

POWER : EMPOWERING ACCOUNTING GRADUATES VIA PERFORMANCE WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE ONLINE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The Performance Work-based Learning Experience Report (PoWER) represents a groundbreaking pedagogical innovation aimed at equipping accounting graduates with the essential competencies needed for a seamless transition into professional accounting practice. By bridging the divide between practical accounting proficiency and career readiness, PoWER revolutionises traditional assessment methodology to ensure students are well-prepared for the dynamic demands of the industry. Designed as a simulation-based adaptation of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)'s MyExperience, PoWER redefines conventional reporting frameworks by integrating industry-relevant competencies acquired during work-based learning internships with the rigorous performance objectives stipulated in ACCA's Practical Experience Requirement (PER). This innovative learning tool, seamlessly embedded within the university's Learning Management System (LMS), provides a structured, experiential platform that prepares students for real-world professional scenarios. It enables them to meticulously document and showcase their mastery of both essential and technical performance objectives throughout their internship experience. Beyond enhancing experiential learning, PoWER deepens students' understanding of professional responsibilities, fostering industry-aligned expertise. Furthermore, it aligns with the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)'s competency-based education reform and contributes to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, reinforcing its role as a transformative tool in accounting education.

KEYWORDS: *experiential learning, performance objective; work-based learning; competency-based assessment; simulation-based report*

PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

The transition from academic training to professional accounting practice remains a significant challenge for graduates, primarily due to the mismatch between theoretical knowledge and industry-required competencies (Jackson & Meek, 2021). Traditional assessment methods in accounting education often emphasize theoretical proficiency while neglecting real-world application and competency-based learning. Consequently, graduates may struggle to meet the expectations of employers who seek candidates with practical experience and professional judgment. Research indicates that conventional university assessments do not adequately capture workplace readiness, and there is a pressing need for a structured framework that integrates practical training within academic evaluation (Djeffal & Haddad, 2024). Without a competency-based approach, students may complete their studies with insufficient exposure to performance-driven accounting practices, leading to gaps in professional preparedness.

PoWER aims to bridge this gap by embedding industry-relevant competency assessments into accounting education. By aligning work-based learning with the Association of Chartered Certified

Accountants (ACCA)'s Practical Experience Requirement (PER), PoWER seeks to enhance graduates' professional readiness by providing a structured framework for documenting and demonstrating technical and essential skills during internships. The implementation of simulation-based learning assessments, as recommended in modern accounting education reforms, has been shown to significantly improve students' practical competencies and professional judgment (Jackson & Meek, 2021)

DESIGN DESCRIPTION

PoWER is a structured and online platform designed to integrate work-based learning assessment within a university's Learning Management System (LMS). Serving as a simulation-based assessment tool, PoWER incorporates the initial assessment guidelines, layout, rubric and feedback into an interactive online simulation assessment report, seamlessly accessible via the LMS platform (Phase I).

Developed in alignment with the ACCA's performance objectives, PoWER enables accounting students to access its user interface directly through their LMS. The primary interface provides comprehensive guidelines on how students should document and reflect on their work-based learning experiences during their internship via the PoWER simulation-based assessment report. The assessment structure mandates students to fulfill all essential performance objectives, while for the technical objectives, they must select and complete any four out of the seven available areas (Phase II).

PoWER offers students a systematic method to document their work-based learning experience, ensuring their internship journey aligns with the criteria set by ACCA. As an online learning platform, it enables students to log real-time work activities, track progress, and reflect on their competency development relative to the essential and technical performance objectives of ACCA. This innovation enhances conventional internship assessments by integrating and bridging theoretical knowledge with professional practice, effectively mirroring ACCA's actual online performance objective assessment platform (Phase III).

Unlike traditional internship assessments, PoWER ensures students' work is securely stored within the LMS, allowing them to gradually complete the simulation-based report throughout their internship. Upon submission, students receive personalized feedback and learning recommendations, facilitating continuous improvement and bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and applied knowledge in professional accounting practice (Phase IV).

VISUALS

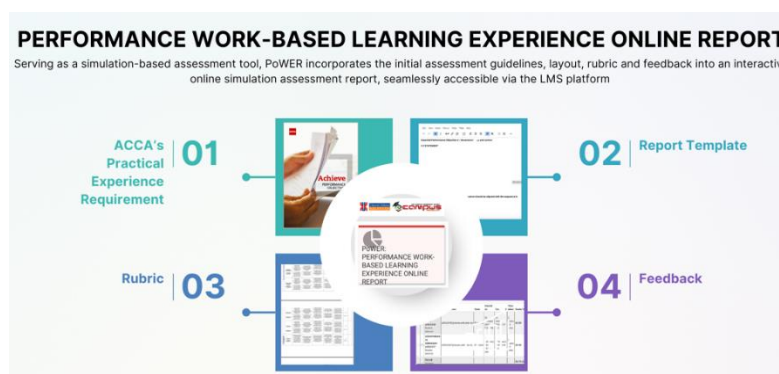


Figure I : PoWER: Performance Work-Based Learning Experience Online Report

NOVELTY AND UNIQUENESS

PoWER introduces a transformative approach to work-based learning by integrating LMS-powered performance tracking with accounting professional body-standard competency frameworks. This system aligns with emerging trends in digital accounting education, which emphasize adaptive learning models and competency-based assessments. Moreover, PoWER's simulation-based evaluations mimic real-world accounting scenarios, providing students with hands-on experience before entering the workforce. By incorporating the ACCA's PER, PoWER ensures that students develop the technical and analytical skills required in modern accounting professions (Jackson & Meek, 2021). What sets PoWER apart from conventional work-based learning report assessment is its integration of automated performance tracking and feedback mechanisms. Unlike traditional internship reporting methods, which rely on static evaluations, PoWER utilizes real-time data documentation to assess student progress. Additionally, the system is tailored to the ACCA competency framework, ensuring that students gain accredited professional skills before entering the workforce.

BENEFITS TO MANKIND

The PoWER platform marks a transformative leap in accounting education, significantly enhancing students' employability through structured experiential learning. Research underscores that graduates with work-based learning experience exhibit higher retention rates and superior critical thinking abilities (Twyford & Dean, 2021). By integrating competency tracking aligned with accounting professional bodies, PoWER elevates students' essential and technical expertise while instilling ethical self-reporting practices and regulatory compliance awareness. The system mandates students to attach verifiable evidence for each performance objective they claim to have achieved, ensuring integrity and transparency in competency assessment. Moreover, PoWER bridges the education-to-employment gap by equipping students with industry-relevant skills, making them workforce-ready upon graduation.

Beyond improving individual competencies, PoWER drives technological literacy, a critical necessity for future accountants navigating an increasingly automated and digitized financial landscape. By replacing paper-based internship evaluations with a fully digitalized system, PoWER reduces administrative burdens on educators, promotes sustainability in educational practices, and contributes to cost savings for universities. Additionally, PoWER fosters a more engaging and relevant learning experience, ensuring that students graduate with practical expertise that aligns with real-world industry expectations.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL

The PoWER platform possesses significant commercial potential, particularly through its adaptation into a mobile and web-based application. By transitioning from a university-specific LMS to a standalone, cloud-based platform, PoWER can cater to a wider market, including universities, professional training institutions, and corporate internship programs. Additionally, its alignment with professional accounting standards, such as the ACCA's PER, enhances its value proposition for global accounting firms and regulatory bodies. The development of a PoWER mobile app would further increase accessibility, allowing students to log real-time work activities, receive instant feedback, and track progress towards professional accreditation from any location.

CONCLUSION

The PoWER platform represents a revolutionary advancement in work-based learning and competency-based assessment, seamlessly integrating LMS with industry-standard accounting competency frameworks. By providing a structured, digitalized, and simulation-based evaluation,

PoWER enhances students' employability, promotes ethical self-reporting, and fosters technological literacy - essential skills in the evolving accounting landscape. Unlike traditional internship assessments, PoWER leverages real-time data documentation and automated performance tracking, ensuring a more engaging and transparent evaluation process. Additionally, its commercial potential extends beyond academia, with the possibility of expansion into a cloud-based or mobile application, making it a scalable solution for others. By aligning with sustainability goals, reducing administrative burdens, and ensuring graduates meet professional accreditation standards, PoWER bridges the gap between education and industry, preparing the next generation of accounting professionals for real-world challenges.

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