 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 MA (extract from the December 2017 examiner's report)

Comments on section B:

Section B contains 3 questions, one from each of syllabus areas C Budgeting, D Standard Costing and E Performance Measurement. This approach will continue in future exams. The balance of MCQ questions in section A reflects this weighting so as to preserve the overall balance of the exam.

Common problems with section B questions include the following

- An inability to calculate payback, NPV and IRR.
- An inability to calculate standard cost variances.
- An inability to calculate residual income and ROCE.
- An apparent difficulty with questions presented in spreadsheet format
- A difficulty with questions involving the reconciliation of actual and budgeted figures via standard costing variances.

“

Students who use examiners' reports are more likely to pass than those who don't.

”

“

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

”



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 MA:

The syllabus for Management Accounting (MA)/FMA, introduces candidates to elements of management accounting which are used to make and support decisions.

The syllabus starts by introducing the nature, the source and purpose of cost accounting and the costing techniques used in business which are essential for any management accountant. The syllabus then looks at the preparation and use of budgeting and standard costing and variance analysis as essential tools for planning and controlling business costs.

The syllabus concludes with an introduction to measuring and monitoring the performance of an organisation.



“ An extract from the December 2017 Examiner's report :

Future candidates are advised to:

- Study the whole syllabus, because the exam will cover the full syllabus.
- Practise as many objective testing questions as possible, number entry questions appear to be a particular weakness.
- Read questions very carefully in the examination
- Ensure that their calculations are complete before selecting their answer to multiple choice questions
- Try to attempt the “easy” examination questions first.
- Try not to spend too much time on apparently “difficult” questions.
- Attempt all questions in the examination (there are no negative marks for incorrect answers).
- Consider the “reasonableness” of their answers in section B (an inventory days figure of 27 million days is unlikely)
- Read previous Examiner's Reports

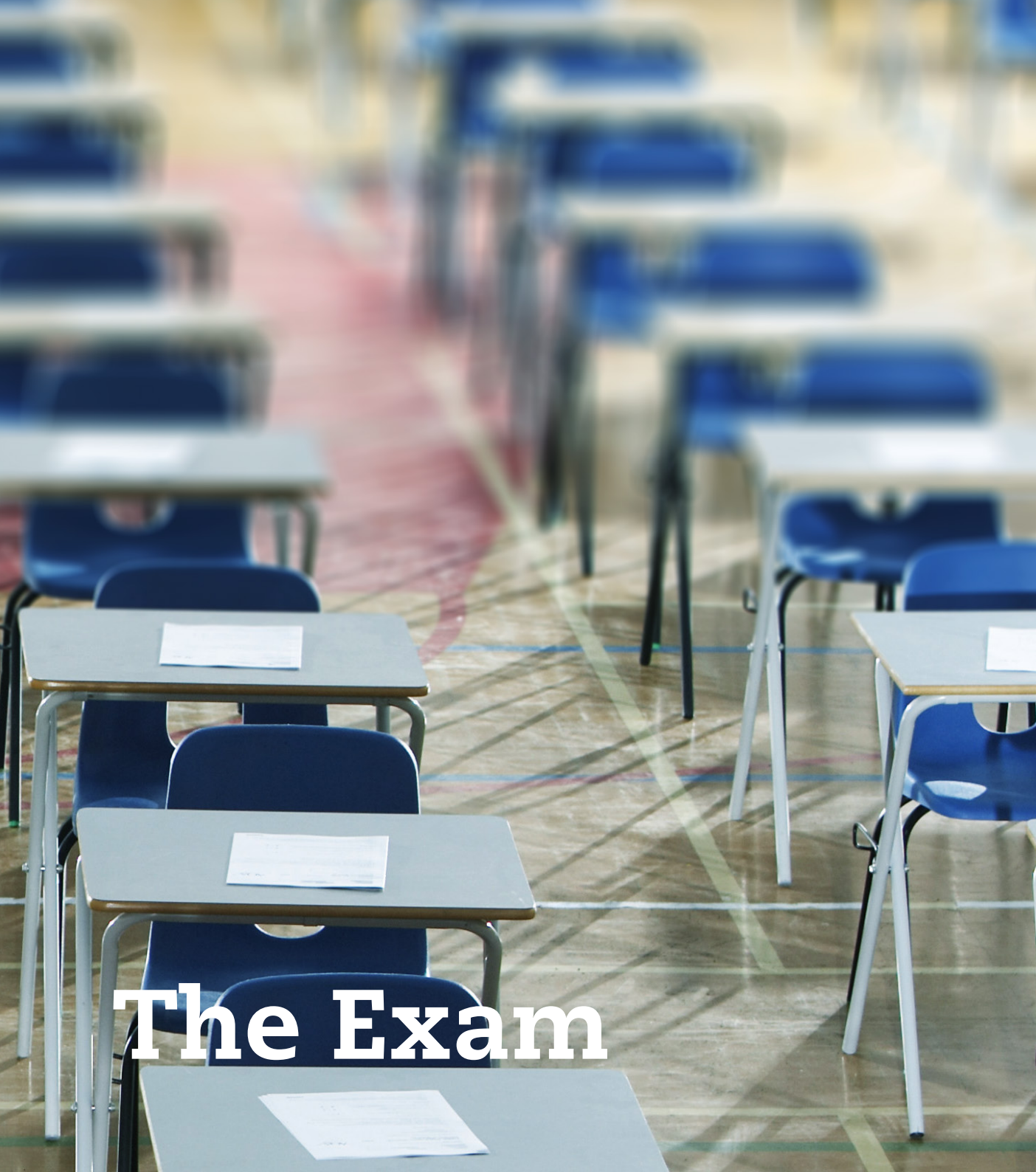


Students who use specimen resources are more likely to pass than those who don't.



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



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

Page No.	Link	URL
04, 12, 16	Approved Content Provider	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/learning-provider/learningproviders-alpc.html
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, 20	Syllabus and study guide	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/acca-qual-student-journey/qual-resource/acca-qualification/f2/syllabus-study-guide.html
08, 16, 17, 20	Specimen exam	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/past-pilot-papers.html
08, 17	Examining team's guidance	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/examiners-reports.html
08, 17	Examiner's reports	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/examiners-reports.html
08, 17	MA/FMA MTQ advice	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
08, 17	Exam technique and syllabus updates articles	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
08	Formulae sheet	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/exam-formulae-maths-tables.html
08, 17	MA – A guide to using the examiner's reports	http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/ACCA_Global/Learning%20Providers/exam-reflection/Reflections-1st_F2-Management-Accounting-FORM.pdf
11	Technical articles	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
12	PER (Practical Experience Requirement) objectives	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/practical-experience/performance-objectives.html

Appendix – Links

Page No.	Link	URL
13, 14	Effective presentation and communication of information using charts	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Inventory control	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Study support video – Accounting for labour	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Fixed overhead absorption	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Process costing	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
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13, 14	Cash budgets	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
13, 14	Ratio analysis	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
17	study skills articles in Student Accountant	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
17	Student Accountant Hub	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
17	Practice Test	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html
17	Practice Tests video	http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/fundamentals-exams-study-resources/f2/technical-articles.html

