

Versatile AAT**An all-rounded foundation for success**

Name: Derrian Chan
Title: Accountant
Company: Sa Sa Cosmetic Company Limited

The AAT Examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE) have helped supplement Derrian with all-rounded knowledge to ensure success in her career. She talks to us about her different experiences working in NGOs and commercial companies, as well as how the examinations helped her to excel at work.

How long have you worked in the accounting profession? What drew you to this industry?

I have been in the accounting profession for over 10 years. I have always had a head for numbers, and I did quite well in mathematics in school, so I thought that accounting would be a good fit for me. When I first started my career, I worked in auditing, but after a year, I switched to commercial accounting. Since then, I have worked in various organizations, including NGOs like Worldwide Fund (WWF) Hong Kong, before joining my current company Sa Sa.

What are your current responsibilities at your company?

Our accounting department has around 40 colleagues in total. Therefore, our division of work is quite detailed, and we are able to have teams specializing in different areas of the business. My team focuses on inventory management. We have to check invoices, keep track of the amount of stock and unit costs on a daily basis. In addition, we have to contact suppliers to monitor supply levels, and deal with special cases arising from surges in demand or supply.

How is working in a commercial company different from working in a NGO?

I would say that my current experience is quite different when compared to my previous one. At WWF, the accounting department was smaller, and the division of duties was not explicitly delineated. The requirements were more all-rounded, as I was responsible for all aspects of work, from issuing reports to preparing balance sheets. In comparison, the system at Sa Sa is already well-established, and the reports are all generated according to standard procedures. This allows us to concentrate more on our specialty, and to work with greater efficiency and ease.

Why did you decide to undertake the PBE? Were you able to apply your studies to your current work?

I decided to undertake the examinations as I saw it as a way to advance my career. I was exempted from the AAT Examination after completing my Associate of Business Administration, but I soon realised that I could progress through the profession much faster if I took the PBE. I remember reading about the PBE from school, and I thought PBE would better fit my schedule, as I could study according to my own pace. After finishing my PBE in 2010, I was indeed given more responsibilities by my employers.

The examination materials were definitely relevant to my daily duties. All the papers in the examinations could be directly applied to our work, including law and audit which proved to be useful when handling unfamiliar cases. Additionally, I have learnt to multi-task when preparing for the examinations, as I had to juggle work and study, and this is a useful skill to possess.

How did you prepare for the examinations? Was managing your time between work and study difficult?

I studied for the PBE by myself, although I did take a course for Paper IV Business Law and Taxation. It was of course difficult to manage my time, especially when I was still working at WWF. There were quite a lot of overtime, and I remember having to work during the Easter holidays, which took away some crucial studying time for my examinations in June. Sacrifices inevitably had to be made, and I mostly studied during lunchtime or on weekends.

I think it is important to know about the requirements of each paper before going into the examination. I struggled a bit with PBE Paper IV, as I did not memorise the specific case names, only the details of each case. After taking the course and doing past papers, I found that remembering the case names were essential to getting a good grade, and I was able to attain a good mark on my second attempt.

What are your future plans with regards to your QP and your career?

My plan for attaining my CPA qualification is currently on hold, as I just gave birth to my son. Ideally, after my son begins school, I would like to take up my QP again. However, at this moment in time, my family takes precedence, and I hope to enjoy as much time with my baby as I can!

Derrian Chan's study and career path

2002 – 2004	Associate of Business Administration in Accountancy from Community College of City University
2004 – 2005	Audit Trainee at David Choy & Co.
2005 – 2008	Assistant Accountant at First Telecommunication Int. Co. Ltd.
2008 – 2009	Accounting Officer at Worldwide Fund Hong Kong
2009 – Present	Accountant at Sa Sa Cosmetic Company Limited
2007	Completed AAT Examination with full exemption
2008 – 2010	Completed PBE
Present	Student of HKICPA's Qualification Programme