

Versatile AAT**The fast lane to success**

Name: Angel Poon
Title: Accounts Clerk
Company: Legend Pacific Limited

Thanks to the rigorous training from her studies for the AAT Examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE), Angel Poon has been able to move swiftly up the professional qualification ladder towards success.

How long have you been working in the accounting industry?

I've worked in the industry for almost ten years now. For the past eight years, I have been working in the Food and Beverage Division at Legend Pacific Limited as an Accounts Clerk, having transferred from the trading department. My main duties include handling all the account payables in the division, as well as providing financial analysis for the company's management.

It's interesting working in the food and beverage sector, as there are generally more invoices than there are in other industries. We have a lot of business dealings with different contractors and sellers every day. I once saw a stack of invoices in our office that was around one foot tall!

Have the AAT Examination and PBE helped you with your career?

Definitely! The AAT Examination studies provided a theoretical grounding into my daily accounting work, which meant that I was able to analyze the work assigned to me. After taking the AAT Examination, my supervisors gave me more high-level analysis work, which was a step up from the more basic paper work I was doing when I first joined the company.

The PBE was a good training in management accounting. This was a great help in terms of boosting my business analysis skills. I have been able to apply many of the theories to real-life scenarios I regularly come across at work. For example, Paper I PBE Financial Accounting helped me understand the theories behind the accounting procedures I handle on a day-to-day basis.

How did you manage your time between work and studying for examinations?

The best thing about taking the AAT Examination and PBE is their flexibility. Even with a day job, it was easy to schedule the exams to minimize the interruption on my job. In all, it took me around four years to complete all my accounting professional examinations, including the two-and-a-half years for the HKICPA's Qualification Programme (QP), half year for PBE and around one-and-a-half years for my AAT Examination. By taking the examinations at my own pace, I was able to keep up with my everyday job. Between my examinations, I also made sure to take breaks so that my schedule would not be overly demanding.

You completed the examinations in a short time span. Can you share some secrets of your exam success with us?

I am very thankful for my boss's encouragement, as she was very supportive during the whole examination period. My boss saw the examinations as an effective way for me to advance my career. I was able to take study leave before the actual examinations, which made the preparation period much less stressful.

In terms of the actual examinations, the AAT Examination was relatively easier to handle. I was a bit ambitious in the beginning – I registered for eight subjects in one single attempt! Luckily, I was able to pass seven of the examinations, and I completed the taxation paper again on my second try. For the PBE, I had to read some reference books. It took me around one month to finish reading a book and I spent around six months in total to read up on all the examination materials. Eventually, I completed all four papers in one examination session.

One tip I could share is this: I usually skim through the materials every day, to allow the information to simmer in my mind. Two to three days leading up to the examinations, I would study very intensively, perhaps for 12 hours a day. This was an effective method for me to retain information, and helped a lot for the PBE.

What are your plans for the future?

I need to accumulate enough hours before I can be qualified as a CPA, so I am now steadily working towards that goal. In the near future, I hope to gain employment at a professional accounting firm, as I really wish to broaden my experience in different areas of accounting and audit.

It's important for accountants to keep an open mind, as our work can vary widely depending on our clients. I am continually learning whether it's law, business, or management, in order to be well prepared for the future!

Angel Poon's study and career path

2000 – 2002	Diploma in Secretarial Administration from Institute of Vocational Education (Tuen Mun)
2005 – 2006	Completed AAT Examination, passing seven papers in one examination session
2012	Completed Professional Bridging Examination in one examination session
2012 – 2013	Completed HKICPA's Qualification Programme
2005 – present	Accounts Clerk at Legend Pacific Limited