

## ***Young reporters – meeting the professionals***

### **Introduction**

The programme “Young reporters – meeting the professionals” is a continuation of the HKIAAT Accounting and Business Management Case Competition. The young reporters are the competition winners. This programme aims to further strengthen the young reporters’ generic skills and to widen their horizons through exposure to the real world by giving them the opportunity to interact with CPAs and accounting professionals.

### **Responsibilities**

Young reporters are required to outline interview questions, conduct an interview, take photos and notes during the interview and to write up the interview article.

### **Interviewee**



**Michael Chan** is a senior accounts clerk in an optical trading company. He completed the Accredited Accounting Technician (AAT) examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE) in 2006 and 2007 respectively. He is now a student of the Hong Kong Institute of CPA’s Qualification Programme (QP), heading towards a CPA designation.

### **Young reporters**

The four young reporters are the graduates of Associate Degree in Business (Accounting and Finance) at the Hong Kong Community College, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. They are members of the Champion Team of the HKIAAT Accounting and Business Management Case Competition 2008-2009. The young reporters are:



**Chan Siu Lung,  
Black**



**Lo Lok Hin,  
Enzo**



**Ng Wai Ka,  
Ryan**



**Wong Chun Fat,  
Heero**



## **AAT and PBE – significant attributes of accounting personnel in Hong Kong**

Michael Chan demonstrates how we can be the masters of our lives. He talks about his development through the AAT Examination and PBE, the route he took to working towards a professional accounting qualification other than via academic qualification.

### ***Tell us about your current company and your main roles.***

My current company is a small-medium enterprise (SME) which imports and exports optical products. I am now a senior accounts clerk with subordinates in my team. I am responsible for preparing accounting reports, handling the day-to-day cash flow, accounts payables and receivables, invoicing matters, liaising with auditors and the Inland Revenue Department, and handling the company's property investment. I think that working in an SME is a good place to learn different kinds of skills and abilities. Comparatively speaking, you will be given more opportunities to learn different aspects of running a business as compared with working in large corporations.

### ***When did you start your accounting studies and preparing for the AAT Examination?***

I studied accounting during my secondary education. Although I was not good at calculation, it was not difficult for me to grasp the basic knowledge of accounting. With this successful experience, I was then motivated to study and learn more. After graduating from secondary school, I chose to pursue real working experience in the accounting field rather than moving on to tertiary education. One of the reasons is that I have to earn my own living. It might seem arduous, but I believe that I can achieve my goals through my endeavours.

I know that taking recognized public examinations is vital for accounting professionals. Therefore, I searched information on the internet and found that the AAT qualification is well-recognized in the accounting profession. I was even impressed by the practical nature of the syllabus for the AAT Examination papers as this equips graduates with skills to handle different accounting tasks. The articulation pathways to different degree programmes and the Hong Kong Institute of CPA's Qualification Programme (QP) provided by the AAT qualification were also considerations as part of my long-term goal. With its affordable examination fees, reasonable time expectations and flexible study mode, the AAT qualification was therefore the best option for me.

### ***How did you cope with the AAT Examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE)?***

I completed the eight papers of AAT Examination and the four papers of PBE in two years and one year respectively. Thanks to the flexibility of examination design, I could plan my study schedule and had enough time for preparation. Of course, working hard is always the main requirement for success. I spent around three hours every night studying. I read all the textbooks and took my own notes to ensure my thorough understanding of the textbooks. Nevertheless, I did not sacrifice so much leisure time as I wanted to strive for a balance between work and life. Taking a rest is important to re-charge in order to improve the quality and use of my study time.



***What happened after you completed the AAT Examination and PBE?***

Passing both exams confirmed my ability. This helped me build up confidence in pursuing my career development. An increase in salary and job promotion is the realistic reward for my efforts and accomplishments. I also hope to broaden my scope of work in accordance with the knowledge I have gained.

***What are your plans for the future?***

I wish to continue to develop my skills in the accounting field and am eager to become a qualified CPA. I keep boosting my accounting knowledge and am now a registered student on the Hong Kong Institute of CPA's QP. I will try my best to overcome the challenges in each module and complete the QP as quickly as I can.

***What is your advice to those who want to develop in the accounting field?***

Each of us has different strengths and weaknesses. For example, though I am weak in calculating skills, I face this problem bravely by devoting extra effort and time to it. Try to set reasonable targets to keep you moving. Being humble is important too. In the real business world, you will find that the knowledge you acquired may not be enough. Sometimes, textbooks only give you the concepts or theories but in themselves they do not represent the answers and know-how needed for your job.

Each company and industry varies in nature and in accounting performance requirements. Hence, it is better to raise questions, seek advice and learn modestly from colleagues and try to adapt to the working environment as well as you can. To be frank, I think employers and employees often face conflicting expectations in the workplace in terms of workload, quality of work, level of commitment and rewards. It is understandable that employers expect employees to produce high-quality work while employees expect appreciation and remuneration for their efforts. Sometimes you need to make a suitable adjustment to your mindset to balance these different views. In conclusion, make all-out attempts to do your job and you will find your own way position.



As you read the interview,  
we hope to share our learning  
experience with you.....



## Our learning process and experience

**>>> 29 January 2010, 1:30pm (12 days before interview - preparation)**



We are currently students in the top-up degree programme and are grateful for this opportunity to produce another "young reporters" article. We have become very busy since the second semester started. However, we enjoy the young reporter programme so much that we used our after school hours to prepare for the interview.

This time, we had a chance to interview an AAT. From his experience, we wanted to get more insights into the real working environment and factors which could help us to achieve success in our career.

**>>> 10 February 2010, 7:30pm (interview day)**



Michael is a bit shy but is very cheerful and humorous. He gave us some valuable insights into his work experience and talked about his views on the importance of attaining professional qualifications. We finished the interview in a happy and friendly atmosphere.



**Chan Siu Lung, Black**

“This is the second time that I have participated in this programme. After interviewing an employer and an employee, it was interesting to learn their different standpoints and their views on working standards and expectations. The interviews really do broaden our horizons on this real commercial world. I believe this experience is good for our future career. Lastly, we must offer our heartfelt thanks to the HKIAAT for giving us the opportunity to participate in this programme.”

**Lo Lok Hin, Enzo**

“With the experience gained from the last interview, we set questions quicker and our discussions went more smoothly this time. We have had the chances to interview accounting professionals from different levels, including a partner of an accounting firm and an AAT working in a small-medium enterprise (SME). During the interviews, we realize that employers and employees hold different points of view. Nowadays, employees are important assets to companies. I believe that effective communication is imperative and can help both parties to identify each other's needs and work out a win-win solution.”

**Ng Wai Ka, Ryan**

“A well-known saying “where there is a will, there is a way!”. Our interviewee this time, Michael Chan, has found his own way through his hard work and determination. It might be difficult for many people who enter the Hong Kong Institute of CPA's QP to do without a degree. But Michael did it. His passion for accounting is what drives him to achieve this greatest goal. This “never give up” mentality is what we should learn from. His jubilant, modest and affable character totally lightened up the whole interview and influenced me deeply.

Michael's experience was interesting and allowed us to identify the difference between employers' and employees' perspectives, and understand the real working environment for accounting professionals in SMEs. The insights acquired from the interviews are useful to me in considering my future career.

**Wong Chun Fat, Heero**

“From Michael's experiences, I realized the challenges which I may face in the accounting profession after graduation. Moreover, I learned how to be a good and responsible employee and what attitude I should have in my work. Michael is a good model for me as he planned his career path and targets clearly and systematically. I have learned from him to plan my life carefully right now. I am also impressed by his optimistic and positive mind set. I believe that Michael will become a successful CPA in the near future. Finally, I have obtained an in-depth understanding of the accounting profession from this programme. This is an invaluable experience that I can never learn from textbooks. I really thank the HKIAAT heartily again.”