How to do the tutorial assignments

Introductory comments

Most people studying in the accounting discipline pursue knowledge so that they will be able to solve problems in the real world of commerce. So it makes sense that we should arrange the learning process in ACCG 310 around completing as many problems as possible in the weekly assignments.

Allocating sufficient time

Each weekly assignment encompasses a significant body of work at a level of detail that it is not always possible to cover in the lectures. Therefore, non-completion of a weekly assignment is likely to result in important concepts and techniques being missed. In addition, as the latter part of the unit builds on concepts and techniques that are covered in the earlier part of the unit, students who fall behind will find it extremely difficult to catch up. Typically, students underestimate the time required for completing the weekly assignments. You should allow at least 6 to 8 hours of private study per week to review lecture notes, complete the required reading and attempt the weekly assignment.

In our experience, students that are unable to satisfy the learning objectives of this unit (and fail the final exam) have not completed the tutorial assignments on a timely basis.

Getting an ‘S’ grade for submitted assignment work

Tutors will collect students’ written answers to assignments at the end of each tutorial. The weekly tutorials will generally include ‘discussion questions’ and ‘practical exercises’. In most weeks, the required assignment work will comprise three discussion questions and three practical exercises.

Tutors will be looking for a 100% attempt/completion of the prescribed discussion questions and practical exercises in a submitted assignment before awarded a student an S grade (‘Satisfactory’) for their assignment.

How to approach the assignment discussion questions

Writing answers to the discussion questions contained in the weekly assignments should be viewed as good practice for the final exam. When writing answers to discussion questions try to be conscious of the need to comply exactly with the directions of the question and to specifically address what has been asked. Have you been asked to ‘summarise’, ‘discuss’, ‘describe’, ‘outline’, ‘evaluate’, ‘explain’ ‘analyse’ or give your opinion on an issue with supporting reasons? Does the question require you to specifically refer to an accounting standard or refer to the work of other authors?

Be as concise as possible when writing answers to discussion questions. Rarely should written answers to discussion questions exceed one page and in many cases one short
paragraph will suffice. Your written answers should be structured so that you will be able to easily revise them at a later date (for example, when you are preparing for the final exam). Consider using separate paragraphs for each of your arguments or using headings to act as ‘signposts’ for the content of your answer. You could also consider writing your answer (or part of your answer) in ‘point form’.

**How to approach the assignment exercises**

Prior to attempting the practical exercises of an assignment you should carefully review the worked examples that are set out in your lecture notes and the relevant textbook chapters.

A suggested strategy for solving the practical exercises in the assignments is as follows:

1. Confront the problem, overcome your initial sense of panic and be motivated to solve it yourself (not your teacher, not your friend but yourself);
2. Define the problem, be clear about what is required and what information is relevant to solving the problem;
3. Explore the problem to make connections between it and your background knowledge or previous experiences;
4. Devise a plan of attack to solve the problem, what will you do first, second and so on;
5. Do it: carry out the plan;
6. Reflect on the results obtained: are they sensible and not contrary to any fundamental principles or rules that you have learnt?

It is not expected that you will always submit perfect answers to the practical exercises. Making mistakes and ‘getting stuck’ is an important part of the learning process when you confront accounting principles and techniques for the first time. The key to becoming proficient at practical accounting exercises is to do the best you can with the knowledge that you have. If it turns out that your work has some mistakes or omissions, then you should use the solutions provided at the end of each week return to ‘revise and correct’ as soon as possible. Of course, any difficulties with the practical exercises that you unable to resolve should be addressed to the teaching staff.

**Use of computer software packages**

In business, it is uncommon to find people who write or problem-solve in the field of financial accounting without using computer software packages such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. Accordingly, you are strongly encouraged to complete your tutorial assignments in ACCG 310 using word processing and spreadsheet packages where possible.