



Vital

Education and
Training Information

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Time for a Change...?

Coming soon...the new and improved 'Vital'.

Vital is currently undergoing a makeover and from March 2002 you will receive the refreshed, revamped and new-look issue. BUT to do this, we need your help. As this magazine is aimed at you, we want your input into how you would like it to look.

We want to know:

- What size would you prefer?
- What topics would you like to be included?
- Is there a layout that you think would work better than the current one?

Any other ideas you have will be welcomed!

Finally, what about the name? We chose the name 'Vital' because the information included in it is of an informative nature. It is published to help and support you throughout your training and is therefore vital to you. However, if you have any thoughts of a name that you think is more suitable or would be more effective, please let me know.

Please forward your ideas and opinions to me:

sara-jayne.stubbs@icaew.co.uk
studentsupport@icaew.co.uk

Many Thanks

Integrated Learning Programme

The AAT to ACA Top-up Integrated Learning Programme will be available again from the beginning of March in preparation for the June 2002 exam.

Improvements to the course include an Induction Day and an enhanced Marking Service. The Induction Day will be held during the first week of the course and will give you an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the course programme and to meet your tutors and fellow students. Through the enhanced Marking Service you will be able to send worked questions to the tutors for marking at any time during the course.

The Integrated Learning Programme

combines self-directed study with support from experienced tutors via a course website.

The key benefits are flexibility and accessibility – you will be able to fit your study around work and home commitments and access the programme and tutor support wherever you are. The programme also offers extensive support by professionally-qualified tutors, a comprehensive online study guide, and contact with other students via the web.

For more information visit the course website: www.icaew.co.uk/learning, or contact us on **01908 248030** or email: learning@icaew.co.uk

Don't forget...

The Timetable for the Professional Stage examinations in December 2001 is as follows:

Day	Time	Paper
Tuesday 11th	9.30 - 12.30	Audit & Assurance
	2.00 - 5.00	Financial Reporting
Wednesday 12th	9.30 - 12.30	Business Management
	2.00 - 5.00	Accounting
Thursday 13th	9.30 - 12.30	Taxation
	9.30 - 12.30	AAT Top-Up Paper
	2.00 - 5.00	Business Finance

Exam Results Despatch Dates:

Exam	Date of Despatch
Technical Core 2 and Final Admitting Exam	14 December 2001
Test of Advanced Technical Competence and Advanced Case Study	14 December 2001
Professional Stage	25 January 2002
Top-up paper - AAT	25 January 2002

Don't forget that the results will also be available on the Institute's website www.icaew.co.uk from 9.00 pm on the day of despatch. Also the Exam Results hotline is available to call on the Saturday following the despatch date between 9.30 and 12.30 on **01908 248040**.

Also for future reference remember that you can download exam application forms from the Institute's website. www.icaew.co.uk/exams, on the menu box on the left-hand side select applying for exams and this will take to the link that allows you to print an application form.

Exam Results and the Hotline

The Question:

We have received numerous enquiries recently from students asking, why is it that the examination results do not become available on the Institute's website until 9.00 pm on the day of despatch?

The Answer:

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, it allows for you to retrieve your results in the privacy of your own home and not in the presence of colleagues.

It also offers you the time to reflect on your results over the weekend,

away from work. For example, if you have failed an examination, you have time to reflect on this before returning to work on the following Monday. The reason for this being that it may have an effect on your continuing training depending on the terms stated in your STCE in relation to exams.

Finally, the selected time of 9pm allows you plenty of time to leave work and get home, without rushing, before the results are released.

Hotline

If you do not have access to the website over the weekend

following the despatch of results, there is an exam hotline, which is available to call on the Saturday following the results release date. The line is open not only to inform you of your results, but also to offer advice to those of you who may not have been as successful as you had hoped or needed to be. Terms and conditions with regards to examination expectations from your training organisation are set out in your STCE, which can normally be found under study performance.

Call the exam hotline on
01908 248020

Promoting your firm in 2002

We have come to the end of yet another successful year of university events across the country. We would like to thank all trainees that have participated at these events.

Participating at careers fairs, business games and informal networking evenings is an excellent way of raising your firm's profile to a target audience.

Careers Fairs

We will be attending various fairs next year, including regional and

national fairs and are looking for trainees to talk to undergraduates about their experience of the ACA training and exams.

Presentations/informal networking

This is an ideal opportunity for employers to talk to students very informally over 'drinks and nibbles' and promote the training at their firm, whilst identifying potential new trainees from a target audience.

Business Game

We are looking for ACA trainees to

act as facilitators for our interactive business game. Using experience and skills gained at work you will lead a group of undergraduates who will be playing the role of advisors through a series of activities. A lively and entertaining event enjoyed by all trainees!

We are currently putting together a programme of events for 2002. If you are interested in representing your firm and taking part in any of these events please contact Tasin Akhtar on 01908 248149 or email: tasin.akhtar@icaew.co.uk

What Library?

The Institute has its own Library and Information Service (LIS) which is available for you to use. You don't even have to visit the library (based at Chartered Accountants' Hall in London). You can simply phone, fax or email your enquiry to the library and information can be forwarded on to you. The library staff will even read information to you over the phone. Whichever option suits your needs best – the choice is yours.

Why not give it a go:

Website: www.icaew.co.uk/library

Phone: 020 7920 8620

Fax: 020 7920 8621

24 Hour Answerphone: 020 7920 8622

Email: library@icaew.co.uk

Enquiries are usually answered while you are on the phone and any information that is being posted is sent out within 24 hours.

The basic service is FREE with reasonable charges applying for other aspects of the service.

Publications available include: -

- Reference copies of the learning materials
- Reference copies (and in many instances loan copies) of all E&T publications – current and past, including exam papers, reports,

handbooks and consultations

- Reference copies (and in most cases loan copies) of all ABG Professional Information publications, current and previous editions

All of the above include journals. However, these are not for loan but an article can be copied from a particular issue. Also there are links to the website when the documents are available there.

What is LibCat?

LibCat is the library's catalogue on the Internet. It gives you access to one of the foremost libraries in the world of accountancy and tax information. It has been selected with the business and professional needs of UK Chartered Accountants in mind. Simply go to www.icaew.co.uk/library and click on LibCat, to link to the full catalogue books, reports and journal articles.

LibCat covers 100 years of publications and over 28,000 journal article abstracts. New material is added daily. Many of the records include an electronic link to the full text of documents, such as ICAEW technical releases, where available on the Internet.

Searching the catalogue is easy, with a choice of quick or complex search menus. You can search for

an author, a title or a subject and decide whether you want a list of books, articles or both. LibCat is easy to use and there are links to helpsheets and FAQs.

You can also use LibCat to find:

- When the latest version of an item is likely to be
- Where on the website an item is
- Whether you can borrow the publication from the LIS and whether it is currently available
- When an item was published.

Also...

The stock covers a range of subjects related to students' training and work experience and LibCat can similarly be used with non-Institute publications, including:

- Management
- Law
- IT including the internet and accounting, auditing and financial aspects
- Taxation, including double taxation treaties
- Company Information

If you do visit the library and want to borrow a book, you will be asked to produce your student registration number. Use the contact card enclosed with this edition of Vital to keep a note of your number.

Email us TODAY

It is important to us at the Institute to ensure that we are keeping you as up-to-date as possible regarding forthcoming developments within Education and Training.

Although we do publicise developments in various articles, including this one, and via the Website, students have been telling us it would be more beneficial if we could inform you of any changes as and when they occur by means of email. This will also give you the opportunity to raise any queries or put your views across by responding directly to us.

In order for us to progress work in this area and for it to be as successful as possible, we will need your email address. Please send it to us: studentsupport@icaew.co.uk

During 2002 we aim to develop the tools necessary to enable us to contact you by email with updates on subjects such as syllabus changes, examination updates, career development information and so on.

The emails will not necessarily be sent at regular intervals, simply when any changes/developments take place.

Help us to help you and send us your email address today.

Many Thanks

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Liaising with Lucy

Following the successful launch of the Student Support Team within Education & Training, the team has been working hard to provide you with as much help and support as possible.

Particular attention has been paid to the development and launch of a new web area within the existing Institute's website. The focus of this area being 'you', a student training with the Institute.

In early 2002 one of the areas that you will be able to visit is the new



'Agony Aunt' section, developed by Lucy (a member of the Student

Support Team). You will have the opportunity to ask questions, voice your opinions, raise any queries or simply read answers to questions that other students have raised, which you may find beneficial. Lucy will respond to anything that you ask, so link up with Lucy and put your questions to her.

You will be able to locate this link within the student area of the Institutes main website www.icaew.co.uk/students. The link is headed 'Liase with Lucy'. Have a look - I'm sure you will find it very useful.

The Country's Youngest Chartered Accountant

20-year old Karen Sands has become the youngest Chartered Accountant in the country. In practice with leading Oxfordshire firm Critchleys, she was admitted as a member of the Institute on 1st November, making her the profession's youngest current member by two years.

Karen joined Critchleys' Oxford office in 1997 after taking her GCSEs at Didcot Girls School, where she achieved an A* in maths.

Says Karen: "I decided not to go to university as I felt that an accountancy-based degree would be too slow-paced and insufficiently challenging for me, and that after the degree I would still be at the very bottom of the career ladder."

Karen passed the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Foundation exams in six weeks, the Intermediates in three months and was fully-qualified within a year. She wasted no time in



embarking on her studies to become a Chartered Accountant and passed the final exam in July this year.

"Critchleys has been enormously supportive of my studies – and my ambitions," says Karen. "Because I wanted to get my final exams out of the way and get on with my career, the partners even allowed me to take a three-month break from work to attend a full time study course."

Says Critchleys' senior partner Dai David: "Karen's achievement is

fantastic and we're all very proud of the hard work and determination she's shown over the last four years. But I think it's also testament to this firm's very strong commitment to training. We offer an excellent training contract to young people aspiring to a career in the accountancy profession – and Karen is the best possible illustration I could give you of how good it really is."

Karen says she's relieved to have achieved her ambition to be a fully-qualified Chartered Accountant, especially at such a young age, but also very excited about the future.

"I knew that whatever career I chose would be maths-based, due to my GCSE results, and I wanted to do something that offered a constant challenge and opportunities to learn. Because finance law is always changing, I felt accountancy would suit me."

Karen has already set herself the next challenge: to specialise in tax. So, after a well-deserved break from studying, she intends to embark on the Institute of Taxation exams.

Hot Tips

We have been speaking to prizewinners - those students who have achieved the highest marks for a subject paper or overall paper sat.

We wanted to know what hints and tips they could offer to other students to help them obtain successful exam results. Also how it feels to be listed in the National Order of Merit and to become a 'prizewinner'.

William Smith (Arthur Anderson), Manchester achieved fourth place and the William G Frazer prize in the Technical Core 2 examination in July 2001. Here are his comments:

How did it feel?

It all came as a bit of a shock really. I didn't ever expect to win a prize, and so on results night, when the results came out on the internet, it was only as an afterthought that I even checked the prize list to see if I knew anyone that had won anything. So when it was my name up there, I was speechless. Of course, it gave me even more to celebrate later on that night...

Hints and tips for other students

The most important thing for me was keeping calm under exam conditions, which is something far easier said than done when all the

pressure is bearing down on you.

I found that in the weeks running up to the exams, it certainly helped my sanity to spend time doing non-exam related things. Just spending time with friends who weren't sitting exams helped me switch off for a while, which meant I was more refreshed when I hit the books again.

From my experience, once the exams are over, it's also important not to dwell on every mistake you think you made - you truly cannot tell how well or badly you have done until results day.

Preparing for studying

I had real difficulty stopping myself from getting distracted when I was meant to be working. I tried working with the television on, which turned out to be more like glancing at my books whilst watching the television. What worked for me in the end was removing all distractions while I was working and taking regular breaks. And some days I would try to sit down and my heart just wasn't in it. The trick was to recognise when I was in that kind of mood, then do something else

and not feel guilty about it. A flexible study plan certainly helped in this way.

Exam support

Everyone at work and all my tutors were supportive when I needed help, although the onus was on me to ask for the assistance I felt I needed. As part of my exam course there were a lot of timed mock exam questions, which really helped with exam technique. The time pressure in the exams was a real problem for me initially, so plenty of practising helped me remain calm when it came to the exam room.

Final word...

For those currently preparing for exams, the only advice I feel I can offer is not to despair! The run up to sitting the exams is a stressful and difficult time, and there are times when you think it will never be over. But don't let it take over your life - free time and friends are important too!

“...it's important not to dwell on every mistake you think you made...”

We'll feature other tips in future editions, so if you've got any tips to help other students, just email us: studentsupport@icaew.co.uk

Why fill in Training Record forms as you go?

The answer to the above question is, to make it easier for you. When the time arrives for you to apply for membership of the Institute, you will be required to submit your TA2/TR3 Assessment Summary Form. This form must be completed to date and signed off by your MRT (Member Responsible for Training).

During your period of approved training you will receive regular six-monthly reviews of work experience by your MRT or your counsellor. These reviews are recorded on your TA1 Assessment Forms and although they are not submitted when applying for membership, the information that you have recorded on them

throughout your approved training is transferred onto your TA2/TR3.

It is therefore important that you maintain your TA1 forms and transfer your written assessments of performance and progress as you go along as it acts as a form of confirmation of your suitability for membership.

Syllabus

The new booklet for the Professional Stage syllabuses has been produced for 2002 and is being sent to all Training Organisations. We have also produced the TC2/FAE syllabus booklet for 2002-2003.

Both syllabuses are on the website: www.icaew.co.uk/students, or contact the Student Support team on 01908 248040 or by email: studentsupport@icaew.co.uk, if you would like hard copies.

Ethical Guidance Revisions

You may have seen in the last issue of Vital that the Guide to Professional Ethics has recently been revised and is still under review.

Our guidance on marketing (Statement 1.211 Obtaining Professional Work) has changed with effect from November. Please see our website (www.icaew.co.uk/students) for details of this and other recent and planned changes.

Our professional ethics training package includes a case study on marketing, which is currently being updated. The revised case study will be available on our website shortly.

Produced by Education & Training

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