

## STUDY ADVICE for ACCA – “Your Revision Period”

1. THE NEED FOR REVISION
2. HOW TO ORGANISE REVISION
3. REVISION MATERIAL

### 1. THE NEED FOR REVISION

An organised 'systematic' approach to revision is *essential* for exam success. Revision is the last step in the teaching-learning process and brings together all the loose threads; puts pieces together and generally allows one to consider *whole* subjects. During the course one is required to learn each subject 'piecemeal', section by section. This is necessary because we cannot learn everything at the same time. However, the need to learn each section of a subject separately, in a certain sequence, does mean that often we are unable to comprehend the ramifications that later subjects will have on the topics we learn about in the earlier stages. It's only when you have finished studying a subject that it becomes possible to consider everything about it and to obtain synergy by linking the separate topics which made up a syllabus. Synergy is obtained when the total sum of component parts mixed together is greater than those components added separately. This may sound a little 'gobbledygook' but does suggest that if two subjects are studied separately a certain level of knowledge will be attained - however by intelligent intellectual application of these two topics together it's possible to extend knowledge and understanding beyond that which is included in an exam subject syllabus and when exam subjects themselves cross-relate.

For most students revision is the most *interesting* and *rewarding* part of learning. When the pieces begin to come together the result can be stimulating and does generate interest, enthusiasm and confidence. There is nothing dry about revision. If it's approached sensibly and with the right attitude one can achieve a lot, and this, of course, is very beneficial, particularly as the exam is drawing nearer...

The main advantages to be gained from taking an organised approach to revision are listed below:

- (a) You will be able to plan your studies knowing that a period has been allocated for consolidation and review.
- (b) Knowing that time has been allocated for revision, you will be able, throughout your course, to highlight areas of study which you will want to return to and develop further once you have covered more advanced areas of study.
- (c) Throughout your course you will be able to highlight areas of study which you consider are important knowing that you have reserved time to concentrate on them during the weeks immediately prior to the exam.
- (d) You will have allowed yourself time to practice exam-style questions and to be able to assess your own performance over the whole syllabus.

### 2. HOW TO ORGANISE REVISION

You will have budgeted the time you have available for revision when you constructed your programme at the commencement of your studies. You may well find that when you approach your revision period, you could gain considerable advantage from having additional time available. If so consider the following possibilities:

- (a) Paid study leave - most responsible employers, both in the private sector and in government departments, recognise the need for students, who are taking professional exams, to have time off from work for preparation immediately before the exam. Your terms of employment or Staff Handbook may detail the circumstances in which you can have time off. If it doesn't, discuss study leave with your employer - you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.
- (b) Unpaid study leave - if you're not entitled to paid study leave, consider requesting your employer to allow you to

have unpaid study leave, if you can afford this. Remember that passing a professional exam will considerably help your future career and earning prospects. If you tighten your belt and increase your chances of exam success, it must be worth your while.

- (c) Holiday - your last alternative is to take your holiday in the period leading to your exam. This will be a small sacrifice if it provides the difference between pass and fail.

You should begin planning your revision a few weeks before you reach the end of your study material. Most courses are so designed that you'll work through the required study material for each subject and then have a period in which to revise them.

It's not wise to plan your revision too early. You'll find it difficult to gauge how you should allocate time between the 'competing' subjects as you'll be unable to comprehend what is involved in them.

The first thing to do when you set about planning your revision is to construct a programme. The programme will act as a framework around which you'll be able to organise your life but it should not be too rigid between subjects. You'll need a flexible approach to enable your time to be re-apportioned between subjects should you need to devote more, or less, time to a particular subject, or subjects than originally estimated. The revision programme is required because you'll need to arrange the other aspects of your life around it. However, once you have committed yourself to studying at certain times of each day, the programme itself, in regard to subjects, needs to be adaptable.

One way to construct such a programme is to follow the advice given in the Tony Surridge free e-guide, '**Having the Right Frame of Mind**'. Decide which subjects need most revision and 'weight' them accordingly. Be careful! Subjects which you're good at are more than likely the subjects which most interest you, and you may feel tempted to spend proportionately longer on them than you should. You must be equally careful that you don't become over-confident in regard to subjects you feel you are good at and neglect them during the revision period. Calculate the total study time available for your revision, and then apportion it according to your weighting between subjects. Allow a certain amount of your revision time to remain unutilised. Include it within your 'programme' but don't allocate work to it. This will allow you to modify your programme as you progress through your revision and to catch up on any revision work planned but which, for one reason or another, you're not able to cover. It'll also help you cope with 'unexpected' problems which always arise in revision.

Next draw up the programme. When designing your programme, try to complement subjects. Alternate between numerate and non-numerate subjects, difficult and not-so-difficult, and so on. The programme should be written in pencil so that it can be modified as necessary.

Your next step is to match each subject against the time you have allocated for it. Analyse each subject and compile a schedule of the topics to be revised and the sequence in which these topics are to be covered. Allocate a time to each topic, ensuring that the total time for each *subject* doesn't exceed the time allocated to it on the programme.

### **3. REVISION MATERIAL**

By the time you start revising you'll have amassed a considerable amount of study material. Not all will be required for revision and you'll need to organise it so that you can retrieve the relevant parts quickly as and when required.

Study material available for use during your revision period will consist of the following:

- The Tony Surridge '**Study Text: A Routemap Through the Syllabus**' (for each subject)
- Your own notes
- The Tony Surridge '**E-Mnemonics – Remembering Vital Points**' (for each subject)
- The Tony Surridge '**Exam-Status Questions and Answers : Drilling Down**' (for each subject)
- *Your journal/newspaper scrapbook*
- *Revision pack of exam-style questions and answer guides.*
- *Any other study material you have used during your studies.*

- (a) E-books

By this stage of your course, the material in your e-books will be used more for *reference* purposes than for reviewing. However, certain parts of your e-book based study material will be relevant for revision and you'll already have indicated these by underlining them and by the use of coloured inks and notes in margins on your printouts during your learning period.

(b) Your own notes

The notes which you'll have made during the course will be invaluable and will play a prominent part in your revision. It'll be necessary for your notes to be classified in some way so that you can link them with corresponding areas of study, thus enabling you to retrieve them efficiently.

(c) Self-assessment questions with answer guides

You'll already have worked through the Tony Surridge self-assessment questions included in the e-book: '**Exam-Status Questions and Answers : Drilling Down**' during your course. Perhaps more than once! However, some questions will be worth working through again now that you're approaching the exam. During the course you should keep a record listing the particular questions which you consider will provide suitable practice during revision. It's beneficial to practice answering questions quickly and one approach is to allow yourself '*one minute per mark*' for questions *reworked* during revision. For instance, you should aim to practice-answer a 25 mark question in 25 minutes or less.

(d) Your journal/newspaper scrapbook

The scrapbook of articles and commentaries which you've built up during your course will complement the notes which you've made. It will play a prominent part in your revision and should be classified in a way that facilitates reference.

(e) Revision Packs

Revision packs of pre-exam notes and specimen exam questions and answers can be obtained from different suppliers. They are designed to guide you intelligently through the last few weeks of exam preparation and to give vital hints for the exam day itself. The revision packs notes analyse each subject and summarise the most likely topics to be examined and provide more practice questions and answers.

[www.tonysurridge.co.uk](http://www.tonysurridge.co.uk)

For more free study advice, visit [www.tonysurridge.co.uk/exam-material/study-advice](http://www.tonysurridge.co.uk/exam-material/study-advice)



We can't all own the goose that  
lays the golden egg...

...but if you train with us,  
hopefully you won't need one.

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