

Advice from a faculty member

Influencing lives with knowledge



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Dr. Steve Fong talks about how he enjoys teaching and gives his views on the importance of the AAT qualification. A seasoned accounting lecturer and currently an AAT Advisor, Dr. Fong possesses more than 20 years of teaching experience in various tertiary institutions.

How did you start and develop your career?

I started my teaching career in 1989 as a teaching assistant in the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Department of Accountancy. Later on I became a lecturer at the City University of Hong Kong (formerly the City Polytechnic). Following that I took up teaching positions at various tertiary institutions. I rejoined the Division of Commerce in the Community College of City University of Hong Kong in 2008. This has given me a great opportunity to meet with a sizeable group of accounting students (a total of more than 500 in years one and two) of the Associate of Business Administration (Accountancy) Programme.

Why do you enjoy being a teacher?

I like to share knowledge with people. Teaching, especially in accounting, offers me the chance to do this. I enjoy teaching at the university since it gives me more support and flexibility in doing research. Through the research I can explore more knowledge to be shared with others.

How do you motivate students to learn?

Since I have actively researched student development, I have found that there are some effective ways in motivating students to learn. Clear directions and the use of concrete examples by lecturers, the active involvement of students and the proper use of social pressure are some of them. Open competition on accounting issues also provides a tremendous motivation for learning.

For example, consider the Accounting and Business Management Case Competition organized by HKIAAT. Students have to research topics such as project financing which are beyond the teaching scope. They then have to prepare and rehearse for presentations and ask questions. Their confidence and enthusiasm in learning are very effectively boosted by this exercise. Such a pro-active learning attitude has resulted in students from our college winning the 1st runner-up and two other merit prizes. Through the competition, they have learnt knowledge beyond the textbooks in areas such as interpersonal skills, negotiation skills and problem-solving skills. Such skill sets, according to a recent job search agency in the US, are more prominent factors than technical knowledge in the minds of employers looking for accounting personnel.



What is your main role as an AAT Advisor?

I serve as a bridge between the HKIAAT and my students. If the students have any questions, either about the qualification recognition or their career development, they come to me. I will communicate and relay any updates in information from the HKIAAT to the students. I really enjoy working with the HKIAAT in grooming high-calibre accounting talent.

What are your view on the AAT exam syllabus and qualification?

Students are encouraged to attain AAT qualification as it adds value to their profile and enhances their competitiveness in the job market. The wide coverage of all accounting subjects in the HKIAAT syllabus is good for mid-level accounting personnel. Knowledge of the syllabus also serves as a strong foundation for people pursuing a career in accounting. As an accredited HKIAAT programme, the Associate of Business Administration (Accountancy) prepares students well for getting the AAT qualification, which is recognized by both the professional body and the government.

What are the opportunities and challenges for today's accounting students?

There are abundant opportunities in the accounting industry. With the increasing cross-border business activities, and the growing trend for companies to engage outsourcing service providers to handle their accounting systems in Mainland, students who are prepared to be geographically mobile have many opportunities. Since many technical accounting tasks are now done by computer, students should focus on improving their analytical skills and interpersonal skills, which have become the essential qualities for an accounting professional today.