

ACCA has removed any restriction on how candidates may now use the three hours and 15 minutes allowed for their exam. ACCA encourages candidates to take time at the beginning of the exam to read questions carefully including reading the background scenario on the front screen, the separate requirements, scanning the exhibits and to then plan answers. However once the exam time has started, there is no restriction as to when candidates may start typing either planning notes or their answers into the chosen response options.

DiplIFR candidates are aspiring to become professionals and, as such, ACCA believes that they should be responsible for managing their own time during the exam – this is a life skill.

Not all candidates are the same and hence the precise use of the time is likely to vary, however we advise allocating 1.8 minutes a mark, so for each 25 mark question allowing 45 minutes of time to fully answer the question. This builds in an additional 15 minutes of planning and final review time at the end of the exam.

To be fully prepared for the exam, including how to use the 3 hours and 15 minutes, practice as many exam standard questions as possible; the ACCA specimen exams and Approved Content Provider revision kits contain exam standard questions. Full details of these can be found on the ACCA website.

While ACCA publishes past DiplIFR exams, these should be used with caution especially if there have been any changes in a particular IFRS standard, as they are not updated for the latest exam syllabus or changes to IFRS standards since the exam was sat. This is why Approved Content Provider revision kits that have been approved by the examining team for style and appropriateness are a good learning resource. Also be aware the marks per question changed in December 2019 so older questions will not have the current mark allocations. However these questions can still be used for practice, using the 1.8 minute per mark principle.

Practice exams should be attempted **under exam conditions** to work out how best to use the exam time. Ideally you will practice the questions using spreadsheet and word processing software to mimic the CBE environment you will encounter when sitting the DiplIFR exam. As part of good exam technique, answers should be fully reviewed and candidates should determine how performance might be improved in the future, including what modifications might be made to the use of the three hours and 15 minutes exam time. Also, refer to examiner reports on the ACCA website which often pass comment about how candidates should best use their exam time.

However you plan to use your exam time, you should:

- (i) ensure for all questions that the requirement has been fully understood and determine the process necessary to answer the question;
- (ii) properly consider how to structure the response to each question and lay it out so as to articulate the answer clearly; and
- (iii) consider whether to use the spreadsheet response area for workings and calculations and cross reference these to the word processing response area for the narrative explanations.

In professional level exams, it is probably useful to allow some time at the start of your exam to choose the order in which you will answer the questions rather than doing this halfway through the exam when you may be feeling under more pressure. Be prepared to move on to the next question if you have already spent 45 minutes on that question. You can always return to an answer if time allows at the end of the exam. ACCA know the successful candidates are those that attempt all four questions in the DiplIFR exam.

Adoption of these principles combined with plenty of question practice will help to maximise the chances of success. Make sure that you go into your exam knowing that you have done everything possible to pass and that includes planning appropriately both before and during the exam – good luck!