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PHong Kong's CPA Qualification 香港會計師專業資格

# **Examination Techniques Seminar on QP Module Examinations**

Module C (December 2017 Session)

Date: 3 Nov 2017







# **Agenda**

Introduction

Common Weaknesses

Sharing with Markers

Preparation for Examinations

• Q & A Session



### QP Hong Kong's CPA Qualification 香港會計師專業資格

# Part 1: Introduction







# Today's objective:

# Finding ways to pass the Module Examination!





### **HKICPA QP Module Examinations**

#### **Examination Format:**

- Section A Case Questions (50%)
- Section B Essay / Short Questions (50%)
- 3 hours duration for each Paper
- All compulsory questions





# Part 2: Common Weaknesses







# Major causes to examination failure





# Aspect 1: Questions

- Difficulty in identifying the specific question requirements
- Misinterpretation of the question requirements



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# Aspect 2: Answers

- Approach or structure of answers are disorganized
- Answers are either too long or too short
- Answers are wrong, irrelevant, or lack of practical consideration
- Answers are not linked to the case facts
- Answers are straight copy from LP or reference materials
- Did not attempt all questions





# Aspect 3: Candidates

- Inadequate or ineffective preparation
- Other commitments affecting examination preparation
- Not in a good form to perform on examination day
- > Felt panicking or got nervous in the examination centre
- Poor time management





# Part 3: Sharing with Markers







# Ms. Ada Chan





# What are your objectives to attend this forum?





# Common weaknesses





# Common weaknesses observed during marking

- Difficulty in identifying the specific question requirements/ misinterpretation of the question requirements
- Answers are irrelevant to the questions, or are not specific to the case facts
- Poor presentation and structure of answers
- Poor time management, not all questions are attempted









#### June 2017 session - Sect A - Q2a

"Landlord Supreme Limited ("Landlord") is a property development and investment company which operates in Hong Kong. It owns five "A-grade" commercial buildings located in Central, Wan Chai, Quarry Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui and Kwun Tong respectively with over 4,000 office units....

As in the prior year, the management has engaged an external valuer, Accurate Limited, to assist Landlord to determine the fair value of the commercial building portfolio at each period end. The valuation method adopted is the income approach. Key assumptions adopted in the valuation include market rent, term yield and revisionary yield..."

#### Required:

(a) Evaluate the risk of material misstatements of the investment properties (i.e. commercial buildings) of Landlord in terms of valuation assertion.





# What is the question asking for?

"Landlord Supreme Limited ("Landlord") is a property development and investment company which operates in Hong Kong. It owns five "A-grade" commercial buildings located in Central, Wan Chai, Quarry Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui and Kwun Tong respectively with over 4,000 office units....

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#### Required:

(a) Evaluate the risk of material misstatements of the investment properties (i.e. commercial buildings) of Landlord in terms of valuation assertion.





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q2a

#### Panelists' comments:

- Candidates in general were weak in applying their knowledge in a real case.
- Most of the candidates were able to conclude that the risk of material misstatement of the investment properties in terms of valuation assertion was high, but they failed to provide valid reasons to support their conclusion.





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q2a

#### **Bad examples:**

- As Landlord appointed experts in helping fair value determination, it is complex in nature and might require auditor's expert to evaluate the appropriateness of the value of IP...
- A large fair value gain on IP compared to last year...
- The value of investment properties are calculated using income approach, the method of valuation might be inappropriate...
- The source of data used in the valuation might be unreliable and cause misstatement of IP...





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q2a

#### **Better examples:**

- The amount of investment property is material to the financial statements (i.e. 96% of total assets), inherent risk is high
- The increase in fair value is significant, representing 69% of profit before tax in the year
- The valuer's competency is questionable and the quality of work of the external valuer may have impact on the fair value determination of the investment properties
- The increase in fair value was 16% vs last year, it is not consistent with the increase in rent of 4%,
- The fair value determination of IP involves significant judgement and accounting estimates by management, which increase the inherent risk





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q2a

#### **Better examples:**

- The amount of investment property is material to the financial statements (i.e. 96% of total assets), inherent risk is high
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- The fair value determination of IP involves significant judgement and accounting estimates by management, which increase the inherent risk





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3a

Landlord has a professional building management team providing management services to its tenants.

- The business of Landlord in the year was stable. No substantial acquisition or disposal of business and assets happened in the year.
- The occupancy rate of the office units exceeded 85% in the year (2015: 85%).
- The number and the mix of tenants were stable in the year. No bad debt provision
  was made for any particular tenants in the past two years. No single tenant
  contributed over 5% of the rental and management fee revenue of Landlord.
- The rental and management fees charged to the tenants increased by 4% and 2% respectively in the year.

#### Required:

 Evaluate the risks of material misstatements of rental receivables of Landlord. Your assessment should state the risks of material misstatements of each relevant key assertions.

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# What is the question asking for?

Landlord has a professional building management team providing management services to its tenants.

- The business of Landlord in the year was stable. No substantial acquisition or disposal of business and assets happened in the year.
- The occupancy rate of the office units exceeded 85% in the year (2015: 85%).
- The number and the mix of tenants were stable in the year. No bad debt provision
  was made for any particular tenants in the past two years. No single tenant
  contributed over 5% of the rental and management fee revenue of Landlord.
- The rental and management fees charged to the tenants increased by 4% and 2% respectively in the year.

#### Required:

 Evaluate the risks of material misstatements of rental receivables of Landlord. Your assessment should state the risks of material misstatements of each relevant key assertions.

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#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3a

#### Panelists' comments:

- Candidates failed to identify the relevant audit assertions in assessing the risk of material misstatements.
- Candidates failed to draw an appropriate conclusion of the risk assessment based on the facts provided
- Candidates failed to provide valid reasons to support their risk assessment conclusion





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3a

#### **Bad examples:**

- There may be a risk that rental receivables of Landlord does not exist...
- Rental income has increased by 3% and rental receivable increased by 4%...
- The risk is low...
- No new loan was borrowed in 2016, which suggested that it is unlikely that nay lien has been imposed on the rental receivables this year..





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3a

#### **Better examples:**

- The increase in rental receivable of 4.2% is in line with the increase in rental income by 4.16%, therefore no material risk on completeness is expected..
- Controls of AIO is considered to be operated effectively in past year's audits and no significantly control deficiency identified...
- The automated billing system for rental income and receivable indicates the risk of human error is low...
- No bad debt provision was made in the past two years, and the mix of tenants are stable in the year. This indicate the risk at valuation assertion is low...





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3a

#### **Better examples:**

- The increase in rental receivable of 4.2% is in line with the increase in rental income by 4.16%, therefore no material risk on completeness is expected..
- Controls of AIO is considered to be operated effectively in past year's audits and no significantly control deficiency identified...
- The automated billing system for rental income and receivable indicates the risk of human error is low...
- No bad debt provision was made in the past two years, and the mix of tenants are stable in the year. This indicate the risk at valuation assertion is low...





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3c

Apart from sending confirmations to the tenants, propose other relevant substantive audit procedures to ascertain the rental receivable balance of Landlord.

(5 marks)





# What is the question asking for?

Apart from sending confirmations to the tenants, propose other relevant substantive audit procedures to ascertain the rental receivable balance of Landlord.

(5 marks)





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3c

#### Panelists' comments:

- Candidates suggested audit procedures that were related to rental income but not rental receivables
- Candidates did not read the question requirement carefully enough and suggested audit procedures relating to sending a confirmation such as following-up non-reply confirmations, performing alternative procedures on non-reply confirmations, etc.





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3c

#### **Bad examples:**

- Perform alternative procedures for any exceptions and nonreplies of confirmation...
- For balances not yet settled after reporting dates, examine their respective invoices / agreements...
- Perform reasonableness test on rental income...
- Review the rent receipts by inspecting bank statements and rent receipts documentation to confirm their existence...
- Obtain a schedule of rent charged by month, by tenant, by building...





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3c

#### **Better examples:**

- Perform substantive analytical review on the rental receivables balance...
- Agree the rental receivable balance shown on the breakdown to the renal agreement on a sample basis...
- Discuss with management on the recoverability of the long outstanding balances and assess the adequacy of the provision of doubtful debt...
- Obtain a breakdown of year end rental receivable balance and check the mathematical accuracy...





#### June 2017 session – Sect A – Q3c

#### **Better examples:**

- Perform substantive analytical review on the rental receivables balance...
- Agree the rental receivable balance shown on the breakdown to the renal agreement on a sample basis...
- Discuss with management on the recoverability of the long outstanding balances and assess the adequacy of the provision of doubtful debt...
- Obtain a breakdown of year end rental receivable balance and check the mathematical accuracy...





#### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8a

" All Best Corporation ("ABC") is a famous on-line home appliance distributor which offers more than a million items for sale on its website. You are the auditor of ABC and are now planning the information technology ("IT") audit process. ABC has implemented the following three IT applications:

- (i) "FIN" is the accounting system for financial reporting.
- (ii) "BUY" is the operating system which processes the orders placed by the customers and recognizes the sales.
- (iii) "CUS" is a stand-alone system which maintains all contact details of ABC's customers. The CUS system is used to facilitate communication with its customers for marketing events.

#### Required:

Propose audit procedures to test the effectiveness of the general controls of an entity's IT applications.

(5 marks)





### What is the question asking for?

"All Best Corporation ("ABC") is a famous on-line home appliance distributor which offers more than a million items for sale on its website. You are the auditor of ABC and are now planning the information technology ("IT") audit process. ABC has implemented the following three IT applications:

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### Required:

Propose audit procedures to test the effectiveness of the general controls of an entity's IT applications.

(5 marks)





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8a

### Panelists' comments:

- Control over the information technology environment used to be a weak area
- Candidates provided a lot of irrelevant information which could not specifically answer the question





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8a

### **Bad examples:**

- Understand and walkthrough the end to end process to confirm if there is any change of management procedures upon the system implementation...
- Consider IT knowledge, expertise and experience of the audit team and involvement of IT specialist ..,
- Understand, evaluate and validate the IT general control environment, including process and controls over program change, program development, computer operations, access controls...
- Use of CAAT to review segregation of duties and appropriate system access...





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8a

### **Better examples:**

- Understand, evaluate and validate the IT general control Access control by verifying the access and use of computer terminals. The auditor can inspect the evidence of authorization before processing / accessing the system
- Inspect physical access controls, programme logs, records of programme change
- Verify if there is segregation by inspecting the entity's standards over system design, programming and documentation





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8a

### **Better examples:**

- Understand, evaluate and validate the IT general control Access control by verifying the access and use of computer terminals. The auditor can inspect the evidence of authorization before processing / accessing the system
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### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8c

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- (iii) "CUS" is a stand-alone system which maintains all contact details of ABC's customers. The CUS system is used to facilitate communication with its customers for marketing events.

### Required:

If the general controls of ABC's IT application(s) that you advised to test in Question 8(b) are proved to be effective, advise what application controls you will test for the sales process of ABC.

(7 ma<sup>4</sup>/<sub>k</sub>s)





### What is the question asking for?

"All Best Corporation ("ABC") is a famous on-line home appliance distributor which offers more than a million items for sale on its website. You are the auditor of ABC and are now planning the information technology ("IT") audit process. ABC has implemented the following three IT applications:

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- (iii) "CUS" is a stand-alone system which maintains all contact details of ABC's customers. The CUS system is used to facilitate communication with its customers for marketing events.

### Required:

If the general controls of ABC's IT application(s) that you advised to test in Question 8(b) are proved to be effective, advise what application controls you will test for the sales process of ABC.

(7 marks)





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8c

### Panelists' comments:

- Candidates provided a lot of irrelevant information which could not specifically answer the question
- Majority of the candidates could not make reference to the case fact and therefore not able to score adequate marks for the question





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8c

### **Bad examples:**

- The auditor should test the application controls on transactions processed by the systems for authorization, completeness, accuracy and processing.
- The auditor would inquire into testing programs to check data fields on input transactions and inspect evidence of manual scrutiny of output and reconciliation to source
- I will initiate an order near the year end, inspect whether sales is timely recorded in the FIN system ...
- For the sales process, the following application controls will be tested:
  - The order place system
  - The sales recognisation system
  - The integration from sub-ledger to sales ledger





### June 2017 session - Sect B - Q8c

### **Better examples:**

- Check the reconciled bar code sent from logistics and its own records
- Inspect records of unmatched barcodes
- Inspect reports on unprocessed / uncleared transactions (e.g. unpaid invoices)
- Checking of processed output (barcode in BUY) to source document (sent by logistic company) to check the controls over input accuracy





### June 2017 session – Sect B – Q8c

### **Better examples:**

- Check the reconciled bar code sent from logistics and its own records
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## Sharing of exam techniques: How to address the weaknesses?





## Common weaknesses observed during marking

- Difficulty in identifying the specific question requirements/ misinterpretation of the question requirements
- Answers are irrelevant to the questions, or are not specific to the case facts
- Poor presentation and structure of answers
- Poor time management, not all questions are attempted





## Weakness 1 Difficulty in identifying (or misinterpreting) the specific questions requirements

- Spend some time on reading the questions carefully
- Use highlighter to underline the important question requirements
- Be aware of the key action words assess, provide examples, propose actions, etc.
- Be aware of the time dimension planning, execution of TOC or TOD, and completion/ reporting stage





## Weakness 2 Answers are irrelevant/ not specific

- Make sure the answer includes factual information extracted from the case (e.g. AR increased by 200% while sales increased by 24%)
- Ratio or variance % can be computed to support the answer as it is useful for describing significance, severity or materiality
- Plan the structure of answer (e.g. mindmap) to confirm linkage to question requirements
- Review the written answers to ensure the intended effect
- $\rightarrow$  Plan  $\rightarrow$  execute  $\rightarrow$  review





## **Weakness 3 Poor presentation and structure of answers**

- Consider using the READ Approach to structure the answer in a specific way:
  - Raise the issue / subject matter
  - Extract facts from the case
  - Apply standards to confirm rationale
  - Decide the conclusion





## Weakness 3 Poor presentation and structure of answers

- ➤ Write in meaningful length, concisely and precisely → check fixed assets (for what?), check casting vs. check casting accuracy...
- Break long answers or present different arguments with short paragraphs
- Use simple English but keep the auditing standards jargons
- Allow sufficient spacing between lines
- Write legibly





## Weakness 4 Poor time management

- Reserve time for reading the questions and outlining the structure of the answer
- Determine the length of the answer with reference to the marks allocation
- Allocate time to answer each question and attempt all questions
- Leave some time as buffer for checking





### Improvement areas

- Answer strategy beware of relationship between marks and time allocation
- Structured answer show marker your thinking logic in your answer





## Thank you





# Part 4: Preparation for the Examinations







- 1. Prepare your examination
- 2. Prepare yourself for examination





### 1. Prepare your examination Before examination

### DO

- Commit to your Study Plan
- Cover beyond LP
- Form Study Group with fellow students
- Prepare Critical File
- Practise past papers
- Visit QP Learning Centre
  - Past papers and Examiners' reports;
  - Special topics and/or Important notice; and
  - Examination preparation seminar archives





### **Commit to your Study Plan**

### **Advantages:**

- Schedule ahead
- ➤ Build long term memories → maximize efficiency
- Avoid last minute work and minimize impact of unpredicted events...







### **Prepare Critical File**

### How to prepare:

- Use different colour post-it for different standards / topics
- Organise materials by different standards / topics
- Understand theories behind each standards / topics
- Get familiar with this file

### **Advantages:**

- Colour coding for standards / topics allows easy identification (same file used in examination – time saving!)
- Build up long term memories
- Avoid indexing without understanding







### **During examination**

### DO

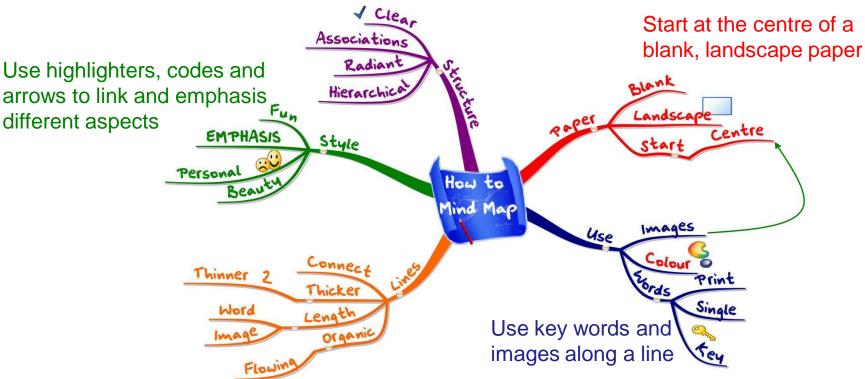
- Identify question requirements
- Highlight key words (e.g. Calculate / Advise / Propose etc...)
- Mind-map or sketch the question requirements
- Outline answers or approach
- Pay attention to specific format requirement (e.g. Write a memorandum)
  - Start with an introduction and end with a conclusion
    - → Get easy marks!





### **Mind Map**

Radiate the ideas out from the central theme and main branches



Make the lines associate as clear as possible





### **During examination**

### DO

- Apply technical knowledge
- Do an easy question first to gain confidence
- Leave time at the end to check for careless mistakes
- Write legibly

### **DON'T**

- Don't make up any information that is not provided by the question
- Don't write more than required as indicated by marks allocation
- Don't struggle, move to another question



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### **Handwriting**



	(Question No. )
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	Nowere, of can't reflect all the cost and Consideration
	that relited to the new customer policy.
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	provide heter genice to customer and focus on high
	revenue's customer.
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	net the gasty control which maker new policy that can't
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### **Examples of handwriting**

**Example 1:** 

adversi Opton

adverse opinion

**Example 2:** 

substantil Intens

substantive matters ??

**Example 3:** 

Sertously in flewing,

seriously misleading ????





### 2. Prepare yourself for examination

- Study HARD before examination
- Arrive early (examination centre opens for entry 45 minutes before start)
- Be aware of the examination regulations printed on the Examination Attendance Docket ("EAD")
  - The EAD will be posted to students 2 weeks before the examination

Failure to follow any of the examination regulations may result in marks penalty or even disqualification from the entire examination!





- There is no shortcut to any examinations including QP!
- This is your examination and not others' examination
- The only way to pass is to prepare properly for it!



## Part 5: Q&A Session

