

*Versatile AAT***Expanding knowledge and career opportunities**

Name: Natalie Lau
Title: Officer
Company: HKSAR Government

Turning an interest in accounting into a professional career is undoubtedly a dream shared by many, but it is just as satisfying to be able to successfully pass the examinations after going through the rigorous preparations, and then to be able to apply the knowledge gained in a different capacity. This describes the experience of Natalie Lau, who is now using her accounting skills in her work as a civil servant.

Natalie did not come from an accounting background, having only briefly studied the subject during secondary school and opting to pursue the Bachelor of Business Administration programme at The University of Hong Kong. “At the time, I thought that a business-related programme could help me land a job more easily, but I still had one eye on accounting, which has always interested me,” says Natalie.

After graduating from university, Natalie felt the need to enhance her knowledge, and the AAT Examination immediately came to mind. “It was almost a natural choice for me,” she says. “Accounting is a profession, and I thought that completing the examinations could only add to my skill set, which would benefit me in terms of job advancement within the government.” Displaying tremendous ambition, she decided to **sit all eight AAT papers in one go in 2014, and she was vindicated in her decision when she achieved the highest marks on five of the eight papers.**

Natalie insists that the rewards, whether direct or indirect, are there for those who care to invest the necessary time and effort. Although Natalie is employed as an officer, rather than an accountant, she has already seen some benefits from studying the AAT Examination in her day-to-day work, “**A lot of work within my department involves internal audit, and the relevant knowledge acquired from preparing for the AAT Examination comes in handy,** as I am now well-versed in the requirements,” Natalie explains.

The future is full of possibilities and opportunities, and it seems that Natalie is ready to capitalise on what may come her way. “I think it is important that we add value to ourselves on a continuing basis by developing new skills and knowledge,” she says. “While I intend to stay in the government for the present, I am not limiting myself to a particular industry or sector, as I believe that it is important for us to learn and grow, and that we should give back to society in one way or another.”

Natalie’s immediate goal is to complete the Professional Bridging Examination in June, in which she will sit all four papers concurrently. Based on her history of personal achievement, she could well be on course for another dramatic success.

Natalie’s tips for students

- ✧ **Manage your time effectively:** It’s important to understand your strengths and weaknesses while allocating time for specific tasks in preparing for examinations. There’s no one-size-fits-all solution in time management; you just have to estimate objectively. Stick to your plans – execution is just as important as planning.
- ✧ **Complete one thing at a time:** You could be overwhelmed at work during examination preparations, and priorities could change. It’s important that you stay focused and try to achieve your goals one by one. Having too many objectives or multiple tasks at the same time could hurt your progress.
- ✧ **Work hard, play hard:** Juggling between work and study could be demanding, and it’s important to have good work–life balance, such as doing some sports or going for walks in the countryside. Exercise not only helps you relax, but also helps boost your productivity in your studies and at work.

Natalie Lau's study and career path

2008–2012	Bachelor of Business Administration from The University of Hong Kong
2014	Completed all eight papers of AAT Examination in one examination session
Present	Professional Bridging Examination student
2012 – present	Officer at the HKSAR Government