

Think Ahead

ACCA

PER

Practical experience requirements

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The basics



WHAT IS ACCA'S PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT (PER)?

ACCA's practical experience requirement (PER) is a key component of the ACCA Qualification. To become an ACCA member all trainees – students and affiliates – must successfully complete:

- the ACCA exams
- the Professional Ethics module
- the practical experience requirement.

ACCA's PER is based on the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) International Education Standard 5, Practical Experience Requirements. ACCA's PER develops the professional knowledge and values, ethics and behaviours needed to become a professionally qualified accountant.

There are three components to the PER:

- achieve five (5) Essentials and any four (4) Technical performance objectives by gaining the experience required to achieve the necessary elements and complete a statement for each performance objective, which are signed off by your practical experience supervisor*
- complete 36 months' experience in one or more accounting or finance-related role which is verified by your practical experience supervisor.
- regularly record your PER progress in your online *My Experience* record, which can be accessed via *myACCA*.

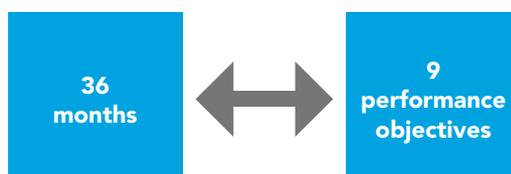
WHY IS THE PER IMPORTANT?

In order to perform effectively as an ACCA qualified accountant, you need to develop your skills in the workplace as well as passing the exams. The PER helps you to:

- apply in practice the knowledge and techniques you are gaining through your studies towards the ACCA exams
- observe and be involved in real- life work situations that help you to develop professional skills, attitudes and behaviours
- develop your judgment, encouraging you to reflect on the quality of your work and how you may improve your performance in the future.

Employers expect ACCA members to show high levels of knowledge and ability in the workplace, and behave ethically. PER enables you to confirm the quality of your workplace performance.

**ALL RECORDED IN
MY EXPERIENCE**



* Unless your employer is a Gold or Platinum approved employer and they have taken advantage of the performance objective exemption; in this case you should regularly record your progress towards achieving 36 months' experience in your online *My Experience* record.

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Meeting the requirements

HOW DO I GET THE RIGHT TYPE OF EXPERIENCE?

ACCA trainees work in every sector and size of organisation. Wherever you work, it is important to look for the opportunities to help you meet your PER and to obtain 36 months' experience in a relevant role, or roles. Ideally, you should have a job where most of your time is spent on activities and tasks related to accounting, finance, audit and assurance, or in other related technical areas such as taxation, insolvency, and forensic accounting.

If your job only includes some accountancy or finance work then the time you spend on these activities can still count towards your 36 months' experience. For example, if only 25% of your working time during the year is spent on accounting or finance tasks, you can claim three months out of a possible 12 as relevant time. When you record your role in *My Experience* you must input the percentage of time you spend on accountancy or finance activities, the relevant time you can claim will then be calculated automatically.

You can use experience from previous roles, voluntary work, work placements and internships towards your PER, including experience gained before registering with ACCA. If you are using previous experience then the person who supervised your work at that time must be able to review and sign off your experience.

WHAT IF I AM STUDYING FULL TIME, OR NOT IN A RELEVANT JOB?

We realise that many trainees study for their exams on a full-time basis before gaining their PER. If you are studying full time you need to regularly update your *My Experience* record to inform us of this.

If you are not in a relevant job to achieve your PER, you still need to regularly update your *My Experience* record to inform us of this. You could gain experience by doing voluntary work for clubs, charities or associations. Alternatively, if your current job offers no opportunities for accountancy or finance related work, it may be necessary to find a job that does. We recommend you use the range of career resources in [ACCA Careers](#), to help you gain a relevant job.

WHAT ARE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES?

Performance objectives are ACCA's indicators of effective performance. They set the minimum standard that you need to demonstrate in the workplace.

You are required to achieve nine performance objectives – all five Essentials and any four Technical. You can only achieve performance objectives if you are in a relevant role. The Essentials focus on professionalism and ethics; stakeholder relationship management; strategy and innovation; governance risk and control; leadership and management. The Technical performance objectives focus on technical areas: corporate reporting; financial management; sustainable management accounting; taxation; and audit and assurance. You can find out more about the performance objectives in *My Experience*, or in ACCA's performance objectives booklet at www.accaglobal.com/per. The information includes the types of activities that could help you work towards achieving your performance objectives, and the exams that the performance objectives link to.

Each performance objective is linked to an exam paper. Pursuing linked exams and performance objectives will allow you to put into practice what you are learning and help you to structure your study and training effectively.



We recommend that you start to plan your search for a relevant role prior to leaving full-time study. Visit www.accacareers.com. You could also ask your tuition provider for support and ideas.

HOW DO I COMPLETE MY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES?

Each performance objective is made up of a description, elements which describe the skills and experience you must demonstrate and a statement. The statement allows you to summarise and reflect on your work activity, so that your supervisor can evaluate whether you have achieved the standard required for the performance objective you are trying to achieve. You will need to claim five elements and complete a 200–300 word statement for each performance objective.

You can claim elements individually as soon as you achieve them, you do not have to wait until you are ready to submit the whole objective.

YOUR STATEMENT

What should I write?

Each description should be a concise explanation of how you achieved the performance objective description. Remember that you only need to cover the broad description of each performance objective. You don't need to summarise all the activities you carried out to achieve the individual elements.

We'll need details of one or two tasks that you've been involved with for every performance objective. The tasks should relate closely to the objective's description. Remember there is a limit of 200–300 words for each statement.

When writing your statement:

- be concise
- avoid using jargon or abbreviations, unless they are explained.
- provide evidence and examples to help illustrate your statement.
- avoid repeating information or making reference to other statements.

Remember that your experience is unique and your statement should be unique too.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

ESSENTIALS – complete all five

- 1 Professionalism and ethics
- 2 Stakeholder relationship management
- 3 Strategy and innovation
- 4 Governance risk and control
- 5 Leadership and management

TECHNICAL – choose any four

Corporate reporting

- 6 Record and process transactions and events
- 7 Prepare external financial reports
- 8 Analyse and interpret financial reports

Financial management

- 9 Evaluate investment and financing decisions
- 10 Manage and control working capital
- 11 Identify and manage financial risk

Sustainable management accounting

- 12 Evaluate management accounting systems
- 13 Plan and control performance
- 14 Monitor performance

Taxation

- 15 Tax computations and assessments
- 16 Tax compliance and verification
- 17 Tax planning and advice

Audit and assurance

- 18 Prepare for and plan the audit process
- 19 Collect and evaluate evidence for an audit
- 20 Review and report on the findings of an audit

WHAT IS A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE SUPERVISOR?

A practical experience supervisor supports your development in the workplace and reviews your PER progress and achievements. Your practical experience supervisor should guide and support you in the following ways:

- Help you to identify which performance objectives you should aim to achieve, and the date by which you should achieve them.
- Help you plan how to gain relevant experience, for example by helping to arrange job rotations, project work, or other opportunities should you need them.
- Help you identify personal development, training, research, or practice needed to achieve the performance objective.
- Your practical experience supervisor will review your performance objective statement and sign off your performance objectives once they agree that you have met the standard required.
- Your practical experience supervisor will also confirm the relevant time you are claiming towards your 36 months' experience.

It is your responsibility to find a practical experience supervisor. To be eligible to sign off your performance objectives they must be a qualified accountant recognised by law in your country and/or a member of an IFAC body; and they must have knowledge of your work. They should be someone with whom you work closely, who knows the type of work you are doing and the quality of your work. They will be assessing your achievements so it is important they have the knowledge and expertise to do this. Ideally this will be your line manager, or the person to whom you report on particular projects or activities. A practical experience supervisor cannot sign off experience that you have not been able to demonstrate to them in the workplace. If your practical experience supervisor is not your line manager, then they may need to consult with your line manager to validate your experience.

You can have one practical experience supervisor, or you can have several different practical experience supervisors to support you in achieving different performance objectives. For example, you may report directly to your line manager who will be able to help you with performance objective five, but you may also be working closely on a project with another colleague who may be able to support you on performance objective nine.

If you are the most senior finance person in your organisation, you work for a small organisation, or your organisation does not employ a professionally qualified accountant who can sign-off your performance objectives then you could ask an external accountant or auditor who knows your work, to be your practical experience supervisor and work with your line manager to sign-off your objectives.



Remember that your non IFAC qualified line manager can still sign off the relevant time you have completed in this role.

You should avoid having a friend or relative as your practical experience supervisor to prevent any potential conflicts of interest. In the event that your practical experience supervisor is related to you, you should disclose this to ACCA when you apply for membership.

 Encourage possible practical experience supervisors to read *Becoming a practical experience supervisor*. You'll find this at www.accaglobal.com/per



WHAT IS THE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES EXEMPTION?

If your employer is a gold or platinum ACCA approved employer – trainee development stream, they may allow you to claim a performance objectives exemption. You would still be required to achieve 36 months' experience and keep a record of this and your employer details in your online *My Experience* record, as well as recording that you are claiming the performance objective exemption. This exemption exists because ACCA recognises that your employer has a training and development programme which gives trainees the required support to achieve professional status.

However, it is important to confirm that your employer has this level of approval and whether they will allow you to claim the exemption. Please note that it is your employer – not you – who decides whether you can claim the exemption.

If you have met the requirements for membership or leave an approved employer where the exemption has been applied, you must complete the *Approved employer PER summary form* which you can download from *My Experience*. This will ensure that you have a record of any performance objectives you have achieved while working for them. Please send a copy of your signed-off approved employer PER summary form to ACCA and we will update your records to reflect your achievement. Please keep the original for your own records.

WHAT IF I WANT A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE IN THE FUTURE?

As a trainee you are not able to undertake work within ACCA's definition of public practice*. You are allowed to provide basic bookkeeping services, undertake payroll and VAT work and record basic accounting records to trial balance stage. If you are self-employed, and provide these services directly to the public, this cannot contribute towards your PER.

ACCA issues a practising certificate and a combined practising certificate and audit qualification**. Practising certificates are available only to ACCA members, and to obtain one you need to do a number of things – including completing a period of relevant post-membership work experience with an ACCA approved employer – practising certificate development stream.

Up to one year of pre-membership experience can count towards the award of an ACCA practising certificate.

- To ensure your pre-admission to membership experience counts towards your eligibility for an ACCA practising certificate, you will need to have your performance objectives signed off by a practical experience supervisor who holds an ACCA practising certificate; or a practising member of another professional accountancy body which is recognised by law for audit purposes in your country.
- In order that your pre-admission to membership experience can count towards your eligibility for an ACCA practising certificate and audit qualification, you will need to document this experience in a Practising Certificate Training Record and have it signed off by a practical experience supervisor who holds an ACCA practising certificate and audit qualification or an equivalent qualification from another recognised professional accountancy body.

In addition to gaining the appropriate PER, you will need to ensure that you have passed the ACCA exams needed to gain a practising certificate. Visit 'Practising Information' in the members section of www.accaglobal.com/practising for further information.

WHAT IS A PER AUDIT?

ACCA conducts PER audits to assure the quality of the PER process and to maintain the standards that are set out in the performance objectives. You may be selected for a PER audit before or after you become an ACCA member or as part of the admission to membership process.

* There are exceptions to this, but it is essential that you refer to ACCA's Rulebook or contact ACCA if you believe you fall into this category. If this is the case, work that falls within the definition of public practice cannot contribute to your PER.

** An ACCA practising certificate and audit qualification is issued only for the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus, and Zimbabwe.

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Using My Experience to follow the PER process

USING MY EXPERIENCE

You plan and record your PER using the online recording tool *My Experience* which you can access in *myACCA*. You will need your user name and password to access *myACCA*. The tool will help you to plan your PER and track your progress towards achieving the requirements. You will also use it to record your employment information, register your supervisor and submit your experience to them for sign-off. ACCA recommends that you always keep your PER information up to date. Trainees often have difficulties if they do not: an example is failing to get experience signed off before leaving an employer. Updating *My Experience* also allows ACCA to track your progress and assist you by developing products and services to help you on your way, and we can invite you to apply for membership as soon as we can see you are eligible.

YOU AND YOUR PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE SUPERVISOR

Once you have identified a practical experience supervisor, make sure that you enter their details into *My Experience* and send them an invitation to register as your supervisor. You will not be able to submit anything to your supervisor for sign-off until they have registered, so make sure you invite them to register as soon as you can. Then you will need to meet to decide which performance objectives you are going to target first.

You should agree with your practical experience supervisor how your relationship can be managed. For example, how often will you meet to discuss progress towards achieving your performance objectives? Will these meetings be virtual or face to face? You should agree your approach together to avoid misunderstandings, unnecessary meetings, or unexpected requests. It is important to be proactive and plan ahead.

You will need to make the most of the time you have scheduled with your supervisor. As well as taking responsibility for arranging and planning meetings, think ahead about the agenda and anything you need to discuss.



You should also agree how and when your supervisor will review your performance objectives. These could be reviewed as and when you submit an individual element or a whole performance objective to them for review, on a quarterly basis, or as part of your annual appraisal process.

TARGETING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Ideally, your employer should give you the experience you need to achieve the performance objectives. If your current role offers few opportunities, you and your practical experience supervisor will need to think of ways to gain relevant experience. For example, you might consider a secondment, job rotation, or involvement in a project that will give you the necessary experience.

The performance objectives you choose should be agreed with your practical experience supervisor. You should consider the following points when selecting which performance objectives to target:

- If you are studying for ACCA exams, choose the performance objectives that relate to these exams. This way you will be able to put what you are learning into practice.
- Match any business objectives you have been set at work with the performance objectives. This will allow you to work towards your business objectives and your PER at the same time.

There is no time limit for achieving a performance objective, but you must be able to demonstrate that you can carry out the work activities that relate to the performance objective to a consistent standard.

WRITING YOUR PERFORMANCE

| AREA OF KNOWLEDGE | PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE | LINKS TO EXAMS |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Professionalism and ethics | 1 Professionalism and ethics | Links to all exams |
| Stakeholder relationship management | 2 Stakeholder relationship management | F1, Accountant in Business F7, Financial Reporting P1, Governance, Risk and Ethics P2, Corporate Reporting P3, Business Analyst P4, Advanced Financial Management |
| Strategy and innovation | 3 Strategy and innovation | P3, Business Analyst P4, Advanced Financial Management P5, Advanced Performance Management |
| Governance risk and control | 4 Governance risk and control | F1, Accountant in Business F4, Corporate and Business Law F8, Audit and Assurance P1, Governance, Risk and Ethics P7, Advanced Audit and Assurance |
| Leadership and management | 5 Leadership and management | F1, Accountant in Business P1, Governance, Risk and Ethics P3, Business Analyst P4, Advanced Financial Management P5, Advanced Performance Management |
| Corporate reporting | 6 Record and process transactions and events | F3, Financial Accounting |
| | 7 Prepare external financial reports | F7, Financial Reporting |
| | 8 Analyse and interpret financial reports | P2, Corporate Reporting |
| Financial management | 9 Evaluate investment and financing decisions | F9, Financial Management P3, Business Analyst P4, Advanced Financial Management |
| | 10 Manage and control working capital | F9, Financial Management |
| | 11 Identify and manage financial risk | F9, Financial Management P1, Governance, Risk and Ethics P4, Advanced Financial Management |
| Sustainable management accounting | 12 Evaluate management accounting systems | F2, Management Accounting F5, Performance Management P3, Business Analyst P5, Advanced Performance Management |
| | 13 Plan and control performance | F2, Management Accounting F5, Performance Management P1, Governance, Risk and Ethics P3, Business Analyst P5, Advanced Performance Management |
| | 14 Monitor performance | F2, Management Accounting F5, Performance Management P5, Advanced Performance Management |
| Taxation | 15 Tax computations and assessments | F6, Taxation P6, Advanced Taxation |
| | 16 Tax compliance and verification | |
| | 17 Tax planning and advice | |
| Audit and assurance | 18 Prepare for and plan the audit process | F8, Audit and Assurance P7, Advanced Audit and Assurance |
| | 19 Collect and evaluate evidence for an audit | |
| | 20 Review and report on the findings of an audit | |

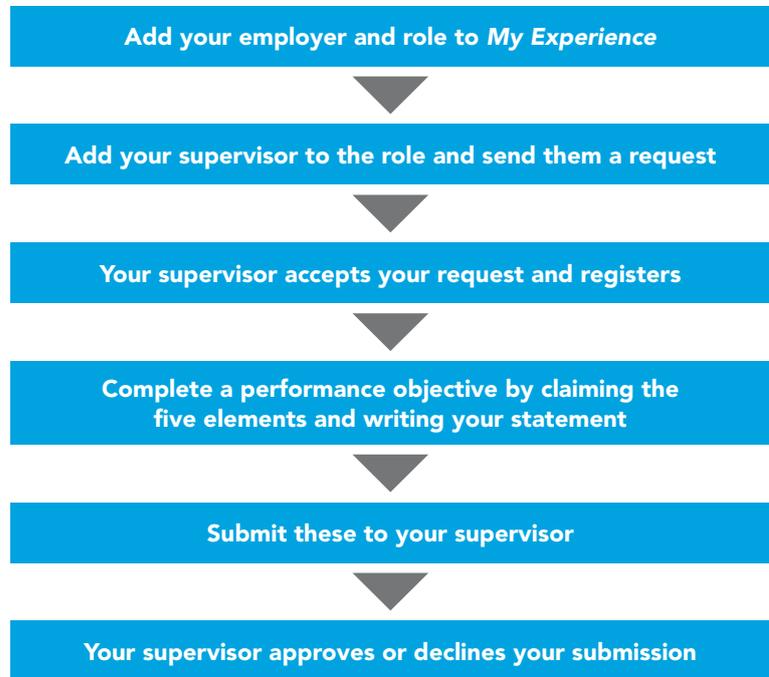
OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS

Remember you can claim individual elements from your performance objectives as you achieve them, and send each to your practical experience supervisor for sign-off. But when you and your supervisor agree that you have achieved the level of experience required to achieve the whole performance objective, you should claim any remaining elements and submit your statement for your supervisor to review and sign-off. It might be helpful to discuss with your supervisor what you should include in your statement. Remember, though, that you must complete the statement yourself.

The following tips will help you complete your performance objective statements:

- Tell us what you did to meet the objective's description and highlight any lessons you learned. Remember that you only need to cover the broad description of each performance objective. You don't need to summarise all the activities you carried out to achieve the individual elements.
- Keep your answers concise, but not so brief that your supervisor cannot appreciate what you are recording. As a guide, someone who doesn't know your work should be able to fully understand and appreciate the work you have completed. Taking this approach will also help ACCA to assess your eligibility for membership and conduct PER audits. Provide details of one or two tasks that you've been involved with for each statement. The tasks should relate closely to the objective's description.
- Show your supervisor that you are achieving your goals and performing effectively in the workplace.
- Avoid repeating information or making reference to other statements.
- Check back against the performance objective description. Have you met all the outcomes and shown that you have conducted yourself in an appropriate manner?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE ONLINE SIGN-OFF PROCESS



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- If you need to make reference to clients or particular documents that may be confidential, it might be more appropriate to use some references or codes instead. If you do, make sure that your supervisor understands these. You will also need to provide this information if you are selected by ACCA for a PER audit, so we can confirm the authenticity of your work.
 - If relevant, you might need to mention the size or variety of client firms.
 - You can use information from existing documents that you have written, such as your performance appraisal form. You must make sure that whatever you use fully addresses the performance objective description. Remember that your experience is unique and your statement should be unique too. (If cutting and pasting from another document, please check that your answer is saved correctly in *My Experience*).
 - Avoid using jargon or abbreviations, unless they are explained.
 - Remember that each statement should be between 200 and 300 words.

Your situation and experience are unique to you, so we do not expect to see duplicated wording, whether from statement to statement, or from other trainees. If such duplication occurs then it may be referred to ACCA's Disciplinary Committee.

REVIEWING AND GAINING SIGN-OFF

You will need to submit your performance objectives to your practical experience supervisor for review and sign-off. To do this, you will need to ensure that your supervisor is registered by adding their details to *My Experience* and sending them an invitation to register as your supervisor. You will not be able to submit anything to your supervisor for sign-off until they have registered.

When your supervisor receives the notification email, they must register in *My Experience* to be given access to review and sign-off your experience. Please note: your supervisor can only see the status of your performance objectives and the time you have completed, but not your personal details. If they have questions they can use the comments section to ask you a question. Once approved your experience will show as completed on your *My Experience* record.

Your supervisor will decide if you have met all the requirements for the performance objective as a whole, or any of the performance objective elements you have claimed individually. They will refer to the detail of the relevant performance objective to check your achievements. The review can be done in person or remotely; it may also be done in conjunction with your line manager if they are not performing this role.

If your supervisor decides that you have not yet achieved all or part of a performance objective they will decline your submission. You should discuss this and ask for feedback. You may find it useful to review your submission with your supervisor, and agree a plan of action that will help you achieve the performance objective. Your supervisor will leave feedback for you to view within the declined objective.

Need more help? Please visit www.accaglobal.com/per

Need more help?

Please visit www.accaglobal.com for further guidance and support for PER

ACCA

2 Central Quay
89 Hydepark Street
Glasgow G3 8BW
United Kingdom

+44 (0)141 582 2000
info@accaglobal.com
www.accaglobal.com

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