



Versatile AAT



Liz Lee

Title: Senior accountant II

Company: Grant Thornton

AAT star student in compliance

Top-notch AAT member Ms. Liz Lee talks about her exciting career in corporate governance with Grant Thornton and how her AAT studies help to further her career.

Tell us about your current position and duties.

Currently I am working as a senior accountant II, mainly responsible for conducting internal control reviews for clients and providing consultancy on compliance issues. A typical daily task is to interview my clients so as to get a picture of their operational background before assessing whether there is any risk in breaking any compliance regulations. If we spot any cracks in their operational model, we perform tests and issue reports advising the clients on the changes necessary for better corporate governance.

Why did you choose accounting as your career?

I chose accounting because of the positive career path. Accounting is a profession full of promising career prospects. Of course I am also extremely interested in accounting.

What made you decide to pursue the AAT qualification?

I was a science student at high school but I took some basic financial accounting courses from my associate degree in e-commerce at City University. However, that was very basic. So I really started from scratch with the AAT qualification. By following the well-organized examination syllabus, I navigated my way through all major accounting areas in one year. Therefore I would say AAT qualification is a fast track for dedicated talent to get into the accounting profession quickly.

Other than being widely recognized (which is the most common reason for people to choose the AAT qualification) the biggest attraction of the AAT qualification is its flexibility. Given with our closer economic partnership with mainland China, accounting practitioners are often assigned duties across the border. This means I need to arrange my studies and exam schedules flexibly – the AAT qualification is definitely the best choice for this.



How has the AAT qualification helped you at work?

Many of my colleagues may have stronger technical knowledge. But in the specialized area of risk compliance, analytical skills are more important than technical knowhow. During discussions with the client, you need to grasp the relationship among figures in order to come up with some critical observations and advice. I believe the all-round AAT examination based on real business cases gave me a solid grounding for handling these kinds of tasks.

Business Communication is a very useful subject as it teaches us how to write a proper business letter. Many people may deem it a simple task, but the tone, choice of word and paragraphing of a letter can significantly affect its effectiveness. Through the AAT study I have become more aware of industry news and this makes me more confident when discussing matters with clients and colleagues.

How do you think the AAT qualification can help you further develop your career path?

When I first joined Grant Thornton I had not yet started studying for the AAT examinations. After studying for the examinations and attaining the AAT qualification, I can see great progress on various fronts such as my accounting knowledge, personal qualities and employer recognition. This has been a strong motivation for me to move forward.

In addition to the entry-level knowledge such as financial accounting and costing, the AAT qualification equips me with more knowledge about taxation and auditing – these are indispensable skills for high-level accounting positions.

What are your future career plans?

I am taking my final examination in the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs Qualification Programme in June. Hopefully after attaining the CPA qualification I will be given even more opportunities in Grant Thornton. As I am still fairly junior, I will need to accumulate three to five more years' experience in this profession. Since compliance standards change over time, I plan to always keep myself updated with these rules to keep me ahead in the game.

Career path of Liz Lee

Graduated with Associate Degree in e-commerce from City University	2003
Financial Consultant – financial advisory company	2003-2005
Promoted to Senior Accountant II – Grant Thornton	2005-Current
Undertook and passed Accredited Technician Examination (ATE) (with 1 paper exemption)	2006 (2 sessions)
Undertook and passed Professional Bridging Examination (PBE)	2007 (2 sessions)
Undertook Hong Kong Institute of CPAs Qualification Programme (QP)	2008
Take QP final examination	June 2009