DAS Q&A

These are the questions and answers from the live webinar held on 16 February 2021 on digital Learning Materials.

Q: Trying to determine how many marks the data analytics questions are worth in both AA and CR. Cannot find anywhere on the ICAEW website.
A: Approx. 10-12 marks from directly interrogating the software

Q: Re the data analytics software, is it the case that the CR exam content isn't actually changing?
A: That is correct. The syllabus learning outcomes have not changed. The data analytics software is an enabler within the question.

Q: Checked the syllabus and could only find the subject weightings.
A: Refer to the icaew.com/corporatereportingdas and icaew.com/auditandassurancedas webpages for more information

Q: Will the inflo data set be able to be seen at the same time as the actual question?
A: The data analytics software will be available in a different tab during your exam.

Q: I realise this but really, we need to know how many marks the exercise is worth to know how much time to spend on the exercises. It is easy to spend too much time analysing and leaving not enough time to answer the rest of the paper.
A: Andrea will be covering this in the webinar. Thanks

Q: Which exam is this for?
A: Audit and Assurance and Corporate Reporting

Q: Is the Data analytics software going to affect the stability of the exam software?
A: No. The new exam platform is designed to accommodate additional software and has been thoroughly tested.

Q: Data analytics (inflo) questions is something new introduced for the March sitting. Would this be considered when marking the papers as we might all get it incorrect
A: As with all new aspects of ICAEW exams, the data analytics aspects have been thoroughly tested and quality checked to ensure that the questions do not disadvantage students.

Q: Is there a risk that people will spend too much time worrying about how to manipulate the data and not enough time understanding what it all means?
A: As with all elements of the exams, time management is a key skill that is needed and practicing in advance of the real exam will improve that skill.

Q: Will this be a part of the upcoming Case Study exam?
A: Data analytics software will only feature in the Audit and Assurance and Corporate Reporting exams.

Q: Is the CR Question Bank updated to reflect the data analytics & introduction of advanced information? How can we practise for this?
A: There are dedicated resources available at icaew.com/corporatereportingdas

Q: When and where will the recording be uploaded?
A: All the webinars from this week will be uploaded to the student area of the website next week. We'll let you know once they are ready.

Q: How many % will be this new data analytics question be for
A: 10-12 marks

Q: Does the Question Bank for Corporate Reporting reflect the new data analytics questions?
A: Practice questions showing how the Data Analytics Software will look, be assessed and what marks are allocated to the questions, can be found on icaew.com/corporatereportingdas

Q: If we aren't using the software are, we going wrong? If the exam hasn't changed there may not be a question on data analytics?
A: The Data analytics software will be used in one question in the A&A and CR exams.

Q: Can you copy paste from the digital material to the software during exam?
A: You can't copy and paste from the Bookshelf into the exam software.

Q: Will practise questions using the Data Analytics software be made available before the exams?
A: There are dedicated resources available at icaew.com/corporatereportingdas and icaew.com/auditandassurancedas

Q: How different will the March audit and assurance exam format will be from the Dec 2020 exam
A: we have released a resit guide for exams in 2021, this will help - you can find it via icaew.com/examresources - navigate to the Audit and Assurance page and it's under Study and exam support.

Q: Will we be able to use ctrl + tab to switch between the data analytics software and the ques in the exam?
A: As the software is browser based you will be able to use CTRL + SHIFT + TAB to switch between browser tabs.

Q: II get an error message when trying to download the software: "The email domain does not match the selected provider. Email returned: 4688594 | PLAAMOCK21EX". Can this be fixed?
A: Can you contact student support so they can look into your individual issue?

Q: You say 10-12 marks but is this for AA or CR or both?
A: Both

Q: Why aren't the data analytics software integrated into the practice software yet?
A: the DAS practice questions, and data sets can be viewed and used alongside the practice software.

Q: Will we also receive the advanced information in hard copy? or in a downloadable format?
A: The AI will be provided as a PDF that you can print off, and as an open book exam you will be able to take the hard copy into your exam.

Q: Will the past exam questions on the software incorporate the data analytics software?
A: There are dedicated resources available at icaew.com/corporatereportingdas

Q: In AA Mock 1 Q2 there are 27 marks in the requirements suggesting use of the DA software. Is this representative of the real exam and If a student doesn't use the DA software would they lose max 10-12 marks? Or max 27 marks?
A: Not all the 27 marks are for directly using the software; 10-12 marks are for this. In the case of the mock exam question, the 10-12 marks are gateway marks; i.e. you need to use the software to then be able to answer part B

Q: I'm a bit confused, how many software's will we be using for the CR exam? Is it two software's and we must switch between the two?
A: There is one new data analytics software which will be introduced in CR July exam. It is integrated within the new exam software which is being introduced for March exams.

Q: The dummy software on the ICAEW website is blank and contains no data on the CR exam resources. Is this fully up to date so we can practice on it?
A: Corporate reporting questions within the practice software will be released shortly. Keep an eye on your student alerts for when they are live and ready to use

Q: With the data analytics software and the online learning materials on the exam - there will be time spent going back and forth and wasting time in the exam. Having two screens would make this much more beneficial as we would be able to have the software open and the question at the same time.
A: Thank you for your feedback which we will take into consideration.

Q: What support is being given to Students sitting or resitting CR in July, now that it seems that it's changed a lot. Is the question bank still relevant or are we going to be sent new ones?
A: You should use the 2021 question bank. Additional DAS questiions and resources are available at icaew.com/corporatereportingdas

Q: The screen is showing blank for me at the moment?
A: Apologies for this - you may want to try leaving the webinar and then re-entering

Q: Is the Data Analytics relevant to the Case Study?
A: The data analytics software is included in A&A and CR exams. Technology (as a subject) is embedded across all ACA exams and syllabus.

Q: The data analytic software will feature along with the key audit risks and procedures in the AA exam, so does that mean that the essence of the ques will stay the same- just that we will make use of the visualisations to write a bit in the answers?
A: If you use the practice questions you will see how the software is used and what is expected in the solutions

Q: Is the question bank the same as prior years or has it been updated to reflect the changes to the exam?
A: The question banks reflect the 2021 syllabus and skills grid. They do not include DAS questions; these are available on the CR DAS webpage

Q: Would this software require additional system requirements?
A: No. It is accessed via the exam platform.

Q: Is there any practice data analytical software available? Thanks
A: Practice datasets are available at icaew.com/das.

Q: How do we open the practice software in chrome? mine opens in Firefox
A: The data analytics software will be in a separate tab during an exam.

Q: For those resitting, will we get access to the open book in the exam if we choose not to buy the new set of 2021 AA books?
A: ICAEW can only ever recommend students use the appropriate edition of the learning materials, and permitted texts, to study and use within your exams. As an open book exam, you can take in any hard copy materials you wish. However, if you have not bought/been bought the 2021 digital materials, you will not have access to these within you CR exam.

Q: Will it be specified in the exam which module to use? (for audit and assurance)
A: In A&A yes, we will specify the Inflo module you should use.

Q: When doing questions, is the data from the question automatically imported into the data analytics tool or do we have to do some sort of upload?
A: The data is already in the data analytics software. No uploading is required.

Q: Could this disadvantage those students that don't work in audit?
A: We tested the software on students who both worked in audit and those who don't and there was no significant difference.

Q: Is it possible to split screens / use two screens?
A: Students will be able to mirror/duplicate a screen onto a bigger display but will not be able to extend to two screens.

Q: what is the need for this extra change? it doesn't look like something which we would do in real life at all?
A: We constantly consult with employers, tutors and students on ensuring the ACA qualification reflects real life work environments and practice. Data analytics is one area which was felt was a key skill that future chartered accountants need. This software is widely used in practice.

Q: How we will be able to see this software, questions and the word/excel to write the answer at once?
A: You will be able to switch between tabs.

Q: Is real audit software really needed in a time-pressured exam? It seemed to take a while to load as well - will these pop-ups come up in a final exam?
A: One of the key aspects of ICAEW exams is that they reflect as much as possible the workplace. The software does not take long to load. The "learn more" pop ups will not appear in the exam (they are to help with your understanding of the software).

Q: So, is the software just for information and to extrapolate from the graphs etc?
A: Yes, it is an analytic tool.

Q: Surely there is not enough time to use this software? It was already time pressured enough without this.
A: The exam questions are always pre-tested, and quality checked to ensure that there is sufficient time to answer. Time management is one of the key exam skills and practising in advance of the real exam improves that skill. The data / information that you previously got from the exam question, will now appear in the software (i.e. there is less info in the question for you to read)

Q: Can you screenshot the data analytics software and include that in your answer?
A: You cannot screen shot the data analytics software.

Q: Is there a shortcut to move between the software and exam question?
A: Yes, candidates will be able to use CTRL + TAB to switch between the software and the exam questions.

Q: Will the Qs that we are asked to be using data within fieldwork or will we need to use planning / completion?
A: Fieldwork.

Q: Will tuition providers be fully trained up with the software to ensure we are guided appropriately?
A: ICAEW have presented the data analytics software to the tuition providers and are in regular contact with them answering any questions that they have.

Q: Do we have to export any of the data into the exam answer sheet?
A: No, in fact you cannot do this.

Q: If we can duplicate our screen, do we need an external camera or can use our laptops?
A: You will need an external webcam if extending to a screen without a built-in webcam.

Q: How many marks for the DAS in the audit exam?
A: 10-12 marks.

Q: Are ACA tutors being trained on this program?
A: Yes, they are - we held a conference and demo for them earlier in the year as well as online resources and tools.

Q: If there are time lags in the inflo software in the exam - how will this be rectified? Will we get extra time?
A: There will not be any time lags. If you have any issues during the exam you should let ICAEW know via the special considerations process.

Q: Could you please give us a brief overview of each module on the software, so we know roughly what they do!
A: The data analytics learning support materials available on the website provide this overview.

Q: Has the question bank itself been updated to reflect advanced information for CR, or is it the same as prior years?
A: Additional CR questions (which include the use of AI) are being developed and will be put on the CR DAS page. Mock exams will also feature AI. Watch out for communications from ICAEW regarding updated CR resources.

Q: Is the information given ahead of the corporate reporting exam new to this exam?
A: Yes, advance information is being introduced for Corporate Reporting this year. Lots of guidance is available at icaew.com/das

Q: Would the software display be adapted around the type of requirement? or is it more standardised?
A: The software will always look the same.

Q: Do we get the advanced information again in the exam, or do we have to remember the content?
A: The AI will be provided as a PDF that you can print and take into your exam. As an open book exam, you can take in hard copy materials in your CR exam

Q: How easy is to switch between the main software and inflo? When we're typing up answers and need to go back to the data, I'm worried about how much time this is going to waste
A: You can switch between tabs.

Q: Have the questions for CR changed from previous years to reflect the new advanced information we're given
A: CR DAS resources are being developed and will appear on the ICAEW website.

Q: Will the CR advance data be available in the practice exam software?
A: Yes

Q: What happens if we forget to log out? why is that so important?
A: There is a risk that if you haven't logged out of the practice software that it may open in the exam, instead of the live exam dataset

Q: Do we need to perform data analytics work ahead of the corporate reporting exam now then?
A: You should familiarise yourself with the advanced information and the software. Use the practice questions to help you with this.

Q: Do the cookies and browsing history just need to be cleared from Chrome or all browsers?
A: You would only be required to clear your cache and cookies from Chrome, as you are using this browser for the exam.

Q: Are exam centres likely to be open for the July corporate reporting exam?
A: We will follow the government guidance in each country to determine whether using assessment centres is possible. It's too early to tell at the moment - in the UK.

Q: So, for the AA exam, we can still take in our physical open book if we want to?
A: A digital copy of the Audit Standards will be provided as part of the exam.

Q: So, during the exam, after we have used inflo, do we log out? Or do we log out just when we are practising?
A: Please ensure you have logged out after practising.

Q: How will we receive these data sets before the exam? Is this on Bibliu? If so - we are expected to access our online materials in the exam, the 11-month data set and document, inflo and the questions. How are we expected to navigate through all this inflo by switching between tabs etc?
A: You will be sent a link prior to the exam with the AI dataset.

Q: If this is a resit then there was no extra tuition for this in 2021, where can we access practice questions?
A: There is a resit guide on the Audit and Assurance exam resources web page - you can navigate to it via icaew.com/examresources. Hope this helps.

Q: Given the large amount of computer issues that student have had previously during exams, how are you ensuring that this does not happen given the large number of changes happening all at once?
A: We have thoroughly tested the various systems being introduced this year.

Q: Is logging out important due to limited licenses? Given how ICAEW struggled with IT problems throughout last year is there a risk of this all immediately breaking and pushing people back a further 3 months?
A: No, it isn't. There is a risk that if you haven't logged out of the practice software that the exam software may open in practice. This is the reason for clearing cache.

Q: You say this is just another exhibit. But with exhibits you can type an answer while looking at the data, with this software we cannot, and this will waste a lot of time
A: Thank you for this feedback. We thoroughly test all exams and time management is carefully considered.

Q: How are you supposed to use the software in your answer if you can't screenshot it and you won't be marked on your use of it?
A: If you use the practice questions you will see how the software is used and what answers are expected.

Q: Can you provide more detail on how we'd apply the data analytics software to the question? Feel like this webinar just showed us how to open the data analytics link
A: If you use the practice questions, they show how the software is used in the exams and how the solutions should reflect this.

Q: I think my question is misunderstood. Will we get access to the permitted text for AA regardless if we have or have not bought the new set of books? Will the permitted text just be embedded as part of the exam software?
A: The permitted text will be embedded in the exam software.

Q: The issue with all these changes is the qualification is becoming more about learning exam technique than the content itself! So now, yet again more time learning exam technique. What's the impact on people with Neurodiversity? Has this been looked at? And is the report widely available to read on the impact?
A: The introduction of this software is designed to replicate the workplace, enabling students to use the skills and techniques required in practice. We have an access arrangements team who consider students' specific circumstances; we work hard to ensure that students are not disadvantaged.

Q: Does the minutes per mark ratio change? Its already time pressured just reading and thinking about questions let alone also working our way around software
A: No, the number of marks in the exam hasn't changed. You should ensure you understand your way around the software prior to the exam.

Q: At present, what is the plan for those sitting CR in July? Are there plans for us to sit at an exam centre or will they all be remote also?
A: We will follow the government guidelines in each country to determine whether it is possible to offer assessment centres. It's too early to make that decision at the moment.

Q: In these exams we're going to be having potentially 3 tabs open (exam/ inflo / bookshelf) but we're only allowed to use one screen. I don't personally find this reflective of the workplace where i have multiple screens to that I can see lots of information at once
A: Thank you for this feedback, we will take it into consideration going forward

Q: Will remove invigilation always be an option now going forward?
A: Remote invigilation will remain as an open for all exams.

Q: How do you copy the data analytics things into the answer?
A: You cannot copy / paste from the DAS into your answer.

Q: Will DA be a part of the 40 marker or 20 markers?
A: It could be any of the long questions in A&A, will always be Q1 in CR.

Q: What are you removing or simplifying to compensate for the increased complexity and time pressure related to using additional data analytics software during the AA exam?
A: There will be less text / info within the question itself.

Q: With respect to Monday's session, there was the option for those with learning disabilities can receive their materials in hard copy. Who can this be obtained? through contacting ICAEW or via your tuition provider?
A: This would be an application via our access arrangements team, please do contact our student support team for more information

Q: If you are looking for presentation skills within our answer, are we going to have extra time? It's very time consuming to make everything look nice and polish
A: There is no extra time for presentation.

Q: Can we use this on Mac? Given that it will be remotely on personal laptop?
A: Yes, the software is browser based and you will be able to use an Apple Mac to access it.

Q: With the RI, are invigilators being told that we are allowed to use this software? I've got visions of invigilators not knowing and ending our exam because we're using another tab
A: The software is part of the exam platform. The RI invigilators cannot stop your exam part way through.

Q: If the questions and software are on two different tabs, can we use two screens to avoid time wasting? (for remote)
A: Candidates are only permitted to use one screen during their exams.

Q: Where are these extra questions for the new software questions?
A: You can find the practice questions on icaew.com/das

Q: So, the question bank and mock exams haven't been updated for the data analytics software that we have to use?
A: The question bank questions remain vital for study and revision, and practice questions have been created to show how DAS software appears and is assessed within the exams as well. Mock exams will reference DAS and the practice data set

Q: So, the question bank format remained the same as last year. But we have additional questions for the new data analytics? And that's online? Is it a separate book? Or do we access it online?
A: The DAS practice questions for AA and CR are available on the ICAEW website. Please visit icaew.com/das

Q: What will happen if you don't log out??
A: You may be taken to the incorrect dataset next time your login.

Q: Could we still get an old-style risk Q not including Inflo? Or are the old-style Qs no more?
A: The exam questions will be the same for all students, so no options available.

Q: At the end of the exam will our answers in the word area automatically be saved or do we need to submit the exam prior to the time running out?
A: Provided all answers have been entered into the word processing area before the time has lapsed, this will be saved and submitted for marking.

Q: So, the DAS practice questions are not actually in the question bank? The question bank in itself gives us 3 questions for exam in prior year format. How many questions are we expecting as from this year? Is it 1 question data analytics and 3 like in question bank?
A: For both CR and A&A, one of the questions will require the use of the DAS

Q: What happens in the exam if you get the 'wrong data set' in inflo is there someone we can contact live during the exam or do we have to wait till after the exam to notify about the difficulties?
A: You should flag this to your invigilator during the exam.

Q: This exam is so time pressured anyway, so are we expected to now use inflo and the rest of the exam is unchanged?
A: We have removed information / text from the question to compensate for the introduction of the DAS.

Q: For the advance info given for the CR exam - would the 4-6-page document cover questions for the entire exam or just part of it
A: Just the first question.

Q: Are there practise questions with these AI data sets?
A: The first four practice questions do not use AI as they are designed to text your understanding of the software. The final two questions and the mock exams will include the use of AI.

Q: So, if we were to sit all 3 finals (as a lot of people do), we would be required to learn to 2 sets of advanced information (CR & Case)? Surely this is increasing the difficulty.
A: Thank you for this feedback, we will take it into consideration

Q: It has just been said we can print off hard copies of materials for open book exams and take it with us to the exam. In yesterday's session, we were advised we cannot print off hard copy materials to take into the exam with us. Please can you confirm which is correct?
A: It depends on the exam you are sitting. For open book exams (Business Planning and Advanced Level exams) you are allowed to take in/use hard copy materials in your exams

Q: Will a recording of this webinar be sent to us?
A: The recording will be available early next week at icaew.com/futureaca

Q: Can we still have hard copy books for the open book exam?
A: For open book exams (BP and Advanced Level) you can take hard copies in

Q: Does the data analytics software not potentially give an advantage to students who may use this software at work over other students?
A: We tested this in the pilots with students who were already familiar and those who weren't. There was no difference in their ability to answer the questions.

Q: How would we flag something during the exam in remote invigilation? e.g. if the software crashed?
A: There will guidance in the onboarding information which will be sent to you shortly (if you are sitting in March)

Q: Can we not just make it a requirement for exam centres to get everyone to logout before we start the exam
A: There is only a risk if you have accessed the practice software on a computer that you are then sitting the live exam on. So, this isn't an issue for exam centres

Q: Can you re-run these sessions later in the year please? There may be people who are not doing their exams until advanced level in November who might miss these
A: Thank you for the feedback, good to hear it's helpful and we will look to run similar sessions again.

Q: When practicing on the new exam software, can we download our answer as pdf? Will it include the whole data provided?
A: Covered during the exam software webinar.

Q: So, all of the AI will relate to only question 1 on CR?
A: Yes, that's correct.

Q: Do we have to buy the bookshelf in order to practise the exam software??
A: The practice software is all on our website. It's the digital learning materials that are accessed through the bookshelf.

Q: It's still unclear what the expectation will be in terms of what should be done over the advanced information ahead of the exam. Is it just to give background information, or will we need to perform extensive work over it in advance? It seems like you've said both of these
A: You should refer to the walkthrough guide on the CR DAS page.

Q: Will the question bank give example pre-release info too so we can see how the exam info compares?
A: Practice questions 5 and 6 and the mock exams will include the use of AI.