

# Qualifications Framework (QF) - Welcome Pack

Thank you for starting your journey within the  
Qualifications Framework

This welcome pack contains information for the Training and assessments for the Qualifications Framework.

---

## Welcome Pack content:

Meet the team	Page 2
Registration into the QF and candidate numbers	Page 2
Membership	Page 2
Special requirements	Page 2
Training and Learner Management System	Page 3
Learning Management System Guide	Page 4-5
Website	Page 6
Stage 1	Page 6
Stage 2	Page 7-10
SharePoint guidance (submissions)	Page 11-14
Dates and Deadlines	Page 15
Assessments	Page 15
Extenuating Circumstances	Page 16
Re-sits	Page 16
Certification	Page 16
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)	Page 17-20
Study & revision skills and exam techniques guide	Page 21-37

## Meet the team:

Sue Steward	Head of Education and Training
Richard Cowles	Education and Training Manager
Rebecca Taylor	Education Co-ordinator
Marianne Rickwood	Education Co-ordinator
Alex Jones	Education Assistant

### Contact details:

- Telephone: 01268 582242
- Email: [qualifications@tsi.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@tsi.org.uk)

## Registration into the Framework & Candidate ID Numbers:

When you register into the qualification framework for examinations, you will receive a registration letter which includes your Candidate ID number, this number is unique to you and is to be used on all elements of submission in the framework. Sitting exams, submitting your coursework submission within Stage 1 and when submitting your reflective statement and portfolio within Stage 2.

The welcome pack is designed to provide you with a summary of information needed for your journey through the Qualifications Framework.

CTSI also recommend that you read the [Qualifications Framework regulations](#) which identifies all the requirements.

## Membership:

Joining this course tells us that you value your professional development. Any non-members registering onto the Qualifications Framework qualification can [register for membership](#) via the CTSI website. You will receive further communications from CTSI concerning your membership and benefits and the process.

In addition to the specialist support and advice you would expect from your professional body, we are also pleased to provide our members with access to a range of discounted offers and exclusive services.

The [application](#) for membership form will need to be completed to apply to become a member.

## Special requirements:

Please indicate any reasonable adjustments (special requirements) that need to be taken into consideration for your examinations by completing the [Microsoft Form](#). Evidence will be required.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that an organisation can make to support individuals to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. CTSI are able to offer various reasonable adjustments for assessments.

CTSI has always offered the following reasonable adjustments, however please do talk to us to see if there are other options available. Is there anything your employer provides to support you that we can consider implementing e.g., speak to type computer programmes.

Examples: Use of a computer, Extra time, Scribe, Amanuensis (reader and scribe), Exam questions printed onto coloured paper, larger print, Use of coloured overlays

### **Process:**

Contact CTSI to talk about possible options available to you. You will need to provide CTSI of any evidence of your disability and any recommendations of support that have been suggested. You will need to complete this form for each exam cycle

## Training:

To attend a CTSI training course you need to book online. You do not have to attend courses in order to register for the Qualifications Framework and assessments. Training and exams are two separate bookings.

CTSI organise training to start delivery in the September prior to the May examination cycle. We try to advertise the courses from January of each year allowing candidates to book. The courses close approximately the first week of August.

[All courses are advertised on the website](#)

When you have booked on-line you receive an automatic booking email. This confirms your place and nearer the time of delivery (prior to the September or October start date), you will receive joining instructions from the training provider responsible for the course delivery.

Delivery of training is done as a hybrid approach, and we offer virtual via Microsoft teams and also face-to-face training with distance learning materials online to supplement your training.

CTSI recommend that you study 3 hours per week running up to the examinations from the start of your course. Your training booking does not register you for any examinations.

## Learner Management System (LMS):

This is what the CTSI online learning system is called.

At the start of the training course, you will be given access to the CTSI Training Together Learner Management System (LMS).

CTSI will load all delegates onto the appropriate course. This will happen two weeks prior to your contact days with your trainer.

When you are loaded onto the LMS, you will receive an automatic email from the system providing you with the login details and password for the system. Please look out for this email.

If you have not received your login details with a week to go, please call the qualifications team on 01268 582242.

The trainer may choose to add further information into your learning materials, these will be added and you will be notified when available by the Education Team via email.

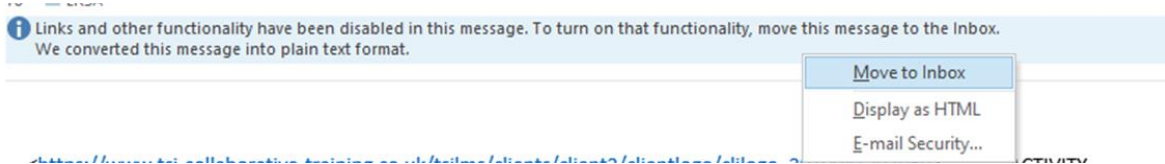
Your Training days teams invites will be provided in your joining instructions from your training provider.

## Learner Management System (LMS) Guide:

The Learning Management System or the LMS as we typically refer to this as, is the online learning portal wherein all of the distance learning and contact days information received from the trainers is uploaded for delegates who are going through training.

You will receive an email with your login details from the Training Together LMS platform, please contact a member of the team if you are unable to login.

If you have not received your login email information, please check your junk/spam mail as this may be found here; if this is the case, please move to your inbox and activate the links and other functionality that will have been removed as per below.



Your email should be shown as below:

[CTSI Online] Login Details



CTSI Online Learning <qualifications@tsi.org.uk>  
To: Alex Jones



Click on the highlighted link to set your password and access the Learning Management System.

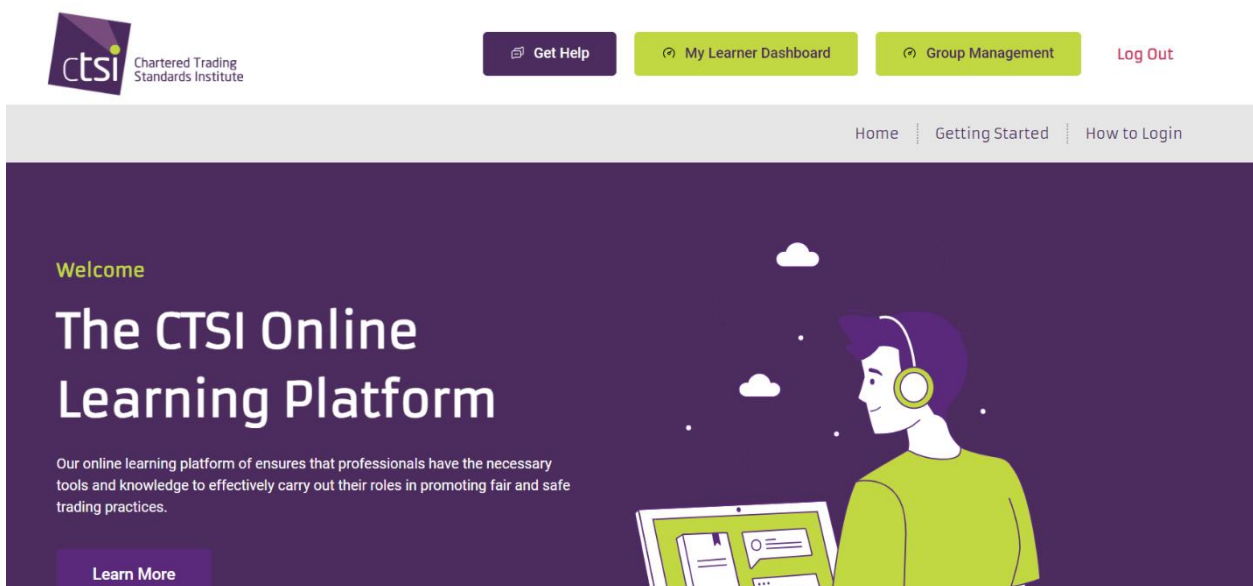
Username: alex.jones

To set your password, visit the following address:

<https://lms.tradingstandards.uk/wp-login.php?action=rp&key=WoShYP7eE4FPvzedsYUW&login=alex.jones>

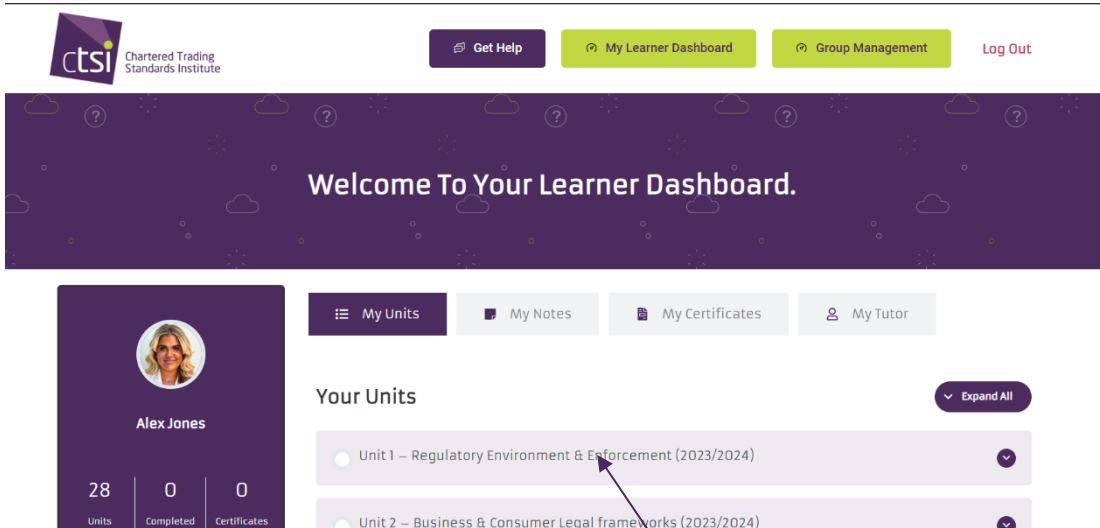
<https://lms.tradingstandards.uk/wp-login.php>

Once you are logged into the system, you will land on the dashboard area where you will see any announcements that the Qualifications Team or the trainers have put out. You will also see your overall progress chart which will show when you have completed or started a course so you can keep on top of your learning. [This is especially useful if you are undertaking other training at the same time].



At the top of the dashboard, you will see 'My Learner Dashboard'. This is where you can access your training courses distance learning materials,

Click on the box. It will show some drop down menus.

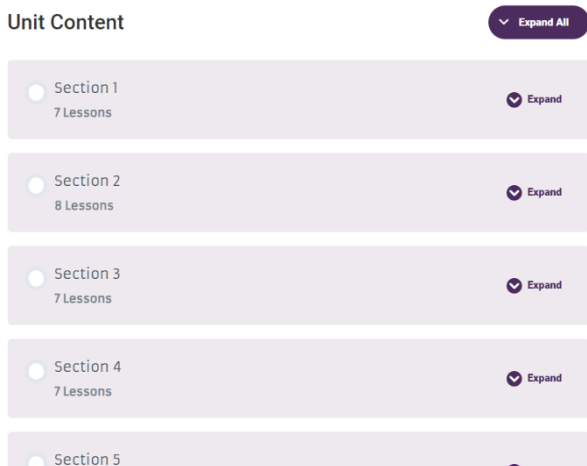


To access the learning materials, select **the Unit tile**.

Once you access the unit, this will bring up the unit page:



If you scroll down you will then access your materials.



## Website:

The Qualifications resources area on the website is where all the stage requirements, forms, portfolios, coursework, past exam papers, examination information, training, ongoing announcements etc. can be found. This is your go to place

<https://www.tradingstandards.uk/practitioners/training-development/qualifications-resources>

The screenshot shows the 'Qualifications resources' page on the Trading Standards UK website. The page has a navigation bar with the following tabs: CPCF TRAINING & EXAMS, STAGE 1 INFO, STAGE 2 INFO, STAGE 3 INFO, ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING, ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES, MAY 2021 EXAM INFORMATION, SEPT 2021 EXAM INFORMATION, PAST PAPERS & REPORTS, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & COMPETENCY, and ARCHIVE. The main content is organized into three columns:

- Information:** Regulations, CPCF Timelines & Deadlines, Portfolio guidance, CPCF Appeals Procedure and Guidance, Verifier for my local authority?, Re-printing of certificates.
- CPCF Fees:** CPCF Stage Fees, CPCF Training Fees, Transition and exemption fees, Resit Fees, RCD package Fees.
- CPCF Training:** How to book onto a Training Together course, Qualifications Training Courses, Printing materials from the LMS.
- Structure and syllabi summary:** CPCF structure, Unit 1 Regulatory Environment & Enforcement, Unit 2 Business & Consumer Legal Framework, Unit 3 Trading Standards Law Part 1.
- Registration Guides:** Register into Stage Examinations, Booking Training, How to register for CPCF assessments - Full Stage 1, How to register for CPCF assessments - Stage 1.
- Qualification Transition:** TSQF to CPCF Correlation Quick Guide, Brexit & Examinations Statement, RCD Exemption information, Council Q&A.

Remember to frequently check the 'Announcements and Updates' area for any new or updated information provided by CTSI.

## The Qualifications Framework

The Qualifications Framework has been designed to have two exam cycles each year (May and September).

### Trading Standards Practitioner Certificate (Stage 1)

Stage one consists of three units, each with an examination and a piece of coursework to be completed.

- Regulatory Environment and Enforcement
- Business and Consumer Legal Framework
- Trading Standards Law part 1

### Stage 1 Coursework submission:

Coursework requirements for the May examination cycle is advertised on the website in September. The current coursework requirements can be found on our [website](#).

The coursework **submission deadline for the May cycle is 1 March**, if feedback would like to be obtained. Or the alternative deadline is 1 April if you do not wish to receive feedback. Please be aware that feedback is only given on unsuccessful submissions.

You will find out if you have been successful or not after the marking processes has been completed. If you are unsuccessful, you can have 2 weeks to review and update your submission, for it to be remarked. This remark is the final mark awarded.

You do not receive a mark until it has been ratified with the Qualifications and Awards Board.

The coursework submission deadline for the September resit cycle is 1 August if feedback would like to be obtained or 1 September if you do not wish to receive feedback.

Submission is via Microsoft SharePoint

## Trading Standards Practitioner Diploma (Stage 2):

When you register for stage 2 you have two full exam cycles (May) to complete the requirements of this stage.

Stage 2 requires you to complete:

- Investigations (unit 5)
- Regulating Markets (unit 6)
- Weights and Measures (unit 4)
- One Option: (Food, Feed or Product Safety) (unit 4)

Each unit will have different assessment requirements.

UNIT 4	Weights & Measures	2-hour written exam	Practical and Oral exam Reflective statement Professional interview Portfolio
Plus one option:	Food Standards	1.5-hour written exam	Oral exam Portfolio
	Feed	1.5-hour written exam	Oral exam Portfolio
	Product Safety	1.5-hour written exam	Portfolio
UNIT 5	Investigations		Portfolio Professional interview
UNIT 6	Regulating Markets		Portfolio Professional interview

## Stage 2 Portfolio(s)

All units in stage 2 have a portfolio to be completed. The portfolios can be found in an [excel document](#) on the website. Please use the tabs at the bottom to locate the portfolio information you require.

Portfolios are about gathering evidence of the skill requirements as identified in the portfolio itself.

CTSI always recommend that you ensure you read your subject portfolio so that you can more easily recognise evidence that could be used to demonstrate your skills.

Please ensure your [read the portfolio guidance](#) on the website

## Generic Portfolio:

If you have not completed the TSQF core skills portfolio you are required to complete the [generic portfolio](#). You can do this alongside your first portfolio you build but it must be submitted at the same time or before.

## Submission requirements

If a subject area has an oral assessment, practical assessment or a professional interview, your portfolio must be submitted to [your regional verifier](#) prior to taking these assessments.

The portfolio submission deadline for the May cycle is 1 April. The portfolio submission deadline for the September resit cycle is 1 September.

Submission is via Microsoft SharePoint.

## Stage 2 Unit 4 Weights and Measures:

Weights and Measures in unit 4 is required by all candidates. This subject area is delivered in partnership with Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) as they are responsible for the section 73 certification.

### Assessments:

- The assessments for **practical and orals** are held at the OPSS building in Teddington London.
- **Professional interviews** are held virtually via Microsoft teams
- **Written exam** is held at the same time as all written examinations.
- **Portfolio** completion is required to be submitted prior to taking practical and oral examinations. The portfolio is found on the [excel spreadsheet](#) with all the other portfolios. You can start this as soon as possible to gain maximum exposure to the field of Weights and Measures. The portfolio can be submitted at any time but on later that the 1 April is sitting practical and orals in the May.
- **Reflective statement** is required to be submitted prior to taking practical, oral and professional interview examinations. The requirement for reflective statements is put onto the website in September each year in preparation for submission the following April 1.

Please ensure you read the [website](#) for all information about Weights and Measures.



## Things you need to know/do when starting Stage 2:

### **Have you contacted your verifier?**

Have you contacted your regional verifier? This will be the person responsible for signing off your portfolios. There is a regional verifier for each region across the United Kingdom. The information can be found via the following link: <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/media/3179342/verifiers-local-authorities-announcement-updated-sept-23.pdf>

### **Do you have an assessor for each of your portfolio's?**

For each of your portfolios you will need an internal assessor. This will be the person responsible for assessing each element of your portfolio. This person will need to be somebody internal within your Local Authority. Each assessor will need to be competent in the subject that they will be assessing as well as completing a yearly CPPD course to ensure their competency with assessing portfolios. We offer both a yearly online course as well as a New & Aspiring course held via Teams for new assessors or those who haven't assessed a portfolio in some years.

### **Have you received your SharePoint link?**

SharePoint is where you will upload each piece of your portfolio. This is a shared area wherein we can provide both yourself, your assessor, and your verifier a link to be able to upload content/make notes on content. Please request a link for yourself and those involved with the compilation of your portfolio via the [qualifications@tsi.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@tsi.org.uk) email address.

### **Have you completed your assessment plan for each of your portfolios?**

The assessment plan is the first step in completing your portfolio. This is vital to be completed as your initial document. For each portfolio you will need to complete an assessment plan which will then need to be signed off by your assessor.

### **Have you looked at our additional training courses?**

If you are looking some additional training assist you with completion of your Stage 2 we offer a wide range of training courses.

Information about the training courses can be found here: <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/practitioners/training-development/qualification-framework-qf-training-courses/>

### **Have you looked at our professional training courses?**

We also offer professional training courses and competencies to further expand your Trading Standards knowledge.

Professional course information: <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/practitioners/professional-training/>

### **Do you have any reasonable adjustments?**

If you have any reasonable adjustments that may impact your examinations, please contact the team so we can ensure you are accommodated for. Please note that we will require your adjustment(s) to be evidenced.

Further information on special requirements: <https://forms.office.com/e/fdWzmxbi6f>

### **Do you know your dates and deadlines?**

The exam cycle may be in May but there are many dates and deadlines throughout the year that you will need to meet to ensure you achieve your qualification.

Dates and deadline document with everything you need to know:

<https://www.tradingstandards.uk/media/3179320/timeline-of-the-qualification-framework-cycle.pdf>

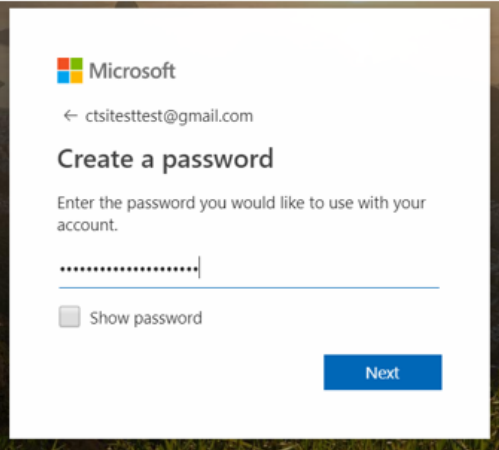
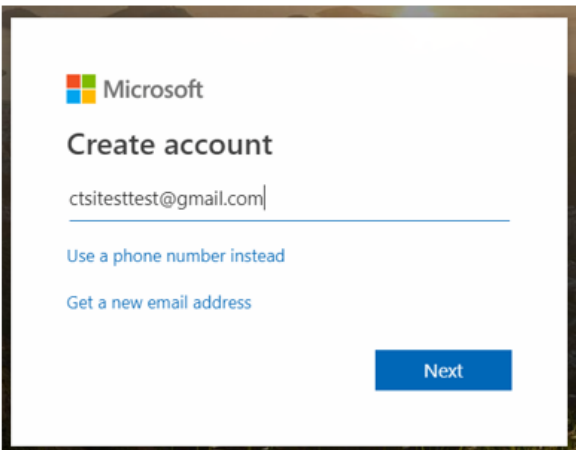
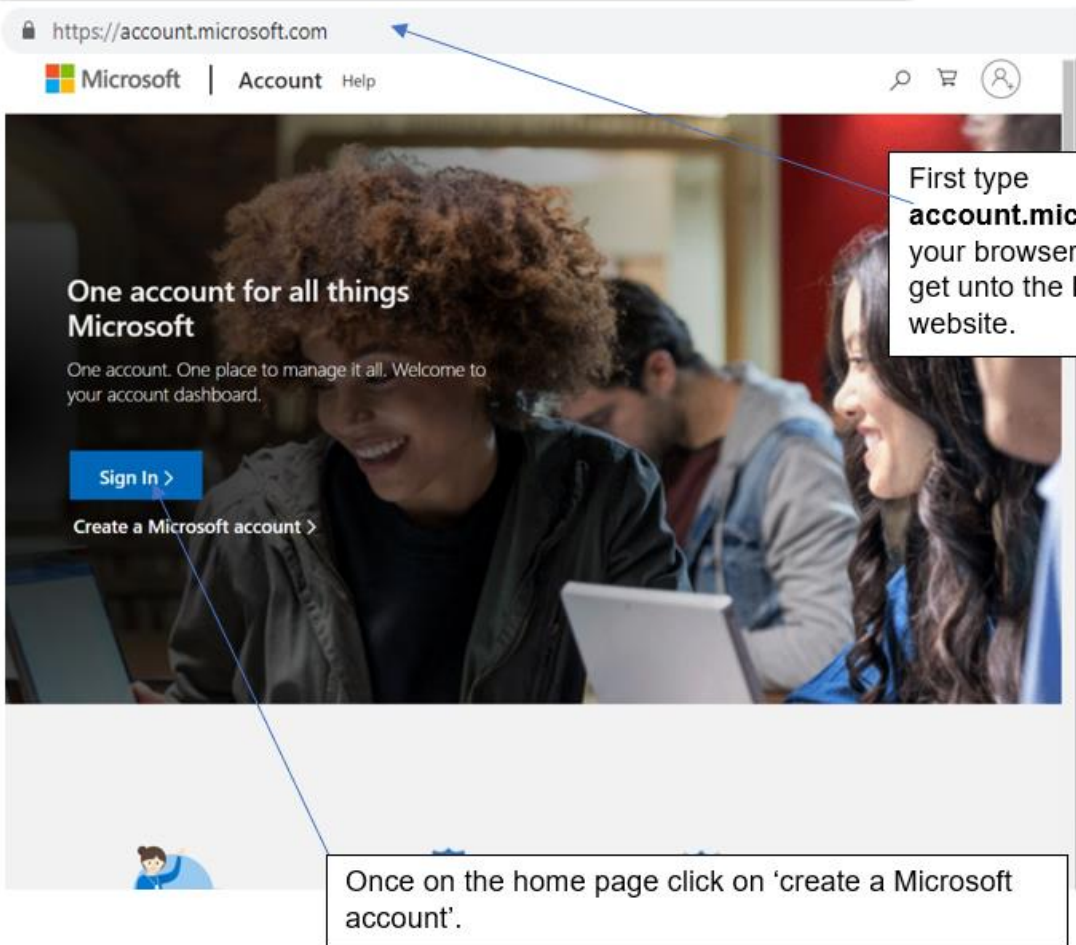
### **Do you know where to find your exam information?**

We have an exam information page regarding each examination cycle. This page will have all the information regarding your exams including timetables, venue information and nominated person information.

Exam information for the upcoming cycle: <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/practitioners/training-development/qualifications-resources/#examcycleinformation>

# How to submit Stage 1 coursework, Stage 2 portfolios and Stage 2 Unit 4 Weights and Measures reflective statement via SharePoint:

1) Create a Microsoft account (if you have an account already, please go to Page 4)



Use your already existing email to set up your Microsoft account along with your password. Once done click 'Next'.

Microsoft  
← ctsitesttest@gmail.com

## Create account

We need just a little more info to set up your account.

**Country/region**  
United Kingdom

**Date of birth**  
1 January 1990

Next

You will be asked to input personal detail such as your date of birth. When done click 'Next'

Microsoft  
← ctsitesttest@gmail.com

## Verify email

Enter the code we sent to **ctsitesttest@gmail.com**. If you didn't get the email, check your junk folder or try again.

Enter code

I would like information, tips and offers about Microsoft products and services.

Choosing **Next** means that you agree to the Microsoft Services Agreement and privacy and cookies statement.

Next

The final stage of your account set up is to verify your email. Visit your email and click the link that was sent by Microsoft to verify your email address

Verify your email address Inbox x

Microsoft account team <account-security-noreply@accountprotection.microsoft.com> to me

3:40 PM (4 minutes ago)

## Verify your email address

To finish setting up your Microsoft account, we just need to make sure that this email address is yours.

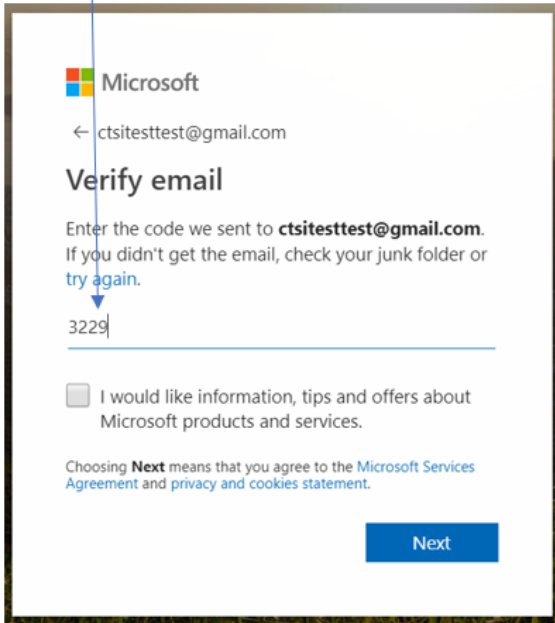
To verify your email address, use this security code: **3229**

If you didn't request this code, you can safely ignore this email. Someone else might have typed your email address by mistake.

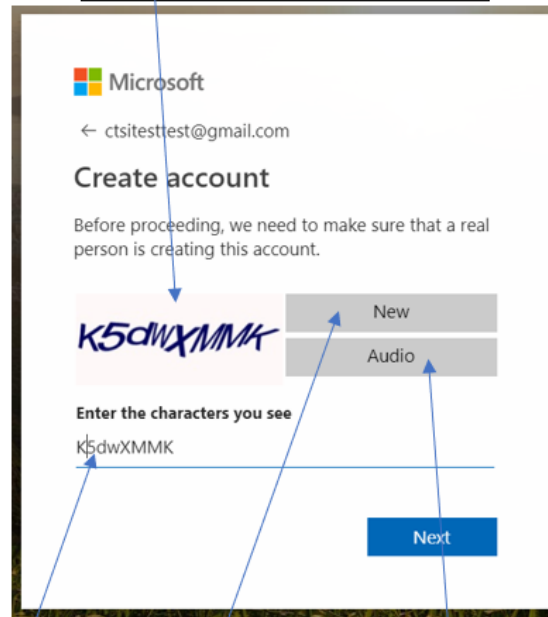
Thanks,  
The Microsoft account team

Go to your email and open the email sent from Microsoft account team, look for the code in the email. In this case the code was **3229**.

Enter the code that was sent to your email and press 'Next'.



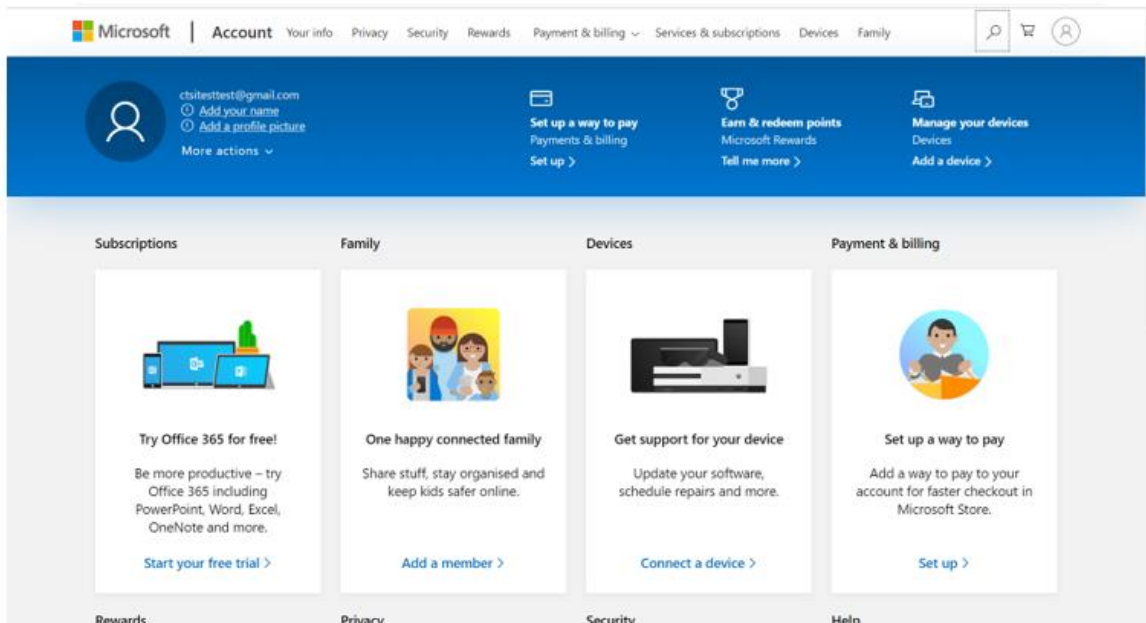
Before you officially create your account, you will need to complete a CAPTCHA as part of the process. Once done press 'Next'.



Enter the letters/numbers you see on the screen.

If you find the CAPTCHA unreadable choose another by pressing 'New'.

If you want to hear the CAPTCHA press 'Audio'.

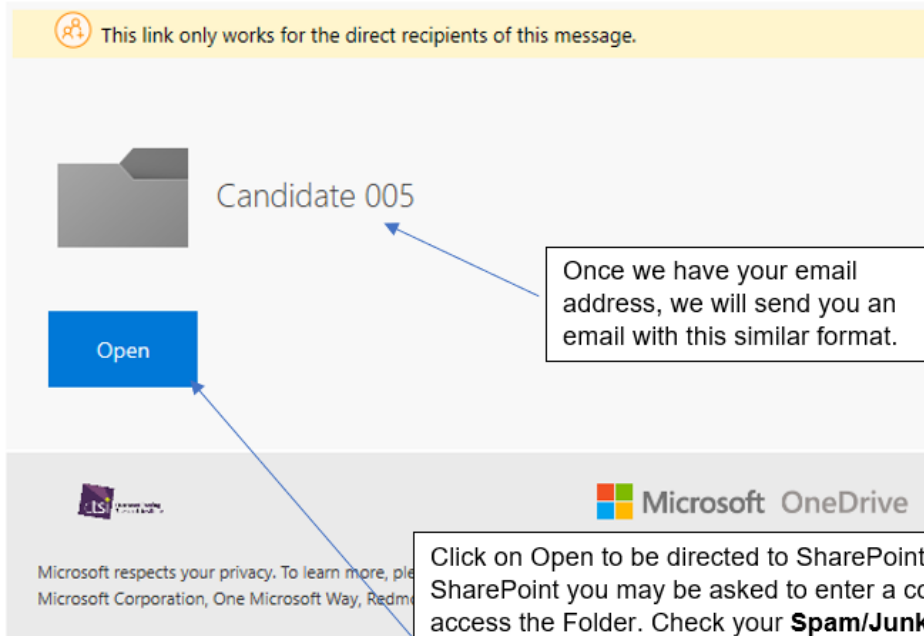


You now have a Microsoft account and will be able to access SharePoint, a web-based collaborative platform.

**Next you must:**

Provide the Education Department your email address by emailing ([qualifications@tsi.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@tsi.org.uk)) or phone us on **01268 582242** as soon as possible. The team will provide you with a link via email.

2) Open the link sent to you via email



Once we have your email address, we will send you an email with this similar format.

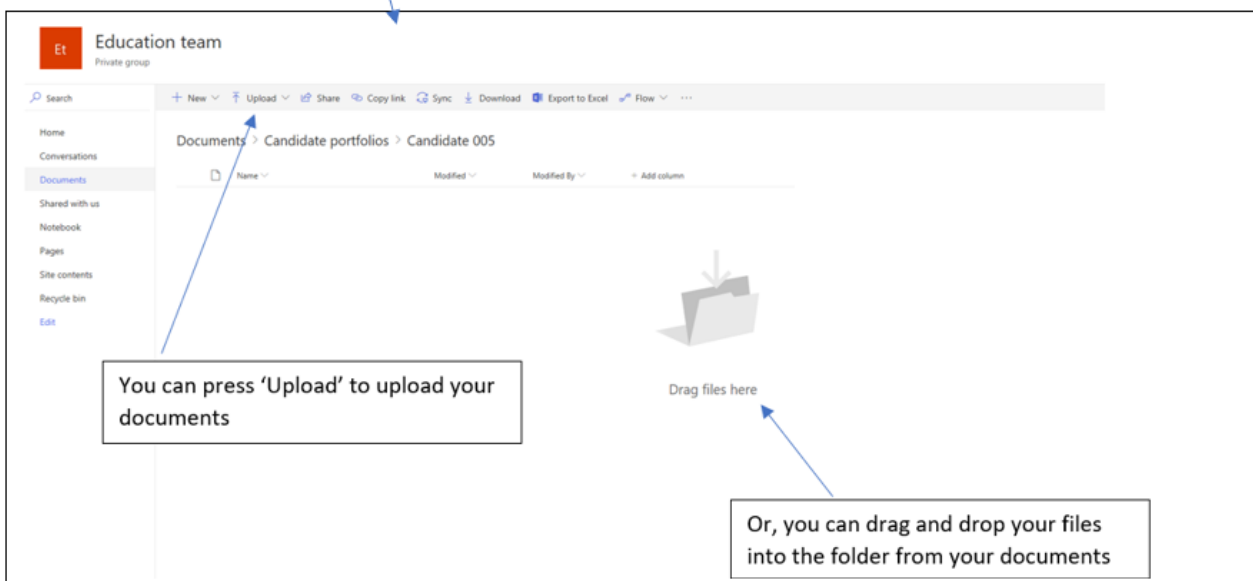
Click on Open to be directed to SharePoint. Once you're on SharePoint you may be asked to enter a code before you can access the Folder. Check your **Spam/Junk mail** in your email for the code.

3) Upload your coursework into the Folder

In this folder you should submit all your coursework with relevant file names e.g. 'Candidate 005 Case Study'.

**Once you have uploaded ALL coursework documents, let the Qualifications team know through phone or email.**

**Do NOT put your name anywhere on your coursework documents.**



You can press 'Upload' to upload your documents

Or, you can drag and drop your files into the folder from your documents

When you have loaded your coursework, the Education Team will revoke your access during the marking period.

## Dates and Deadlines:

As discussed previously in this welcome pack, there are certain deadlines associated with the framework that must be met. This section outlines what these deadlines are and for what aspect.

Deadlines are shown below:

Complete the distance learning materials on LMS if completing training
Submit your coursework/portfolio submission – by 1 March/April deadline (May cycle) or by 1 August/September deadline (September cycle)
Sit the written examinations – Second week of May (May cycle). Second week of September (September cycle)
Sit the oral, practical and professional interview examinations – Week 23 (June)(May cycle). Week 40 (October) (September cycle)

It is **IMPORTANT** that you do not miss any deadline or assessment date as shown above.

## Qualifications Framework Assessments:

A summary of assessment can be found on the website alongside each unit syllabi – found in each stage tab in the [qualifications resource area](#).

CTSI feel it is important that you review each unit syllabi so that you recognise the requirements of learning for that subject.

Running up to the examinations in May and September there will be a separate tab in the resource area that holds all the information you may need for the examination. Make sure you visit this tab as it will have aspects like:

- Timetables
- conduct in exams
- oral guidance
- reasonable requirements form
- photo ID
- delivering exams in a LA etc

As part of **Trading Standards Practitioner Certification (stage 1 for short)** there are two types of assessment:

- Written examination (2 hours in length)
- Coursework (a 2,000-word reflective statement (Unit 1), a 2,000-word case study (Unit 2) and a 2,000-word report (Unit 3))

All the detail of these assessments can be found on page 8 – 9. You must be successful in all types of assessments to achieve the qualification.

As part of the **Trading Standards Practitioner Diploma (Stage 2 for short)**, there are six types of assessment:

- Written examination
- Reflective Statement (Unit 4 Weights and Measures)
- Portfolio
- Oral
- Practical (Unit 4 Weights and Measures)
- Professional Interview (Unit 4 Weights and Measures, Unit 5 Investigations and Unit 6 Regulating Markets)

You must be successful in all types of assessments to achieve the qualification.



## Extenuating circumstances:

CTSI recognise that circumstances may occur that may lead to you not sitting an assessment or submitting your coursework/portfolios. Where this is known, please contact the team (contact details found on Page 2) prior to the dates shown above.

Where you are unable to sit the oral or online assessments due to medical or other reasons, please contact the team immediately. For medical reasons, ensure you have been seen by a GP within 5 days of the assessment date. CTSI reserves the right to request a letter or a copy of any sickness certificate issued. The team will discuss your options directly with you.

If the reason for not attending an assessment is due to bereavement or medical reason, your manager may contact the team on your behalf.

You are required to complete all elements to achieve the qualification. If there are any circumstances that you need to raise with the team, please contact us as soon as possible

## Re-sits:

Candidates undertaking stage 1 for the first time are required to complete all examinations, coursework within the same assessment diet, May, with resit opportunities in the September).

A candidate is limited to re-sitting any one assessment 3 times consecutively.

A candidate cannot progress to stage 2 until they have successfully completed Stage 1.

A candidate is limited to re-sitting any one assessment 3 times consecutively.

A candidate cannot progress to Stage 3 until the successful completion of stage 2.

## Certification:

CTSI take all outcomes of individual assessments to the Qualifications Panel (QP) where they are ratified (confirmed).

Candidates will receive results letter a week after this meeting. This letter lists all outcomes that have been ratified at the meeting.

A week later, candidates who have successfully completed all elements that make up an award will receive their awards letter.

CTSI will then look to start certification. Candidates should receive their certificate within 12 weeks of the awards letter.



## Qualifications Framework – Frequently Asked Questions

The Education Team have noticed an increase in similar questions being sent to us so have put together a frequently asked questions document to hopefully cover these.

Q1:	<b>What is the structure of the Qualifications Framework</b>
A:	<p>The Qualifications Framework has three stages with three individual awards. Stage 1 is made up of Unit 1 Regulatory Environment and Enforcement, Unit 2 Business and Consumer Legal Frameworks and Unit 3 Trading Standards Law Part 1 which upon completion will obtain the Trading Standards Practitioner Certificate (TSPC).</p> <p>Stage 2 is made up of Unit 4 Weights and Measures, a Unit 4 option (Food, Feed or Product Safety), Unit 5 Investigations and Unit 6 Regulating Markets. Upon completion of Stage 2 you will obtain the Trading Standards Practitioner Diploma (TSPD).</p> <p>Stage 3 is a project-based qualification. The project is an 8,000-word document that is linked to trading standards and should be of benefit to the authority, region or the profession. Upon completion the Trading Standards Advanced Practitioner Diploma (TSAPD) will be awarded.</p> <p>You can see a visual picture and more detail of the structure via <a href="#">this link</a>.</p>
Q2:	<b>When can I register into the Qualifications Framework?</b>
A	<p>There are two examination cycles taking place in May and September each year. Registration for May will open in September with registration for September opening in June.</p> <p>Registration for training and for the examinations are two separate entities.</p>
Q3:	<b>Can I book onto the training and the examinations together?</b>
A	<p>Registration for the training and for the assessments are two separate entities. Training can be undertaken separately without going onto complete the assessments if you so wish.</p> <p>It is however recommended to complete the training as this provides knowledge for the subject area which will then support the assessments.</p>
Q4:	<b>How much will the Qualifications Framework cost?</b>
A	<p>Training and assessment fees are separate as mentioned above. CTSI's fee structure can be found on the website for both the examinations and <a href="#">training</a>. Candidates register for the <a href="#">whole stage</a> or if the candidate has exemptions, we have <a href="#">separate fees</a>.</p> <p>We also offer a <a href="#">package</a> for RCO candidates.</p> <p>When completing each stage, payment is for registration as well as the assessments (exams, portfolios, practical's etc). The registration option isn't at the top of the booking page but is mandatory when registering for exams.</p>
Q5:	<b>How many portfolios will there be?</b>
A	<p>Portfolios are elements in Stage 2 only.</p> <p>Each unit at stage 2 will have a portfolio requirement (Weights and Measures, Food, Feed, Product Safety, Investigations and Regulating Markets).</p>

	<p>Please be aware that Food, Feed and Product Safety are options under Unit 4 and a minimum of one of these is to be taken. If the candidate wishes to complete more than one of the options then you can do so.</p> <p>The <a href="#">generic portfolio</a> must be submitted alongside the first subject portfolio submission.</p> <p><a href="#">Portfolio guidance</a> can also be found on the CTSI website.</p>
Q6:	<b>What will the assessment structure look like for portfolios?</b>
A	<p>The assessment structure for portfolio's is implemented by the assessors (usually a qualified person within your local authority).</p> <p><a href="#">Training</a> for internal assessors is now online only).</p> <p><a href="#">Example assessment plans</a> are also available for guidance. Portfolios are then assessed by a regional verifier.</p>
Q7:	<b>Where will exams be held?</b>
A	<p>CTSI try and make the examinations as convenient as possible for all candidates by having venues across the United Kingdom and offering a hybrid approach.</p> <p>We typically have a venue in Essex (The CTSI Head Office), a Welsh venue, a Scottish venue and a Preston venue.</p> <p>Candidates do have the option to sit their exams at their offices.</p>
Q8:	<b>The Qualifications Framework has introduced new forms of assessment like reports, case studies and reflective learning. When will these need to be completed?</b>
A	<p>The report, case study and reflective learning are the three different types of coursework for Stage 1.</p> <p>All coursework, the report (Unit 3), case study (Unit 2) and reflective learning (Unit 1) have <a href="#">guidance documents</a> available for use on the CTSI website and will need to be completed before the written examinations are undertaken.</p> <p>The coursework deadlines in order to complete the May exam cycle is the 1 March prior to the exams.</p>
Q9:	<b>I have got prior qualifications; will these give me any exemptions from the new framework?</b>
A	<p>A quick guide is available for TSQF holders. For DCA holders, please contact the Education Team direct for information (<a href="mailto:qualifications@tsi.org.uk">qualifications@tsi.org.uk</a>).</p> <p>Our transition <a href="#">quick-guide</a> is available to find out if your prior qualifications align to the Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>If the exemption the candidate wishes to obtain is over 5 years old, they will need to go through the <a href="#">Assessment of Prior Learning</a> (APL) route.</p> <p>Please read through the information on the website and guidance first. If you have any questions, please contact the team on 01268 582242 or <a href="mailto:qualifications@tsi.org.uk">qualifications@tsi.org.uk</a></p>
Q10:	<b>Can I complete Stage 1 and Stage 2 at the same time?</b>
A	<p>As per our regulations, Stage 1 will need to be completed in full before the candidate can move onto Stage 2 of the framework.</p> <p>Stage 1 has a time-frame of one year so will need to be completed in one exam cycle.</p>

	<p>Stage 2 can then be undertaken under the next exam cycle, but this can be broken down any way you choose to do so as the time-frame for this stage is 2 years.</p> <p>When we were working to introduce the qualification, new the QF deemed that in order to obtain a fully competent officer, Stage 1 and Stage 2 together would therefore provide this to the candidates.</p>
<b>Q11:</b>	<b>Can I complete one element only under the Qualifications Framework?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>Under the Qualifications Framework, a decision was made that units cannot be undertaken individually as it was deemed that in order for an award to be given, all aspects will need to be completed in full.</p> <p>You are able to complete a training element only to achieve the knowledge in an area but would not be able to complete a standalone exam.</p> <p>The only exemption to this rule is if you are DCATs qualified and are looking to do an additional element of Stage 2.</p>
<b>Q12:</b>	<b>I have looked at the exemption information and I feel that I should be entitled to an exemption. What do I do to have this looked at?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>All effort was made by both the QP to review all aspects relating to exemptions.</p> <p>The QF have made available an exemptions process, to enable you to refer to them your query and to provide evidence to them that will allow them to review your exemptions.</p>
<b>Q13:</b>	<b>I have had some things occur that mean I am not ready to sit my examinations or submit my coursework in time. What can I do?</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>If you have had circumstances arise which means you cannot meet deadlines or are not ready for your examinations in the May cycle, you have the option to complete an extenuating circumstances form. This form will need to detail which circumstances have occurred with any proof if the circumstance is medical etc.</p> <p>The policy and form are now <a href="#">one editable document</a>.</p> <p>The form is then sent to the QP for them to review if we can accept the form.</p>
<b>Q14:</b>	<b>I am a Regulatory Compliance Officer Apprenticeship (RCO) delegate. How can I enter the Qualifications Framework?</b>
	<p>If you are currently going through or have completed the Regulatory Compliance Officer Apprenticeship (RCO) you can enter Stage 1 with exemptions from Unit 1 and Unit 2 and complete Unit 3 only.</p> <p>We offer a package which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unit 3 examination and coursework</li> <li>- Unit 1 and Unit 2 exemptions</li> <li>- Unit 1 and Unit 2 distance learning notes</li> <li>- Unit 3 distance learning notes and training days</li> </ul> <p>We offer this package which is inclusive of everything within Stage 1. We also provide the distance learning materials for Unit 1 and Unit 2 as mapping showed that some of our learning was not included within the RCO.</p> <p>This is to make sure your knowledge is at the same level as someone who did Stage 1 as a whole.</p>

Q15:	<b>Can I sit my examinations without submitting my portfolio beforehand?</b>
	<p>In order to sit any practical, oral and professional interviews you must first complete your corresponding portfolio. This is to ensure that the knowledge you acquire when completing your portfolio is used in your examinations.</p> <p>We also recommend you complete prior to the written examinations but there is no requirement for this in the regulations.</p>

---

# Study and revision skills Exam technique **Guidance**

## **Qualifications Framework**

# Study and Revision Skills

## Index

### Content

When do I start?

Worries before the off

Set your priorities

Time and timing

Things to do, and not to do, when studying

Skills you need

Writing

Reading

Course notes

Tutorials/seminars/group work

Find out what you need to study

Practice questions

Practice, practice, practice!

Study groups

Tips to aid the memory

Summary

# Study, revision and examination skills

## Preface

We are all very different in our make-up and personalities. In looking at studying or revision, similarly, there is not a one size fits all solution. In the body of these notes are a number of tips to help with study techniques similarly tips to aid revision and examination skills. Many readers will find some of them superb, others a waste of time. Not every suggestion will suit everyone, but many will, it is a case of read it, try it and see what it works for you.

A word or three of caution: there is no easy way to study or revise. Some people are gifted and have tremendous powers of recall but they need to read it first and then develop an examination technique that allows them to bring out all those assimilated facts. So being able to read it once and regurgitate it is all very well and good, but these examinations require application and analysis and that takes practice and technique.

Others are not blessed with 100% recall, I am guessing most of you at this point, not to worry, you too can achieve your goals, by dint of hard work and persistence.

Some folks can cram last minute and pick up reasonable marks, they may not have a good understanding of the subject, but can put down enough facts to pass the examination. However, a practitioner also needs to be able to apply what they have learned on to day-to-day situations.

You may have been recruited late, or some money may have been found at the eleventh hour to fund your examination fees. You can still pass! You will however, have to work much harder in that shorter time.

For those of you who have started studying, well done in reading these notes. It shows commitment and an intention to help yourself, because no-one else can do it but you.

Work hard, study hard and practice examination questions. Success, sometimes, does not come first time. In my experience that just means you need to change your methods, adapt and work a little harder and smarter for the next time you sit.

Good luck in your endeavours!

# Study and revision skills

## When do I start?

Now is good! As soon as you decide to study for any qualifications then that is not only when you start to study, but also when you start preparation for the examinations as well.

Examinations are a strange phenomenon that many organisations use to determine whether you can attain a certain level or standard. It is rare in life that we are faced with situations where we can only rely on what we can remember at that point in time, without recourse to other sources of information. However, whilst few people have a natural ability in examinations, like most other skills, it can be learned.

If you are working in any environment where you encounter trading laws then you have probably already started on your journey, as you are working with certain pieces of legislation that you will come across in examinations.

Working with others in a group environment, talking with experienced colleagues, asking questions of the subject area and listening to others asking questions can also be very informative.

## Worries before the off

There may be many reasons why you are worried; these are just a few of the fears that have been expressed:

*'I have started a new job and I feel that I know nothing and everyone else is so knowledgeable, but I am not;'*

*'I left my studying behind years ago before we had children and a mortgage;'*

*'This subject is so technical I will never get my head around it;'*

*'I am the youngster in this office everyone else knows how this stuff works but me;'*

*'I have not studied anything since I left school, how can I manage all this new material?'*

*'I am well past my studying; there is no way I can remember all of this at my age.'*

The answer to all of them is that they can do it. All it takes is hard work and application. OK a modicum of intelligence as well, but you have that, otherwise you would not have got the job.

You all have your individual circumstances, BUT there are many people in your situation, whether you are studying seriously for the first time, or are picking up the threads of a long-forgotten memory.

Most of us worry to some degree and having an examination at the end of the journey is not a cause for panic, but knowing this, it is a time to put strategies in place to cope with what lies ahead.



## Set your priorities

This means in your social, domestic and working life.

Taking on study will mean that something else has to give a little. If you lead a full life with a hectic social calendar, you work all hours and you also have a family to look after then you may well be used to fitting it all in and organising. Nevertheless, you will need to allot time to study.

At the other end of the spectrum, you may tend to take it easy after work and unwind with a glass of something and watch the television. You too have to change your habits and devote some of that leisure time to studies. You do have to make sacrifices and planning time to study is imperative to success.

Ask if there is any possibility of studying at work, or does your authority have study leave (this may apply nearer exam time)? The worst that can happen is they say no. Work may also have some books on the subject that your predecessors have used; again, a polite request could pay dividends. Study time at work is a bonus, however, few people will get the opportunity and it will be down to using your own free time.

## Time and timing

Making a list or schedule of your available study times can be invaluable. Many folks will keep to a timetable if it is in black and white. Write down your available times to study, keep it handy, stick it on the fridge, or somewhere you will see and take notice of it. The more subjects you are studying the more vital it is to write out a schedule and spend equal amounts of time on each subject.

You do not have to live the life of a recluse and a little time for yourself is extremely important, otherwise you can become demotivated, but set that goal for the end of your study period, in two or three hours I will watch TV/have a glass of wine/go for a walk.

Break down your study period in to manageable chunks and vary what you do over that time. Doing one particular task over 2 or 3 hours could become rather boring and it is only when your head hits the desk you realise you have nodded off. Most sources seem to think that 40-45 minutes is the optimum time to spend with study, or revision, before taking a short 10-minute break.

If you devote 2 hours to study, then perhaps the first 40 minutes you spend reading and taking notes. Allow yourself a walk to the kitchen, make a soft drink and return to your studies but vary the task; the next 40 minutes practice answering some exam questions. Another short break and then use your books to compile a good answer to those questions. This is just a guide, 40 minutes may be too long, or short, for you. Try it and see what suits you best and vary it accordingly.

It may be months before the examinations but you need to start the regime straight away. Time really does appear to pass more quickly. It is like climbing a hill with the exams on the other side, yet in this case you reach the top quite quickly; time will now seem to speed up as you get nearer to the examinations. The longer you leave it to start, the greater the pressure you heap on yourself.

## **Things to do, and not to do, when studying**

Turn off your mobile phone and the television. They are a complete distraction. Your mind needs to be on the task in hand not on social media.

Music can assist but usually not too loud, more in the background. If music helps then put some on, if you like complete quiet put yourself in a quiet place away from day to day distractions.

Ensure you have all your books and materials to hand. A lap top, tablet or pc are ideal for you to make a record of your notes. However, remember your examinations are hand written, (there are exceptions if you have learning difficulties) hence, practicing your hand writing by making written notes is not old school, but a positive advantage.

If you have a young family you will have to gear your study around their needs and often study time is when they are in bed and you are probably not at your best. If you have an understanding partner, then they make take the burden from you for a couple of hours on a regular basis, to give you the time you need. Talk to them about it, you really could use their help.

What I have found, in many years of experience, is that you can always find an excuse for not doing it. If you are determined you will find time to put in the study time, no matter how tough your situation.

## **Skills you need**

If you have not studied for a while then you will need to brush up, or learn new skills. We live in an information rich environment. Anyone can spend an inordinate amount of time on the internet looking up websites that are mines of useful information, but where do you stop?

The answer will first lie in the contents of the syllabus you are studying, secondly, what do your tutors advise? They will provide notes and probably useful websites and reading lists to look at. However, if you are studying a subject that has a deal of legislation in the syllabus you will have to bite the bullet and attempt to read it. Note that important parts are often those sections that explain the definitions, offences and powers. These may well be highlighted in the lecture notes, leaving you to fill in the gaps and read around the subject.

## **Writing**

Most of us rarely write these days; nearly all communication is carried out on some form of technology. Once upon a time your parents or grandparents would have sat down to write long letters to friends and family, you too if you are an older learner. However, in this day and age the pen has taken a backseat to the 'tablet,' pc, laptop or mobile phone.

The examinations are written and you will need to be able to write for a possible two-hour period. Start practising by summarising or expanding your notes. You need to build this up so that you can cope with two straight hours of writing. Initially your fingers and wrist will ache, but like fitness, the more you train that part of your body the more it will be used to the task you require it to carry out.

## **Reading**

You may read for relaxation; you may read for work, but now you need to read for study. If you are recommended textbooks to read, it is not necessary to sit down and read them cover to cover, as you would a novel. It is best, like medicine, taken in small doses. Read passages or chapters that are

relevant to the area you are currently studying. If you are attending a course and the topics are provided, then read the chapters concerning those areas, so that you have an understanding of the subject matter.

All of the Qualifications Framework examination papers are divided up into two sections. Section B are larger, more essay style questions. In order to answer such questions, you need to try and read around the subject areas to increase your knowledge. Rarely are notes given by lecturers sufficient in themselves. Reading supplements that knowledge. Tie both together when reading, by making notes on the passages you are reading, this will increase memory retention and practice your writing skills.

## **Course notes**

As has been stated earlier, these are rarely enough in themselves to pass an examination, but they are an excellent start. Your tutors are experts in their fields and have practised the subject they teach. Your course notes will be a kernel of information, so do not ignore them.

On the day you read them for the first time, it is unlikely that you will be able to recall much of the content. However, the more often you visit those notes the more they will stick in the memory.

Try and read them again within a short space of time, after you have been given them, preferably within a few days. You will probably find that you have made your own notes in the margins, or on separate pages, whilst the lecturer expounded on his subject. Rewrite the notes incorporating your own text. These then will be more comprehensive than the original notes.

Read them again a week or so later and try and answer a few questions on them. You will be surprised, the more you revisit them, the more you retain. If there are also pages or chapters of a textbook that cover the topic then read that and make notes on relevant points that help to explain or expand the subject. Incorporate those notes by rewriting once again to include your amended originals. You should now have an excellent set of comprehensive revision notes and some of them will be etched in to your brain.

Invariably, on any course of study, there will be a recommended reading list. Try to get all of the available sources, or have ready access to them. The more you read the more you will understand.

It is rare that a tutor expects a student to read the books cover to cover. Take it a chapter at a time. In contract law books for instance most tomes will take you through the law of contract, perhaps starting with how one is formed and the component parts of offer, acceptance, intention and consideration. You can read it chapter by chapter and build on your knowledge.

Better yet, if you are attending, or taking a training course, when you deal with a particular topic in the notes, go away and read it in the recommended text. This will give you a much broader picture.

Notes by tutors are never intended to be comprehensive. They are exactly what the title implies: 'notes. Lecturers may well point you to specific legislation or sections of law. That is their purpose: to inform you of relevant components of the syllabus and bring them to your attention.

It would be pointless making tutor notes comprehensive volumes; it would be easier just to dish out the reading list and tell you to go and learn it all.

What tutors tend to do is emphasise important parts of the syllabus. Compare it to a body; the lecturer gives you the skeleton, a framework from which you, by reading around the subject, put the meat and other component parts on to those bones.

## **Tutorials/seminars/ group work**

You may be given the opportunity to answer tutorial questions in class, or take part in telephone tutorials. Where possible actively research the subject and prepare your answers by writing them down. Tutors will often encourage as many of the group to participate as possible.

Invariably, answers by others in the group will cover things that you did not think about in your answer and wish that you had. Make a note of them. In that way you will ensure you end up with a more comprehensive answer than the one you started with.

## **Find out what you need to study**

It is important to know the limits of the syllabus or syllabi you are studying.

The syllabi will be within your online learning course. Download them or print them, as one look will not cement them to your memory and you will need to revisit and refresh yourself of the requirements.

When you read your on-line course, or take in the lectures at your attended classes, the notes will cover some of the relevant areas and many topics will be dealt with, either in detail or in brief. The syllabus will usually list each of the topics required. Possibly where you may be flummoxed is when it states that similar legislation or government policies are also included. That is when you may need to ask the question, what else is covered? Another source of topic areas are the old examination questions. The latest can be found on the CTSI website.

## **Practice questions**

As Dave Powell points out in his book "Writing for Law" you would not enter the Tour De France if you could not ride a bike. Likewise, why would you turn up at the examination without having practiced answering any questions?

You need to start off slowly. As soon as you begin to study the material, is not the time to start answering exam questions, you will be somewhat disheartened if you do. However, when you have covered a specific topic and you have expanded your notes by reading round the subject, then dig out a question or two from the data bank and have a go.

The big problem with any form of learning, whether it is on-line or face to face, is that when you are on your own, there is no-one to provide feedback on your efforts. If there are on-line questions with feedback, then have a go at them and see how you do. It gives some indication. If there are questions set between blocks and you do not attempt them then you are probably losing your only chance to get some really good feedback on your ability to answer questions.

As previously stated, taught courses will often use tutorials. They are an excellent way to learn. If you get the questions in advance then prepare well and listen to answers by others and make notes. Ask questions of the lecturer, it is an opportunity to increase your knowledge, take it!

## **Practice, practice, practice!**

As you approach the exams you should increase the frequency of attempting questions. When you start, if no feedback is available, then compare your answer to your notes. If you believe that your answer lacks in detail then use notes, books or internet to try and flesh it out.

The Examiner's report is often very informative; the current examiner's report is available on the CTSI website. The Examiner will quite often state what is expected in an answer and the depth required. It

may also state where others have gone wrong, or have failed to cover particular points. So when you have looked at your answer, then add to it using all your sources. You should then have a comprehensive answer. You can do this for any number of questions.

When you start to increase your repertoire of answers you will also begin to notice that examiners are not as original as you first thought and, far from every exam having completely different questions, many topics are repeated regularly. What you will note is that the wording of some of the questions differ slightly, but the subject matter is almost the same.

As stated previously, a two-hour exam is a slog. As you get nearer to the exam instead of doing one question and looking at the answer, answer more questions, one after another, building up to attempting full practice exams. By doing this you will build up your stamina. By the time the examinations arrive, you are used to writing for two hours. You may also be able to see which questions come up more than others.

Practicing questions on a regular basis will not only improve your exam technique but also give you confidence. Always remember to read through your answer and compare it to the question asked.

## **Study groups**

In all probability you will be studying alone but, if you have the chance, try and team up with one or two others to share tips and ideas. Study groups of like-minded individuals work very well. You can set exam questions as tutorials and then discuss your answers together. It is surprising how much you can learn; someone will always bring something new to the table.

Even if you have no-one to share with in your authority you may get names and contact details from courses you attend, or from Branch meetings. These days, with a variety of media on which to interface, you can share knowledge and ideas.

## **Tips to aid the memory**

Some students find that sticking facts about the syllabus in various places around their flat or house using 'post-it' notes help: perhaps facts on the constitution in the toilet, separation of powers in the lounge and the rule of law in the bedroom. It does not work for everyone but as long as it works for you it is worth doing.

Some learners find that by setting out their notes in a particular manner they can recall the structure of the notes and think of the headings as they sit in examinations.

Others use mnemonics to help. This is a device to aid the memory. It is usually the practice of using a word, where each letter of the word represents another word or phrase.

Reading out loud can help memory retention. This technique can also work by recording your own notes and playing them back, when you are travelling.

Repetition of reading and practicing questions seems to work best for the majority of students.

**Try them all and keep the methods that suit you.**

## **In summary**

- Sort your priorities and schedule regular study periods;
- Once you have a schedule stick to it;
- Prepare to study by having all materials to hand;
- Learn to write for long periods, practice until 3 hours is easy;
- Read around the subject;
- Read your course notes immediately after the class;
- Write them out again, adding your own notes;
- The more you read and write, the more it will stick;
- Find out the extent of the syllabus;
- Do inter-block exercises to get feedback;
- Try and join a study group, real or virtual;
- Practice questions with increasing frequency leading up to the exams until you feel you can answer them all.

# Exam Technique

## Index

### Content

The night before

Exam day

Reading time

Timing is everything

Planning

Question choice

How much should I write?

Language appropriate

Don't be lazy

Checking and reading through your answers

State the obvious

Multiple part questions

Summary

# Exam technique

## The night before

There is no real right or wrong on studying the night before an examination. It all depends upon your learning style. Some people find that they can make use of those last few hours to cram more facts in to their brains. Others find that, if they do that, they remember only what they crammed that night. It is better to study steadily for many months, to drip feed knowledge and that helps retention. The best method is to work hard up to the examinations, then the night before try to relax a little and get an early night. However, there is no method that will suit everyone and if you tend to panic and think that you have not done enough, the only way you will settle yourself is some last minute studying.

You may not have had the length of time to prepare as you would have hoped, perhaps because last minute money was found to train you, or enter you in to the examinations. In that case, last minute studying, perhaps using notes to list main points, may help keep them in your mind. Some research studies have shown that topics looked at before sleep can lodge in the mind.

You may wish to unwind with a drink, but for obvious reasons do not overdo it. Equally try to rest well so you are relaxed and refreshed the day of the exam. This is not always easy if you are in an hotel having travelled to the exam centre, but do what you can to ensure you are calm and settled the night before.

## Exam day

Set at least one alarm and give yourself time to have breakfast, or lunch for an afternoon exam. You need to keep up your energy levels to get the brain working. Many schools now run breakfast clubs before examinations to ensure children are properly nourished; you need nourishment likewise for brainpower.

It is a self-evident fact that this day is important, yet still people are late to exams, or worse go on the wrong day or time. Check and double check the date and time and ensure you know where the venue is located. If you are driving or getting public transport leave time to get lost, or find a car park, or be delayed.

Exam nerves are normal but absolute panic is not. If you become so wound up before examinations that you are crying and failing to hold down any food, it may be necessary to have a word with a health professional to see what they can suggest. If you are in poor health when you turn up at the exam venue then inform the Invigilator so they can keep an eye out for you.

Most candidates will have that flutter in their stomachs, but, believe it or not, those nerves can help you be on top of your game. Have all your details with you; such as exam number and enough equipment to write and drawing equipment, if relevant, for exams such as metrology. You still see people outside the exam room borrowing a pen.



## Reading time

All the CTSI examinations allow ten minutes reading time; students should make full use of this time to carefully read all of the questions.

Ten minutes may not be enough time to read every question thoroughly, but do not worry. You can afford a few more minutes to fully read and try to understand the diet of questions on offer. It is during this time that you will probably pick the section questions that you will attempt. Do not worry that others around you are staring to write their answers. **Ensuring you fully understand the question, BEFORE you answer** is vital to passing. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of reading and understanding before you start to answer. **So many students fail to answer the question asked.** They answer what they think might be the answer without any planning, structure or format.

## Timing is everything

You may well have taken far more than your allotted ten minutes reading time. What you need to do is calculate how much time you have left and work that out so you have a proportional amount of time for each section or question.

The front of the exam paper provides you with a suggest time allocation for each session of the exam. Try not to go over your allotted time. If you have not finished after nine minutes leave a space and come back to it later, if you have time. You will gain more marks by starting a new question than you will by plugging away trying to finish the old one. This is especially true for the longer questions. Stick to your time limits rigidly and start on a new question. Come back to it if you have time left when the others are completed.

Many students underestimate the consequences of spending so much time on one question that they fail to attempt all questions on the exam. It is particularly problematic when you fail to attempt a 35 mark question. By failing to attempt this you have limited your maximum marks to 65. If you have gone off track for one of the other questions you will now be struggling to pass. Hence the reason timing is so important. According to Kate Williams, editor of a number of 'Pocket Study Skills' books by Palgrave, it is easier to get the first 50% of any question than the last 20%.

## Planning

You have read the questions and now wish to start answering them.

You need a plan. This is less important for the short mark questions but is essential for the 35 mark answers you will be attempting.

So many students go off on in the wrong direction and fail to answer the question that is asked. You have already read it carefully. Now write down your plan and mark it as such, so that the examiner is aware of it. You may decide that the answer is in six parts; your plan could be six bullet points. You may decide that it has a central theme which you write in the centre of the page then have lines, or themes coming from that in the form of a spider diagram. Whatever works for you is good!

When you begin to write your answer, if more themes or bullet points pop in to your head, then add them to your plan. Refer back to your plan and the question when you answer. One of the **biggest problems that markers encounter is that students start well and then go off on tangent, failing to answer the question that is asked, but answering something entirely different.**

**When you read back the answer, ask yourself: have I answered the question asked?**

It is important to read the question and then your answer. If you do not think you have answered the question, then neither will the examiner and your marks will suffer accordingly. Many students will think this is wasting precious time that could be spent answering another question. It really is not. It is time used effectively and wisely. However, this all has to be done within the time frame.

In an exam, it doesn't matter what you know if you can't express it clearly and concisely. Essay type questions should begin with a short introduction stating your position, followed by a series of paragraphs that each make a clear point and a short conclusion supporting the argument outlined in the introduction. There is a simplistic aspect to this, you are setting out a neat structure to your answer and telling the examiner you understand what this question is about.

Problem questions usually have a number of parts to them. In your plan identify each aspect of the question and how you propose to answer it. By doing this you are letting the examiner know you know that you understand what the question consists of and give a logical format for answering.

**Remember, if the questions ask for a conclusion, or your advice, please give it!**

### **Question choice**

In the section A questions you will either know something about the answer or not. If you understand the question then answer it in your allotted time.

There is no reason why you have to answer the questions in the order they are sequenced on the exam. When you read through the questions there may be one stand out question on a topic you feel very knowledgeable about. If that is the case, start with that question. Answering this will give you confidence. Remember to write out your plan carefully, as we discussed earlier, and refer back to it and the question as you answer to ensure you are doing what has been asked. Finish within the appropriate time ensuring that your answer is what the question required. If this sounds like repetition, it is!

Some students will start to answer a question and run out of steam after a paragraph. This will not get you many marks, you may be an expert in being succinct but this will never be sufficient to gain you good marks. However, if you have a written plan, this should inform you that you do not know enough about the topic, so leave this and attempt one you know more about. Similar to going off on a tangent, starting a question on a topic you know little about could cost you dearly. Writing those plans should keep you making the right choices.

### **How much should I write?**

This is a frequently asked question. There is no simple answer. It depends upon your answer and your style of writing. Some people believe if they write down everything they know about the subject matter of the question, irrespective of its relevance, then there must be some good stuff in there somewhere, which will get good marks. This is not true!

Examiners are looking for structured answers. If you have planned and written down your answer following that structure, it may not be as long as the bombardment style approach, but will probably gain more marks. I could suggest that two to three pages is sufficient to answer a 35-mark question but 2-3 pages of rubbish will not score at all. I have known students who fill several pages and fail to score many marks, as it does not answer the question and effectively is just wordage. Equally if your writing is small, or very large, then you will need to adjust your length of answer.

There is no simple response to how many pages should I write? Examiners gear questions so that, roughly, 2-3 pages of informed text should be sufficient to cover major points in a planned, structured answer. The main reason students ramble on for page after page is because they get side-tracked. If you do not refer back to a plan then it is easy, at such a stress filled time, to write reams on a topic on which you feel you are knowledgeable. This may well give you a feeling of well-being, but if it is of limited or no relevance, then the marks you receive will be few. Sometimes students go so far off the topic that despite many pages of facts there are no marks to be gained. Make what you write concise and relevant to the question!

### **Language appropriate**

For the most part, your examinations are law subjects. In law words have specific meaning, it is important to use the correct vocabulary. If you are referring to a civil case then you would not prosecute but take an action. Examiners begin to doubt when students appear not to understand what they are talking about by using inappropriate language. When referring to an act of parliament, then it is divided in two sections and subsections. A regulation is divided up in to regulations e.g. regulation 1, regulation 2, etc. An order is divided up in to articles.

When discussing offences then the outcome could well be a prosecution. However, if you are looking at infringements under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, then there is the option to take civil action instead of a criminal prosecution. Be clear exactly what you mean and use the appropriate terms.

Only use abbreviations after telling the examiner what they are, if you use Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations (CPRs) then using "CPRs" after the Regulations, as shown, informs the Examiner that you will be using that acronym throughout the rest of the text of the question. If it is a common abbreviation or acronym then the examiner will often give you the benefit of the doubt. However, if it is rare, or one you make up, then please let the examiner know.

### **Don't be lazy**

Let us assume that you have mentioned something in question 1 and the subject matter appears later in the paper, question 8 for example; please write out the explanation again. Do not ask the examiner to refer back to question 1 for part of the answer. If you cannot be bothered to give a full explanation where it is relevant, then do not expect the examiner to trawl through the exam paper trying to find part of the answer tucked away in another section.

There may well be a slight overlap in the subject matter but your answer needs to be relevant to the question you are answering.

### **Checking and reading through your answers**

Many students will happily finish their exam and leave the room thinking how good it is to get out early. Why? If you have finished early then you can use that time profitably to check through your answers. It is amazing how often words are completely missed out of a sentence, as we are writing quickly to get down as much information that we can. For example, if you miss out the word 'not' it completely reverses the answer you wished to put down. The examiner can only mark what you have written and not what you intended. So, your hard work on that area could be negated for want of reading carefully through your answer.

You may also think of more information to enhance your answer, If you fail to take up such an obvious opportunity you may fail the exam. You may not have answered all of the first five questions. Reading

through the questions and answers may stimulate your brain in to action and an answer, or at least part of one may come to you. Checking through might pick up only two or three extra marks but that could well be the difference between pass and fail, so DO IT!

### **State the obvious**

If the examiner asks a specific question, then state the obvious in your answer. Do not assume that by your clever use of prose the examiner will be able to interpret what you intended to write. Examiners can only mark what you have written down, not what is in your mind when you write it. If it is implied then you will not get anything for it. By telling the examiner the facts they will have what they want and you will get marks for it.

Often in examinations you might be asked to compare or contrast one situation or system against another. For example, in the Regulatory Environment and Enforcement exam you may ask you to compare self-regulation with more formal methods of regulatory control. In order to answer you first need to explain what both are and then go on to explain the advantages and disadvantages of each. Problem questions often consist of different areas of law. State that you believe the question to be in several parts and explain what they are and how you intend to approach the answer. It informs the examiner that you know what you are talking about.

**DO NOT REPEAT THE QUESTION IN THE ANSWER!** So many students do this. Examiners know what the question is they set it and it is on the question paper so why waste all that time rewriting it, yet year on year some people will do exactly this. If you number the question clearly that is all you need to do.

### **Multiple part questions**

First, ensure you answer all parts, students often miss out on marks by failing to answer one part of the question, because they forgot, or failed to plan any answer for that part. Secondly, does it carry equal marks or do some parts attract higher marks? If they are not of equal value that may be because the lower mark questions are easier to answer, but more likely, you will be expected to spend more time on the answer with the higher marks. I know this sounds like I am stating the obvious, but it will often be the case that a student will write a paragraph on a 15-mark part of a question and two pages on one worth five marks. This is usually the wrong way round!

### **Summary**

- Eat and drink before the exam and arrive refreshed in plenty of time
- Ensure you have enough writing materials and any other equipment required
- Carefully read the paper, take more time if you need it
- Work out your timings for each answer and stick to them
- Plan your answer, write it down and refer back to it as you answer
- Read the question again and your answer. Did you do what was asked?
- If you do not finish a question in the given time, leave a space and move on
- Essay style questions should have an opening, a middle discourse and a conclusion
- If you finish inside the time check through all of your answers carefully for spelling, clarity and missing words.
- Check to ensure you filled in all your details on each answer book before handing it in.

**Good luck with your exams!**

## **Bibliography**

Writing for Law: Dave Powell & Emma Teare, Palgrave MacMillan

The Study Skills Handbook: Stella Cottrell, Palgrave MacMillan

The secret to exam revision success: Andrew Marszal,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationadvice/9823789/Revision-techniques-The-secret-to-exam-revision-success.html>

Ten top revision tips: Abby Young-Powell

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/apr/24/revision-advice-students>

Five secrets to revising that can boost your grades: Tom Stafford,

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/08/five-secrets-of-successful-revising>