



# EXAM GUIDANCE: TEST CENTRE

An essential guide for all ICAEW CFAB  
and ACA Certificate Level students



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# GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

This guide is to help ICAEW CFAB and ACA Certificate Level students preparing to sit an exam at a test centre. It's packed with all the essential information you need to know before taking your exams and includes:

- how to prepare for and book your exam;
- what to expect on the day of the exam;
- the different types of questions;
- how to start and end your exam;
- how to review your answers;
- how to change your answers; and
- items you can take with you into the exam.

If you have a question, contact our student support team at [icaew.com/webchat](https://www.icaew.com/webchat) or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com). Alternatively you can call us at **+44 (0)1908 248 250**.

## The exams

The six exams will introduce you to the fundamentals of accountancy, finance and business and can be taken in any order.

They are each assessed by a 1.5 hour computer-based exam, and can be sat throughout the year.

The pass mark for each exam is 55% and you have a maximum of four attempts at each exam.

They are:

- 1 Accounting
- 2 Assurance
- 3 Business, Technology and Finance
- 4 Law
- 5 Management Information
- 6 Principles of Taxation

# BEFORE THE EXAM DAY

## What type of questions will be included in the exam?

There are various question styles in the exams:

- multiple-choice (choose one answer);
- multiple-response (choose more than one answer);
- multi-part multiple-choice (choose one answer for each part of the question);
- numeric entry (key in a number); and
- scenario-based.

Where a question has two parts you must answer both parts correctly to receive a mark.

The number of questions is shown at the start of the exam.

## How can I practise the exam questions?

You can practise all question styles using the question banks for each exam. Our ICAEW Workbooks which include the question banks are now available digitally. You can purchase them at [ebookshop.icaew.com](http://ebookshop.icaew.com).

You can also practise using the sample exams. They provide the format and functionality that you will see in the exam and show the types of questions and the weighting of topics that you may experience in the exam. Find sample exams at the end of the question bank for each exam or on each exam resources web page.

You can access sample exams on our website within the [ICAEW CFAB](#) and [ACA Certificate Level](#) exam and study resources.

## How will I know what type of answer is required?

- You can only choose one answer in a multiple-choice question.
- Multiple-response questions will give clear instructions, for example, 'Which two of the following ... ?' Following this instruction, you will need to complete all parts of the question correctly in order to score a mark, as no half-marks are awarded.
- Numeric entry questions will clearly state in bold above the answer box what is expected. You can use a comma as a thousand separator, or write the figures all together if you prefer, both will be marked correct.

## THE EXAMS IN DETAIL

### Accounting

The Accounting exam has 25 questions. 24 questions (60% of the overall marks) are presented in the form of multiple-choice, multi-part multiple-choice or multiple-response, and one is a scenario-based question (40% of the overall marks). For the scenario-based question, you will be asked to prepare single company financial statements; either a statement of profit or loss and statement of financial position or a statement of cash flows, using a pro-forma template.

### Assurance

The Assurance exam has 50 questions worth two marks each. The questions are presented in the form of multiple-choice, multi-part multiple-choice or multiple-response.

### Business, Technology and Finance

This exam has 50 questions worth two marks each. The questions are presented in the form of multiple-choice or multiple-response.

### Law

The Law exam has 50 questions worth two marks each. The questions are presented in the form of multiple-choice or multi-part multiple-choice.

### Management Information

The Management Information exam has 33 questions. 32 questions (80% of the overall marks) are presented in the form of multiple-choice, multi-part multiple-choice or multiple-response, and one is a scenario-based question (20% of the overall marks) which will be drawn from either costing and pricing; budgeting and forecasting; performance management; or management decision making.

### Principles of Taxation

The Principles of Taxation exam has 42 questions. 40 questions (80% of the overall marks) are presented in the form of multiple-choice, multi-part multiple-choice, multiple-response or numeric entry. Two questions are scenario-based (worth 20% of the overall marks, 10% each), each question will cover a single syllabus area: income tax and NIC, and corporation tax.

## Errata sheets

If any errors within the workbook or question banks for any exam are identified, we will publish an errata on our website for you to access. We recommend that you read any errata information before you start studying for your exam.

Errata sheets are located on our website within the [ICAEW CFAB](#) and [ACA Certificate Level](#) exam and study resources.

## Learning materials

Our learning materials are updated each year. The updates reflect changes in the syllabus, legislation, finance acts and financial reporting standards. We will also include any changes to the type of questions you can expect to see in an exam. So it is important that you use the correct edition of the learning materials to ensure that you have everything you need to work towards that pass.

Our learning materials are now available digitally on the ICAEW Bookshelf. The digital ICAEW Workbooks work much like printed books in that you can still write notes on them and highlight them, but with the additional benefits of being able to search for key terms, change the settings to make them easier to read, and have the book read itself to you with the text to speech function.

The new ICAEW Workbooks combine our skills and syllabus learning support content with study manual content all in one publication, making it easier for you to study.

Find out more at [icaew.com/learningmaterials](https://www.icaew.com/learningmaterials)

## How do I book my exam?

You have the flexibility to choose when you want to sit your exams. They can be taken at any time, you just need to check that the test centre near you has availability. You should also speak to your employer before booking, as they may have arrangements in place to organise your exam for you.

You can book an exam via [access.icaew.com/pearsonvue](https://access.icaew.com/pearsonvue). You will need to log in using your ICAEW log in details. Follow [our guide](#) for step-by-step instructions on how to book your exam.

You will receive a reminder email 48 hours before your scheduled exam time. You will need to ensure that all details are accurate. If you are studying with a tuition provider, they will provide you with your exam details.

If your plans have changed, you must reschedule or cancel your exam up to 24 hours before you are due to sit to be eligible for a refund. If you decide you would like to sit your exam remotely, you will need to cancel your original booking and book the exam again as a new booking. View [instructions on how to reschedule or cancel an exam booking](#).

If you are in a training agreement, your exam may have been scheduled by your tuition provider or employer on your behalf. If you would like to make any changes to your exam booking, you will need to check with them first.

## How do I apply for extra time in the exam?

If you feel your exam performance may be hindered due to a health condition, disability, or specific learning difficulty (SpLD), we may be able to put access arrangements in place to support you during your exam(s).

Please do read the [guidance notes](#) and [ICAEW guidance](#) in full before submitting your application. Please ensure you submit your online application for access arrangements at least **21 days** before your intended exam date, and do not book your exam until arrangements have been confirmed.

Tuition provider test centres do not have permission to schedule examinations with additional time, but will contact Pearson VUE on your behalf to make these bookings.

For more information on access arrangements, view the [ICAEW CFAB](#) or [ACA Certificate Level](#) web pages for full guidance and how to apply.

If you have a question, contact our student support team at [icaew.com/webchat](https://www.icaew.com/webchat) or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com). Alternatively you can call us at **+44 (0)1908 248 250**.

# TUTOR AND EXAMINER TIPS

We asked our examiners and tutors for their top tips to help you get the maximum marks, here they are.

## MISTAKES

Often students make mistakes by misreading or misunderstanding the question. The Principles of Taxation is one of the exams where the question content could generate a number of different answers. For example, an income tax question might be asking for taxable income, income tax liability or income tax payable. Read the question carefully to get it right.

## 000'S

When entering thousand figures, you can enter these with or without a comma separator. Do not use any other form of separator. So, only a correct answer of 1,000 or 1000 will get you the mark for that question.

## NEGATIVE NUMBERS

Negative numbers must be indicated using brackets or a preceding minus sign. If you don't do this, you will not be awarded marks for that question, even if your calculations are correct. This applies to all the ICAEW CFAB and ACA Certificate Level exams.

## EMPTY QUESTIONS

Don't leave any questions incomplete. Even if you run out of time, add something in for each question as there will usually be a 25% chance it is right.

## WHOLE NUMBERS

You must only use whole numbers. So, if the answer is 10.78 (as an example) then you will need to round that up to 11 to get the question correct. If the answer is 5.2 then you will need to round that down to 5 to get the question correct.

## MORE TOP TIPS

Explore more study guidance and exam tips including exam webinars, study guides, sample assessments, and tutor and examiner guidance. These are dedicated resources available to you as an [ICAEW CFAB student](#) or [ACA Certificate Level student](#).

# ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM

## What are the rules for sitting the exams?

We recommend that you to read this guidance before the day of your exam. All students must adhere to the exam rules at all times.

## Exam rules – notice for all students




Please read this guidance carefully. It has been written to help you to prepare for the day of your exam, so you know exactly what to expect.

If you have any questions, please speak to your test centre administrator before the exam begins.



## CANDIDATE RULES NOTICE FOR ALL STUDENTS

You must not take any of the following personal items into the exam area:

-  mobile phones, pagers, hand-held computers or other electronic devices;
-  any digital watches including smart watches; or
-  hats, bags, coats or notes; these must be stored in a secure area indicated by the invigilator.

If you are found to have any material with you which is not allowed, even if you did not intend to use it, this will be reported to ICAEW as misconduct and you may be disqualified from the exam or the whole qualification.

ICAEW exam terms and conditions can be found at [PearsonVUE.com/ICAEW](https://www.pearsonvue.com/ICAEW).

## When you arrive at the exam centre:

- Before the test centre administrator can allow you to enter the exam room, he/she is required to carry out several security procedures. For more information please see [pearsonvue.com/icaew](https://www.pearsonvue.com/icaew).
- The invigilator will direct you to a suitable computer. You should follow the on-screen instructions that your name appears in the top left-hand corner when you start.
- If you are given any exam-specific materials, you may only use them once the exam has started. You may not take these items from the exam room.
- You must not make any noise or conduct yourself in a way that creates a disturbance for other students. You will not be allowed to eat or drink anything during the exam.
- The invigilator will monitor you continuously while you take your exam. You are not allowed to communicate in any way with another student or a third party.
- If you experience problems that affect your ability to take the exam, you should notify the invigilator immediately by putting up your hand. The invigilator cannot answer questions relating to the exam content.
- ICAEW will not provide any financial compensation for exams which were unsuccessful due to system failure or force majeure at the exam centre.
- You should ensure as far as possible that you will not need a break during the exam. If you do need a break, put up your hand and the invigilator will assist you. However, please note that the exam will not be paused and the timer will continue. The invigilator has the right to refuse access back into the exam room.
- While you are taking a break, you are permitted to access personal items that you have stored during the exam only if necessary and with the prior permission of the invigilator (for example, if you need to take medication at a specific time). You are not allowed to access other items, including mobile phones, exam notes or study guides.
- You must not discuss or share with other students the questions seen in the exam. Any attempt to do so will be treated as misconduct and could lead to disqualification from the exam or qualification.
- After the exam ends, the administrator will ensure your exam has ended and will show you the on-screen exam confirmation report.

If you do not follow these rules or you are suspected of cheating or tampering with the computer, your exam may be invalidated and further action may be taken.

If you have any further questions, contact our student support team at [icaew.com/webchat](https://www.icaew.com/webchat) or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com). Alternatively you can call us at +44 (0)1908 248 250.

## Will I need proof of identification?

Yes, the test centre will expect to see two pieces of identification (ID). Visit the [Test Centre ID Requirements website](#) to ensure you take the accepted forms of ID with you. If you arrive at the test centre without the required ID, you will not be permitted to sit the exam and you will need to book the exam again.

In addition to the current ID and admission requirements, when you arrive at the test centre and at the start of the check in process, you will also be asked to provide a digital signature. This helps us to identify you and confirms that you agree with all the candidate rules. A high-quality digital photo will also be taken, using image-quality intelligence software to produce a standardised passport-style photo that meets rigorous quality standards.

The invigilator will then compare your signature and photo with your ID and previous exam data. All student data will be securely stored and protected by Pearson VUE in line with GDPR.

## What time do I need to arrive?

You must arrive at the test centre at least 30 minutes before the start of your exam. This is to allow you time to complete the necessary administrative tasks before the start of your exam.

## What if I'm late for the exam?

The test centre will decide if they can accommodate your late arrival. Other students may have already booked in to follow your exam slot, so it may not be possible to accommodate you. You may be required to reschedule and your exam fee will not be refunded. If you are late and do not sit the exam, it will not be counted as an exam attempt.

## What if I feel unwell before the exam?

If you feel unwell before your exam, you should not sit the exam. You will need to reschedule your exam online. If your exam was scheduled on your behalf by your tuition provider or your employer, you must inform them so that they can reschedule the exam for you. Providing that you do not begin the exam, it will not count as one of your exam attempts and nothing will appear on your exam history.

Please note, you will only be eligible for a refund if your exam is rescheduled or cancelled 24 hours before the exam.

## Can I take any study materials into the exam?

No. You cannot take any books into the test centre. However, you will be able to view relevant extracts from tax tables in the Principles of Taxation exam and discount tables in the Management Information exam.

An example of one of the exhibits is shown in Fig 1. Where a question may need a tax or discount table, a button marked either Tax Table or Discount Table will appear on the screen. You can click this to see the table and the question at the same time.

You can also use Ctrl F (find) - this is useful in exhibits such as the Tax and Discount Tables.

Management Information - Candidate Name Time Remaining 71:40

Calculator Scratch Pad 3 of 32

Elig for Review

Discount Tables

Adam is responsible for the Department Management department, and has identified four potential threats to the department's success. Which threat does the department face?

A. Familiarity

B. Self-interest

C. Intimidation

D. Self-review

Interest rate p.a.	Number of years n	Present value of £1 receivable at the end of n years	Present value of £1 receivable at the end of each of n years
1%		$\frac{1}{(1+r)^n}$	$\frac{1}{r} \left[ 1 - \frac{1}{(1+r)^n} \right]$
	1	0.990	0.990
	2	0.980	1.970
	3	0.971	2.941
	4	0.961	3.902
	5	0.951	4.853
	6	0.942	5.795
	7	0.933	6.728
	8	0.923	7.652
	9	0.914	8.566
10	0.905	9.471	
5%	1	0.952	0.952
	2	0.907	1.859
	3	0.864	2.723
	4	0.823	3.546
	5	0.784	4.329
	6	0.746	5.076
	7	0.711	5.786

Review Screen Previous Next

Fig 1. Example of on-screen tables

© Image courtesy of Pearson Vue



### Can I use a calculator?

Yes, you will need to take your own calculator to the exam, from an approved list, available at [icaew.com/calculators](http://icaew.com/calculators).

No other makes or models will be permitted. Calculator covers and lids are not permitted in the exam room and must be stored away in your locker/storage area with other personal items. You are responsible for making sure that your calculator works on the day. Replacement calculators will not be provided. You may not share a calculator with another candidate during your exam session. Your calculator will be visually inspected prior to the start of the exam, and it must remain on your desk in full view throughout your exam session.

There is also an on-screen calculator available for use should you need it. You can practise using the online calculator in advance of the exam by trying the sample exams. View the sample exams on our website within the **ICAEW CFAB** and **ACA Certificate Level** exam and study resources.

### Can I use pen and paper for workings?

No. You cannot take these into the exam room. You will be given a wipeable booklet and pen for any of your workings. You can ask the invigilator for additional booklets and pens during the exam if needed. Please note that at the end of your exam, the invigilator will collect your workings, however, they will not be marked.

### How do I start the exam?

You will be logged into the system by the exam administrator or invigilator and asked to agree to the confidentiality requirement; you can then start the exam according to the instructions given to you by the invigilator by clicking 'Yes' on the dialog box, see Fig 2. The timer will then begin and you will see the first question, an example is shown in Fig 3.

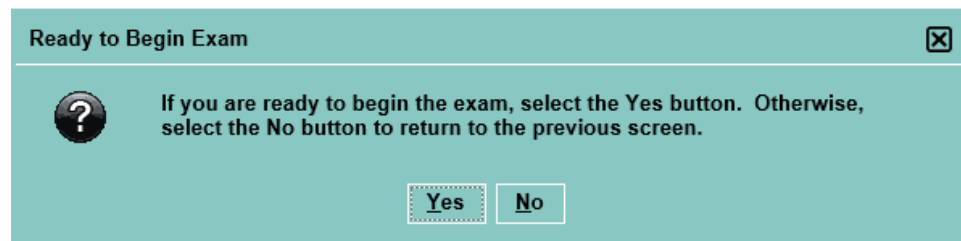


Fig 2.

© Image courtesy of Pearson Vue

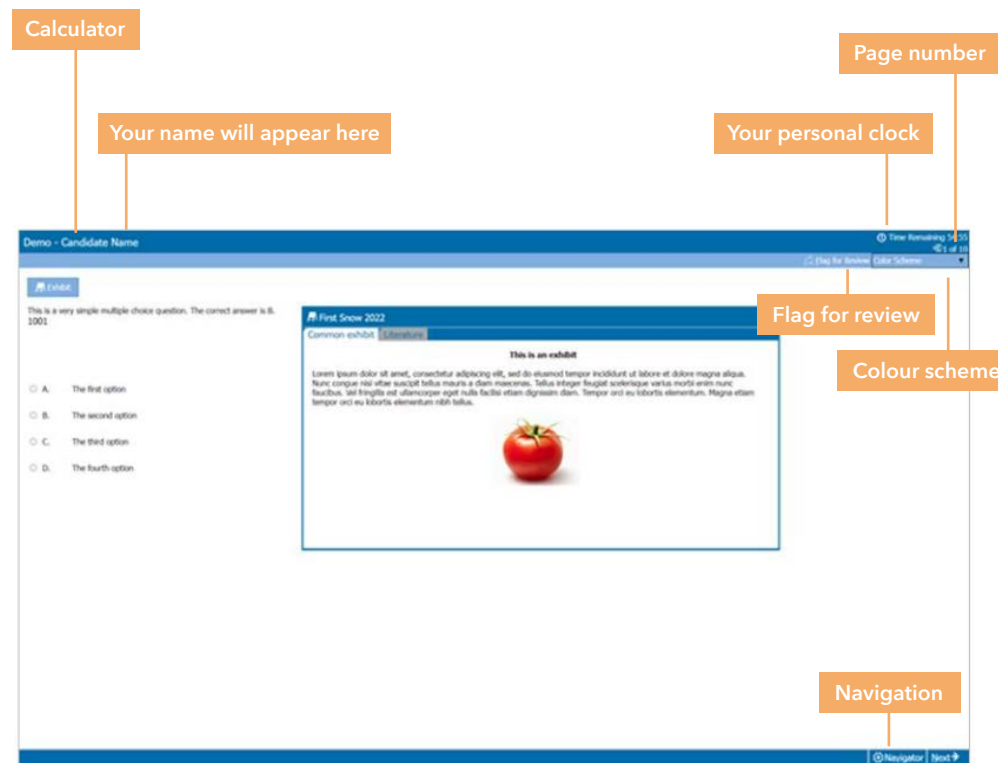
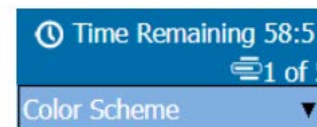


Fig 3.

© Image courtesy of Pearson Vue



A Color Scheme selector will be displayed to test takers on the right edge of the exam's toolbar (on its left edge for right-to-left oriented languages)

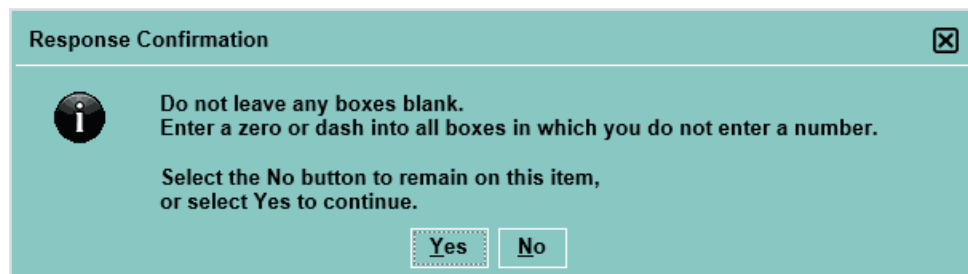
### Can I check through my answers?

When you have navigated through each question once, you will reach the review screen, this is shown in Fig 5. The review screen will show the questions you need to answer, highlighted as Incomplete. It also shows the questions you have flagged for review.

Using the navigation buttons at the bottom of the screen, Review All, Review Incomplete and Review Flagged, enables you to see these questions. Fig 5 shows that question 3 has been selected as Review flagged.

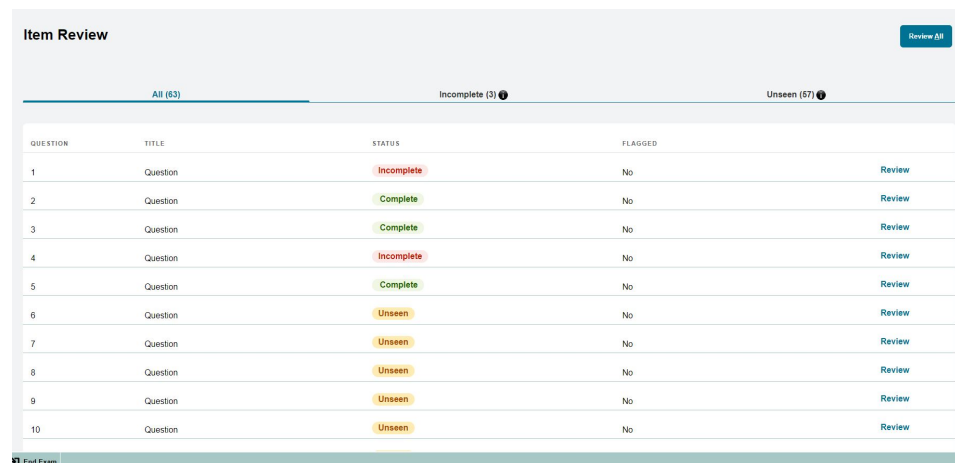
### How do I move to the next question or back to the previous one?

You can use the navigation buttons at the bottom of the screen by clicking Next and Previous, so you can move forwards and backwards. During your Management Information, Accounting and Principles of Taxation exams, you will see a pop up reminding you not to leave any boxes blank (shown in Fig 4). This is a reminder to check your answers thoroughly, and doesn't mean that you have left anything blank.



© Image courtesy of Pearson Vue

Fig 4. Example of response confirmation pop up.



© Image courtesy of Pearson Vue

Fig 5. Question review screen showing which of your questions are incomplete, complete or questions you have flagged for review.

### Can I go back and change my answers?

Yes, you can go through the exam and view all the questions as many times as you wish within the 1.5 hour exam time limit. As you navigate through the questions, you can change your answers and you can mark questions for further review. By marking or flagging the question to review again, you will be able to find the questions quickly when you reach the question review screen. The final answers that you give in the exam will be saved and marked.

### What happens if my computer crashes?

Every click of the mouse and stroke on the keyboard is usually recorded in a log file. In the rare event that your computer crashes, your exam will be restarted either on the same computer or on a different computer.

### What if I feel unwell during the exam?

If you feel unwell during the exam and wish to leave, please raise your hand and tell the invigilator. Please note that this will count as one of your exam attempts.

### What if I can't continue with the exam?

It is possible that your exam may need to be abandoned. An example of this may be electricity failure or flood. If this occurs, you will need to reschedule an alternative date for your exam with the test centre. If this happens, your answers will be void and the exam will be invalid. The test centre will notify us with the reason for abandoning the exam and your exam attempt will be reinstated.

### What happens if I experience an issue in the exam?

Should you experience an issue during your exam, you must report this to Pearson Vue via the greeter or invigilator on the day of the exam. If you are unable to speak to them, please contact **Pearson Vue** to report the issue and ensure it has been logged. If you feel the issue you experienced has impacted your exam performance or you feel that your result has been adversely affected, please apply for exam disruption appeal directly to ICAEW.

If you wish to apply for exam disruption appeal, you must complete the online exam disruption appeal **application form** with any supporting evidence within seven days of the exam. Once your application has been logged, you will receive a confirmation email to confirm we have received it. [View the exam disruption appeal guide.](#)



# WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE EXAM?

## How to finish an exam

If you finish the exam before the 1.5 hours, click the End exam button. You will be asked on-screen to confirm that the exam is to end. Once you have confirmed that the exam is finished, you are then free to leave.

## If you run out of time or forget to click 'Finish'

If you run out of time or forget to click the End exam button, a message will appear stating Time expired and will automatically force the system to log out and save your answers.

## When will I receive my exam results?

Your exam results will be available within 24 hours of completing the exam. You can access your results in your **online training file**, via the Examinations tab. Please note, if you are due to receive your exam results on the same day the ACA Professional or Advanced Level exams results are released, you will receive your results at 12:00 (UK-time). View all Professional and Advanced Level exam results dates [here](#).

For each exam you pass, you will be awarded a certificate of achievement. Each certificate demonstrates the new skills you have acquired and is available within your online training file at [icaew.com/trainingfile](http://icaew.com/trainingfile). Download your certificate and share it with your family, friends and employer. You also have the option to print your certificate.

If you fail an exam, you can access marks feedback via your online training file. Once logged in, go to the examinations tab and you will see a 'details' link within the 'Feedback' column. The feedback will show the percentage of questions that you scored correctly within each syllabus area and will give an indication of the area(s) where further revision or tuition may be required before you next

attempt the exam.

## How long do I have to wait until I can resit an exam?

ICAEW regulations provides a maximum of four attempts at any of the ICAEW CFAB or ACA Certificate Level exams. If your employer is contributing financially to your studies, they may choose to allow you fewer attempts than this, so you should check with them. Always be fully prepared before you take an exam.

In theory, you can resit an exam the next day. However, you should always leave enough time in between your exams to try to understand why you failed, study the materials again and to revise effectively. If your employer is paying for any of your studies, please check with them first as you may need to arrange resit timings with your employer.

When you are ready to book your resit, you will need to book again via [access.icaew.com/pearsonvue](http://access.icaew.com/pearsonvue).

## Please keep your details up to date

It is important that we have an accurate postal and email address for you. This ensures you receive all the information relating to your exams and studies. Contact our student support team to update your details, at [icaew.com/webchat](http://icaew.com/webchat) or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com).

You can also update your contact details via the live help boxes while browsing our website or simply log in to your **online training file**.

## Good luck!

**We wish you the very best in your exams.**

## EXAM SURVEY

After each exam, share your feedback with us by completing the exam survey. You can access the survey via the [Pearson VUE website](#) and select 'Student Feedback', or you can access the survey link within your exam confirmation and reminder emails.

## GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions, please contact our student support team at [icaew.com/webchat](http://icaew.com/webchat) or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com). Alternatively you can call us at **+44 (0)1908 248 250**.

If you are browsing our website, look out for the live help boxes. You will be able to speak directly to an adviser. Mia, our Chatbot, is also on hand to answer your queries. You can also contact us using Skype. Search 'icaew\_uk' and speak to our student support team free of charge.

Chartered accountants are talented, ethical and committed professionals. ICAEW represents more than 202,450 members and students around the world. All of the top 100 global brands employ ICAEW Chartered Accountants.\*

Founded in 1880, ICAEW has a long history of serving the public interest and we continue to work with governments, regulators and business leaders globally. And, as a world-leading improvement regulator, we supervise and monitor around 12,000 firms, holding them, and all ICAEW members and students, to the highest standards of professional competency and conduct.

We promote inclusivity, diversity and fairness and we give talented professionals the skills and values they need to build resilient businesses, economies and societies, while ensuring our planet's resources are managed sustainably.

ICAEW is the first major professional body to be carbon neutral, demonstrating our commitment to tackle climate change and supporting UN Sustainable Development Goal 13.

ICAEW is a founding member of Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW), a global family that connects over 1.8m chartered accountants and students in more than 190 countries. Together, we support, develop and promote the role of chartered accountants as trusted business leaders, difference makers and advisers.

We believe that chartered accountancy can be a force for positive change. By sharing our insight, expertise and understanding we can help to create sustainable economies and a better future for all.

[charteredaccountantsworldwide.com](https://www.charteredaccountantsworldwide.com)  
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 [ICAEW Students](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ICAEW-Students)

 [icaew\\_uk](https://www.snapchat.com/add/icaew_uk)

\* includes parent companies. Source: ICAEW member data  
March 2023, Interbrand, Best Global Brands 2022

