

ACCA ATX UK Syllabus Changes

June 23 – March 24

Topics new to the paper

Syllabus area D 'Professional Skills' has replaced the previous syllabus area D. This reflects the additional professional skills required for the ATX-UK exam and replaces the previous syllabus area D (Communicate with clients, HM Revenue and Customs and other professionals in an appropriate manner) which focussed solely on the skill of communication.

The four new professional skills are explained in further detail in the Workbook which includes as Skills checkpoint focussing on each skill.

The full ATX syllabus can be found here:

<https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-support-resources/professional-exams-study-resources/p6/syllabus-study-guide/p6-syllabus-and-study-guide-united-kingdom-uk.html#>

Page 23 show the summary of syllabus changes.

Topics leaving the paper

Syllabus area A4c(i) 'Research and development relief for large companies' has been removed from the syllabus and now appears within the list of specific exclusions under A(4).

In addition, syllabus area C6 'Current issues in taxation' has also been removed from the syllabus.

The material has been amended to remove these topics.

Amendments to the syllabus

There have been no other amendments to the syllabus.

Syllabus changes

The main syllabus for ATX is set out below:

- A Apply further knowledge and understanding of the UK tax system through the study of more advanced topics within the taxes studied previously and the study of stamp taxes
 - B Identify and evaluate the impact of relevant taxes on various situations and courses of action, including the interaction of taxes
 - C Provide advice on minimising and/or deferring tax liabilities by the use of standard tax planning measures
 - D Professional skills
 - E Apply employability and technology skills
- As explained above, syllabus area D is new and the professional skills replace the communication skills.

Please note, that the syllabus now follows Finance Act 2022 tax legislation.

Significant changes to the BPP Materials

The main changes to the Workbook and Kit centre around the introduction of the professional skills marks into the ATX-UK exam. In the Workbook, the five skills checkpoints have been completely rewritten. Each of the first four checkpoint centres on one of each of the four new professional skills with the final checkpoint looking at exam readiness. It is imperative that you spend time looking at these new checkpoints. Some of the questions at the back of the Workbook have had the professional skills marks incorporated and you are directed to these at the end of the relevant skills checkpoint for each skill. The professional skills marks have also been incorporated into all the questions in the Kit.

In addition to the usual Finance Act updates it is also important to note that the dividend tax rates have increased by 1.25% during the 2022/23 tax year. National insurance rates and thresholds and the annual investment allowance have also changed during the year but the material sets out how the ACCA will test these- make sure you review these topics carefully. Another change to spot is the deadline for payment of CGT on disposal of a UK residential property is now 60 days rather than 30 days (within Chapter 7).

External resources

The ACCA website includes past papers for ATX which you may like to take a look at.

ACCA are in the process of moving the CBE specimen exams from their website to your MyACCA account. Please ensure you visit your ACCA account in order to access these additional resources. These exams are available free of charge you just need to assign them to your account for the exams that you are sitting.

Videos covering the professional skills marks will be available on the ACCA website.

Exam format changes

From June 2023 the ATX-UK exam will feature three (as opposed to four) multi-tax questions.

Section A will contain one 50 mark question. It will consist of a number of exhibits, one of which will be the email from the manager setting out the requirements in the form of 'work to be carried out.' There will be 40 technical marks, which will include 5 marks on ethics, and 10 professional skills marks. You should expect the number of exhibits to generally increase compared to that seen in the previous exam format.

Section B will contain two 25 mark questions. Each question will be 20 technical marks with 5 professional skills marks. The questions will remain similar in style to the previous B questions and will generally consist of a single exhibit and a set of requirements.

The Practice Platform will allow you to use the live exam format, layout and functionality and also contains a specimen exam and two practice exams in the new format.

The 20 professional skills marks will be awarded for demonstrating the following skills:

- Communication
- Analysis and evaluation
- Scepticism
- Commercial acumen

The section A question will examine all four of these skills. The section B questions will examine a combination of professional skills appropriate to the particular question. Each one will examine a minimum of two professional skills from analysis and evaluation, scepticism and commercial acumen. Communication skills will not be tested in Section B.

It is important to realise that there is no need to address the professional skills separately when answering a question. Instead, the professional skills marks will be awarded for the way in which questions are answered, i.e. by reference to the approach taken, the manner in which the work is carried out and the particular technical points which are identified and discussed.

You will earn the professional skills marks by:

- following any instructions and responding to all of the requirements;
- taking time to think about the information provided and how the relevant technical rules apply to the work you are doing on an ongoing basis as you work through the exam;
- taking care making it as easy as possible for the 'manager' (i.e. the marker) to follow and understand what you have done.

As noted, the professional skills marks are not earned separately, instead they are awarded by reference to the technical work you do. This means that you should treat the exam as being out of 80 (as opposed to 100) marks, such that when you are organising your time, you have just over 2.4 minutes per mark. Accordingly, when compared with the previous format of the exam, you have more time to think about: the requirement, what you want to say, and how you want to say it. This should give you the time to exercise your professional skills when answering the questions.