



## Versatile AAT – **Ryan Kwok**

*Be determined to achieve your goal*

*Nowadays in Hong Kong, many of the young people, especially those in generation Y, are portrayed as having a fragile mindset and casual attitude. AAT member Ryan Kwok bucks the trend by demonstrating his disciplined, determined mindset and dedication to his career development in the professional field.*

### **Searching for direction**

Like so many young people, Ryan did not have a clear direction in mind for his future career path when he was a secondary student. Neither did he study accounting in his secondary school nor think of being a professional accountant in his teen years. After graduating from form five in 1999 and working for a few years, during which time he was mainly responsible for administrative work, he started to think about his future seriously and wanted to achieve more for himself. He thought that it was time to move on. Knowing himself to be particularly good with numbers, he started to consider launching himself into the accounting profession.

Ryan enrolled and completed the diploma programme in accounting studies at Hong Kong School of Commerce. He did a lot of research and compared the accounting courses and qualifications offered by various professional bodies in Hong Kong. He found that the AAT qualification offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Accredited

Accounting Technicians (HKIAAT) would be the best and most suitable option for him. “I really wanted to get into the accounting field and gradually move up the career ladder. The AAT Examination is comprehensive, covering various aspects of accounting and business and most importantly, it is articulated to the Professional Bridging Examination (PBE), which allows students to progress to the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs’ Qualification Programme upon graduation. My ultimate goal is to be a Certified Public Accountant. So, I found AAT a very good starting point and foundation for me,” Ryan explains.

### **Practice makes perfect**

Ryan kicked started his AAT studies in 2007 and undertook the AAT Examination during 2009-10. It is not easy to manage work and study at the same time. According to this hard-working part-time student, time management is critical for success. Outside work, he devoted much of his free time to his studies instead of going out and having fun. “I established a habit of doing

revision and reading every day after work if I did not need to work overtime”. He also applied the rule *Practice Makes Perfect*. “To prepare for the examinations, I brought many past papers home and kept practicing them in order to grab the essence of each subject.”

Studying for the AAT Examination enabled Ryan to acquire concrete and practical knowledge and skills in accountancy. He found that Paper 7 “Financial Accounting” was the most interesting. As an audit trainee, Ryan thought that Paper 8 “Principles of Auditing and Management Information System” most useful since he mainly performs audit work for his company’s clients. He also learnt some very practical skills by using common accounting software like DacEasy and Excel, skills which are transferrable to almost all software in use today. The most difficult subject for him was Paper 6 “Fundamental of Business Law” with many cases to read and many complicated legal concepts to apply in the real world. As well as spending plenty of time on his studies, Ryan also sought help from his friends and teachers to crack the really difficult parts of the syllabus. He was also lucky to have support from his previous bosses for study and examination leave.

### Get prepared from accounting to auditing

Ryan’s hard work is paying off. Before attaining the AAT qualification, he worked as an accounts clerk in a toy company and at an accounting firm, where he was mainly responsible for simple tasks like compiling data, posting entries, balancing books, and arranging bank payments. After completing all the papers in the AAT Examination and obtaining the AAT qualification in 2010, he received many opportunities for job interviews when he started to search for a new job, thanks to having this new qualification on his resume. He took up the position of Audit Trainee in Dominic Y.C. Ng & Co. in April 2011. He has to do a lot of audit preparation work in his current position. This is quite different from his previous accounting job duties. According to Ryan, audit work is more challenging as there are more standards

and guidelines to learn. He did not have previous work experience in the area but what he had learned from his AAT qualification studies is enabling him to pick up the working practices quickly.

### Strive to stay ahead of the competition

“The competition is keen nowadays,” Ryan says. “There are many university graduates in the market and therefore I am well aware that I have to keep working hard to catch up or else I will be left behind. I will make ongoing efforts to develop myself and to advance. In the short run, I plan to complete the PBE and the accounting degree programme within two to three years. In the long run, my aspiration is to become a Certified Public Accountant in Hong Kong within ten years.

“I can also see the great potential developing in China-related business. Today, China is already the second largest economy in the world and our economic relations will continue to become closer to our mother country. Therefore I’m also planning to acquire the professional accounting qualification in Mainland China in the future.”

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### Ryan Kwok’s study and career path

2007-10	Diploma in accounting studies – Hong Kong School of Commerce
2007-08	Accounts clerk at Sewco Toys & Novelty Ltd
2008-10	Accounts clerk at Vincent W.M. Lai & Co.
2009-10	Completed AAT Examination Papers 5 to 8 (with exemptions from four papers)
April 2011 - now	Audit trainee at Dominic Y.C. Ng & Co.
September 2011	Enrolled on Bachelor of Professional Accounting programme jointly offered by the Open University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Institute of CPAs
December 2011	Undertook Professional Bridging Examination