ACCA SBL exam planning sheet

Use this sheet in your mock exams and for your final revision. It's based on ACCA's SBL format: 3 hours 15 minutes for 100 marks (80 technical and 20 professional skills marks), with three compulsory tasks and no separate reading time.

Time per task

Each mark is worth just under 2 minutes. Count professional skills marks in the task's total.

Task marks	Total time	Read and plan	Write
20	39 min	8 min	31 min
25	49 min	10 min	39 min
30	59 min	12 min	47 min
35	68 min	14 min	54 min

The planning split is a suggestion. When a task's time runs out, move on to the next one.

Before you write each task

1. Read the requirement, including the professional skills sentence.
2. Note the format (briefing notes, email, report, slides) and who the reader is.
3. Read only the exhibits the requirement points to.
4. List your points under headings, with the exhibit facts or numbers each one uses.
5. Note the claims you can challenge, if scepticism is tested.
6. Decide your recommendation before you start writing.

Professional skills checklist

- Analysis: have I used the numbers and explained causes?
- Commercial acumen: could a real business act on my recommendation?
- Communication: is the format right and the tone suitable for the reader?
- Evaluation: have I weighed both sides and reached a conclusion?
- Scepticism: have I challenged specific claims with evidence from the exhibits?

Two weeks with the pre-seen

1. Read the pre-seen once, straight through, on the day it's released.
2. Write a one-page summary: what the organisation does, how it earns revenue, its stakeholders and its key numbers.
3. Work out the obvious figures once, such as growth and margins.
4. Spend the rest of the time on timed mock tasks.
5. Reread your summary the day before the exam.

General research into the industry won't score marks. The tasks are answered from the exhibits you see in the exam.