

**Featured AAT**

**Written by Aldric Chau**



**Name:** Andrew Chiu

**Title:** Accounts Clerk

**Company:** Holiday Inn Golden Mile - Hong Kong

Over the years, the AAT qualification has gained popularity among those who aspire to become accredited accounting technicians. Our featured member this month, Andrew Chiu, has progressed from being an accounting student to becoming an accounts clerk. He talks to us about how to prepare for the AAT examinations and what passing the examinations has meant for his career development.

***What is your current job?***

I joined the Holiday Inn Golden Mile – Hong Kong as an accounts clerk about six months ago. Since then I have been handling a lot of operational accounting tasks for the hotel. Apart from preparing account receivables, I have to prepare bills to charge customers and vendors for room rental and meals service. All together there are around ten people in the accounting department here.

***Why did you choose to take a Diploma in Accounting?***

I chose accounting purely because of my interest in business. I believe being proficient in this business language can help me grasp every aspect of business. I also studied subjects such as economics but finally found that accountancy is what I enjoy learning most because I was born with a good numerical sense and a passion about numbers.

***What made you decide to pursue the AAT qualification after finishing the Diploma?***

After passing the elementary LCCI course and finishing my diploma course at Hong Kong School of Commerce, I decided to get a professional qualification as AAT as I knew this could help me solidify everything I had learnt and enhance my career profile.

***How long did it take you to finish the AAT exams? Which of the papers did you think was the most challenging?***

I took the AAT examinations when I was studying my diploma. I finished four AAT papers in one year. Then I claimed exemptions for the other four papers based on my diploma. Among the four papers that I took, I would say Paper 7 – Advanced Accounting was quite a challenge since it involves consolidation. The tutor on my diploma course spent a great deal of time and effort in explaining ways to tackle questions in this paper and supported us a lot in our preparation for this paper.



***What have you gained throughout the process of preparing for the exams?***

The preparation for the four papers enhanced my language proficiency and improved my communications skills. Now I feel more confident with when writing business correspondence or having conversations with customers in English. And of course Paper 7 – Advanced Accounting sharpened my hands-on skills in handling daily tasks. Combined with the practical knowledge I've picked up at work, the knowledge that I have learnt from the AAT qualification also helps with my personal finance.

***How has the AAT qualification helped you at work or in further developing your career path?***

The advanced accounting knowledge attained from the AAT qualification has made me work much faster when checking for errors in figures and when presenting material in a professional manner. Other than that, I believe the auditing knowledge gathered is also useful. Although currently I do not have to handle any auditing work, I now possess the basic knowledge and can certainly develop my career development along these lines. For example, I may pursue an auditing career by transferring to the internal audit department in the hotel.

***How did your employer support your decision to take the AAT challenge?***

So far there three of us have taken or are taking the AAT qualification in our department. In general our employer is very supportive. My superiors and colleagues are always willing to discuss any challenging questions I have come across while doing past papers.

***When compared with your colleagues who do not have the AAT qualification, how do you think you can distinguish yourself from them?***

I do see a visible difference between myself and colleagues without the qualification. Probably because of the extensive and real case scenario questions we have gone through, we tend to process figures and present them in a much more efficient manner. In other words, given the same set of data, I am confident about completing the balance sheet much faster than they do. "Practice makes perfect" is my motto and I am convinced preparing for AAT examination is a golden opportunity to practice on the way to becoming a professional accounting technician.

***When you were studying part-time for the AAT exams, how did you manage your time? Do you have any tips for students taking AAT exams?***

Well, it's all about self-discipline. A study plan is very important for time management. I always make sure that I finished my revision two months before the examination so that I had sufficient time for testing myself with all the past papers.

Other than that, awareness of current issues is very important. Most of the questions which appear in the AAT examination are set based on real life scenarios. You can always relate many of them to the current issues and corporate news. I spend a great deal time every day reading business news, so that's probably how I scored a distinction in Paper 5 – Hong Kong Taxation, which consists of a great number of case study questions.



Hong Kong Institute of  
**Accredited Accounting Technicians**  
香港財務會計協會

***What are your future career plans?***

With this professional qualification, I feel more confident about my promotion opportunity in this company or about developing my career anywhere in the accounting field. My short-term goal will be to completely master what I am doing in my current position before moving on to the next step by taking a Bachelor's degree and then joining the HKICPA qualification programme.