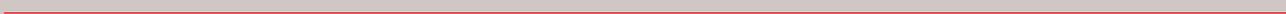




ACA qualification

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LADDERS

2018



ACA

The ACA is a rigorous and globally-recognised qualification. Designed for today's commercial landscape, it provides the professional skills and strategic insight needed to make a real impact on an organisation.

The ACA qualification has four components that combine study and exams with 'on-the-job' experience. Each component has been designed to complement the others.



Professional development

ICAEW Chartered Accountants are known for their professionalism and expertise. Professional development prepares them to handle a variety of situations throughout their career. They know how to spot and communicate risks and provide interventions. They also know how to adapt to changing circumstances and engage with technology.

ACA students will demonstrate their competence across seven key areas.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Ethics and professionalism | 5 Problem solving |
| 2 Communication | 6 Adding value |
| 3 Teamwork | 7 Technical competence |
| 4 Decision making | |

Where they start and how fast they progress is flexible and is managed by their employer. They will record their professional development progress within their online training file and discuss this at each six-monthly review.

This document outlines each professional development area or ladder. Each area contains steps that represent a specific skill. Students must demonstrate each skill by providing an example from their practical work experience. Guidance is given to show the types of examples they can give to meet the skills within each area.

Many of the skills within each area are linked to the Case Study (CS) and ethics (E), so we recommend that all steps are completed before a student attempts the Case Study exam. When a student has attempted all ACA exams, and has only the Case Study to attempt, an employer can review the student's professional development progress to evaluate whether they are ready to take the final exam.

1 Ethics and professionalism

Goal: The ability to behave ethically and sustainably whilst respecting others in order to uphold the values of the organisation and the accountancy profession.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
8 E	demonstrate professional behaviour?	You acted as an ambassador for ICAEW and promoted ethical behaviour within your organisation at all times. You were resilient in maintaining your professionalism in challenging circumstances.
7 E	show objectivity?	You took a fair and balanced approach to achieve an organisational objective. You recognised threats to objectivity and independence.
6 E	show self-awareness?	You recognised the impact of emotions on you and on others and adapted your behaviour accordingly.
5 E	demonstrate professional competence and due care?	You maintained an awareness of developments in the accountancy profession. You recognised when to ask for assistance or to report issues upwards.
4 E	value diversity?	You valued different perspectives, respected individual differences and supported fair treatment and equal opportunities for all.
3 E	demonstrate sustainability?	You identified the impact of your actions on the environment and looked for ways to conserve resources and energy. You were socially responsible in supporting the community in which you live and work.
2 E	observe confidentiality?	You respected and maintained confidentiality in your dealings with others. You acted with sensitivity in situations when maintaining confidentiality would be in breach of the public or organisational interest.
1 E	demonstrate integrity?	You behaved truthfully, honestly, and in the public interest. You took responsibility for your own actions and your own development.

2 Communication

Goal: The ability to communicate effectively at all levels, using oral, written and presentational skills, in order to achieve positive outcomes.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
7 CS	negotiate?	You negotiated with a colleague, senior or client or other stakeholder, clearly and fairly, to get an agreement that was acceptable to all parties involved.
6 E CS	challenge upwards?	You questioned the views of senior colleagues in a way that enabled your position to be heard and understood.
5 CS	present to a group?	You presented information in a group situation in a way which was clear, fluent and held the audience's attention, to achieve your desired objective.
4 E	manage conflict?	You showed tact and diplomacy in handling a disagreement or communicating an adverse or unwelcome decision.
3 E	influence?	You adapted your behaviour, style, approach and means of communication to another person to gain their commitment or agreement to a course of action. You persuaded another person to change their point of view, asserting your own position, whilst showing an understanding of theirs.
2	communicate in writing?	You produced an email, letter or report that was clear, logical and well-structured and met the needs of your intended audience.
1 E	listen effectively?	You paid attention to what other people were saying and showed attentive body language. You kept an open mind when listening to others' perspectives and showed empathy.

3 Teamwork

Goal: The ability to work collaboratively as a member or leader of a team in order to achieve shared goals.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
8 E CS	manage a team?	You planned, managed and controlled a team to deliver a project that met performance objectives and standards within time and budgetary constraints.
7 CS	allocate tasks and resources?	You assigned tasks and available resources to achieve task objectives within agreed deadlines.
6 E	develop others?	You identified others' development needs and shared your knowledge and experience to help them. You supported a colleague or client to think creatively and/or acted informally in mentoring, coaching and training others.
5 E	show empathy?	You were sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others in the team and managed the situation accordingly.
4	deliver tasks under pressure?	You monitored and managed workload and resources to contribute to team objectives. You stayed calm under pressure.
3 E	value diverse perspectives?	You were open-minded to input, feedback and suggestions from different people, including those whose views were different from yours.
2 E	collaborate with others?	You motivated others by recognising individual team members' achievements. You encouraged and promoted teamwork to achieve shared goals. You shared knowledge and insight to achieve team goals.
1	ask for help?	You knew when to ask for help and where to find it. You used opportunities to learn from others.

4 Decision making

Goal: The ability to gather, interpret and evaluate data in order to make effective decisions.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
7 E CS	decide between competing outcomes?	You applied independent thought, reasoning and judgement based on evidence, professional experience, technical knowledge and consideration of alternatives to make insightful decisions within a realistic timeframe.
6 CS	apply professional scepticism?	You used a questioning mind to identify when information was biased, arguments were flawed, contradictions existed between different pieces of information, or assumptions were not justified.
5 CS	evaluate risk?	You identified and evaluated potential risks arising from your conclusions, including broader commercial considerations such as costs and benefits. You made an informed decision despite uncertainty.
4 E	justify conclusions?	You were able to justify your conclusions from evidence when faced with questions or resistance from others.
3	draw conclusions?	You drew conclusions based on relevant data.
2	organise data?	You used appropriate tools, such as spreadsheets, databases, or data analytics, to organise data to make it understandable.
1 E	gather relevant data?	You clarified a need from another person to have relevant data and gathered appropriate data to help them to make a decision. You understood the context in which a decision was being made.

5 Problem solving

Goal: The ability to analyse a problem, generate options and make recommendations in order to arrive at appropriate solution.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
8 CS	implement a solution?	You developed recommendations to solve a complex problem and took them through to agreement and implementation. You showed resilience and creativity and deployed resources effectively when the project did not develop as planned.
7 E CS	make useful recommendations?	You applied your technical knowledge, professional experience, evidence and analysis to support recommendations that took into account the position of other parties involved. You identified the best solution given the existing constraints.
6 CS	consider different perspectives?	You sought insight and input from an appropriately diverse range of stakeholders and perspectives when formulating recommendations. You drew on input from your professional network to support this.
5	think creatively?	You used techniques, such as brainstorming and lateral thinking, to generate options and found a creative solution to a problem.
4	prioritise?	You used your initiative to evaluate and prioritise what was important, focusing on key issues and outputs.
3	evaluate different options?	You used analytical techniques to evaluate options and rank potential solutions, identifying associated risk and uncertainty. You showed adaptability in the face of change.
2	identify a problem?	You defined a problem by asking questions to clarify the nature of the problem and the business impact. You gathered information to enable you to analyse the problem.
1 E	support others to solve problems?	You shared your practical experience with others to help them when solving problems. You learned through practical experience of a problem.

6 Adding value

Goal: The ability to add value to the organisation, team or role in order to achieve objectives.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
8 E CS	lead by example?	You achieved an outstanding outcome by inspiring and acting as a role model for others to follow.
7 E CS	anticipate and see opportunity in change?	You anticipated changing circumstances and identified an opportunity to add value as a result of the change. You assisted more reluctant colleagues to embrace change.
6 CS	improve financial performance?	You took the initiative to identify a way to improve performance, for example: improve a process, save money, generate revenue or grow the business.
5 CS	deliver excellent customer service?	You improved the service you provide to your customers or stakeholders, internally or externally. You built a rapport with customers or stakeholders to better understand their needs and tailor your service accordingly.
4	continue learning?	You reflected on your own performance and identified ways in which you could improve. You developed specific skills or knowledge that enabled you to add value to your organisation, team or role.
3	exceed expectations?	You used your initiative to achieve something more than was expected. You were open-minded and adaptable in finding a new or better way of doing something that added value to your organisation, team or role.
2	show resilience?	You overcame obstacles and setbacks to deliver and continued to perform effectively when faced with pressure or adversity.
1	work flexibly?	You responded flexibly to changing circumstances without losing your efficiency and focus, using your initiative to get the job done and complete multiple tasks on time.

7 *Technical competence*

Goal: The ability to seek, learn and use technology and technical information in order to support the achievement of organisation or team goals.

	How were you able to...	Guidance on specific examples
6 CS	support technological change?	You understood the potential for technology to improve systems and / or working practices, and identified an area where technological innovation could improve performance.
5 CS	treat a complex technical issue correctly?	You applied technical knowledge from a range of sources to resolve a complex technical problem whilst retaining an awareness of the business environment.
4	use technology to improve your effectiveness?	You used technology to improve speed, accuracy, presentation and overall effectiveness in your role through use of more sophisticated technology or more advanced functionality.
3	identify a technical issue?	You identified a technical issue in a work assignment and used your technical knowledge to resolve it.
2	use technology appropriately?	You employed an appropriate technological solution to a practical work situation, such as using a relevant office software package, data analytics application, or accounting programme.
1	relate study to work?	You related technical knowledge from professional study to practical work situations.

Please note that in 2017, we updated and redefined some of the ICAEW professional development skills. The date an ACA student registered with us will determine the skills they follow and develop during their ACA training.

All ACA students who registered with us from 01 September 2017 onwards, will follow the seven professional development skills described within this document.

More information on the professional development review and outcomes, is available at [icaew.com/futureprofessional](https://www.icaew.com/futureprofessional)