

Versatile AAT

Success comes with hard work



Name: Lok Cheng
Title: Accountant
Company: Ready System Engineering Limited

In today's fast-changing world, one may easily fall under the illusion that success can be fast-tracked. However, the saying "no pain, no gain" applies to the business world. HKIAAT member Lok Cheng explains how planning ahead and putting effort into executing the plan is the only way to achieving one's goals.

Why did you choose accounting? What drew you to the profession?

Initially I did not intend to pursue a career in accounting at all. I only studied Principles of Accounts for HKCEE, and then obtained an Associate Degree in Building Services. But later on, I found less interest in this field and began looking into alternatives which could offer a clear progression pathway and a professional status.

I learnt that the accountancy profession provides stable career prospects. The profession is mature and the articulation pathway is well-structured, meaning I could plan my future and achieve my goal step-by-step. As long as I devoted myself to my plan and was persistent in my efforts, success would be close at hand.

What are your key responsibilities at Ready System Engineering Limited? How are they different from your work at previous positions?

As an accountant at Ready System Engineering Limited, my primary responsibilities involve maintaining a full set of accounts for the company and some subsidiaries, and monitoring daily costs and transactions. I also assist my manager in financial control tasks as well as in consolidating accounts for the perusal of higher management. The company accounts which I assist on cover Hong Kong, Mainland China and Macau. I also need to travel frequently to Mainland China to provide guidance to colleagues there and to modify the accounting documents for consolidation purpose as the accounting requirements between Hong Kong and the Mainland are different.

Before joining this company, I had worked in other industries as an accounts clerk and an assistant accountant for few years. But the scope of my work in previous jobs was relatively narrow, only focusing on part of the entire accounting operation. Now I have been given the opportunity to maintain a full set of accounts and have



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a full picture of the whole process of accounting in an organization.

Why did you decide to undertake the AAT Qualification?

My ultimate goal is to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Since I do not have a degree in accounting, I decided to take the examinations offered by the HKIAAT which could take me along the path to becoming a CPA. I started taking preparatory courses for the exams while at the same time doing a full-time accounting job to accumulate practical experience. Both the AAT Examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE) studies are flexible, and therefore best suit my needs.

What have you learnt from studying for the AAT Examination, and how do you apply what you have learnt at work?

The most significant application of my technical knowledge at work lies in the better understanding of accounting concepts and standards. Having a good understanding of the whole accounting system is very useful in performing day-to-day accounting tasks and thus promoting efficiency. A comprehension of auditing also enables me to co-ordinate with auditors smoothly as I understand what they require. Furthermore, my soft skills such as analytical skills, which is essential for every job, were also brushed up by undertaking the AAT Examination.

How do you cope with balancing work and studies as you work full time while studying for the exams? Do you have any advice for current and prospective students?

It is not easy to balance work and studies. I believe planning and implementing your plan in an efficient way is the key. I make a plan of actions and milestones and monitor my progress. I develop a weekly timetable and allocate my time to work, studies, personal time and resting time, and then try my best to stick to the time allocation. I think this is good practice, as it allows you to maximize the time spent in each of the areas of your life.

I think some students are short-sighted and may be easily satisfied with the status quo instead of striving for a long-term goal. This can be a dangerous notion. I know some friends who step aside from professional exams for a long period of time. I would urge them to pick up their studies in order to become qualified and so to better compete in the market. There is no shortcut to success. Time and hard work are essentials that one cannot omit in achieving goals.

Lok Cheng's study and career path

2003	Form 7 graduate
2005	Graduated from City University of Hong Kong with an Associate Degree in Building Services
2005-2008	Accounts clerk at Peaktop Group
2006-2008	Completed eight AAT Examination papers (with an exemption from Paper 1)
2008-2009	Assistant accountant at Seasons (HK) Limited
2009	Completed four PBE papers
2009-2011	Assistant accountant at Ready System Engineering Limited
2009-Present	Associate member of HKIAAT
2010-Present	Student of Hong Kong Institute of CPA's QP (completed four modules)
Apr 2011-Present	Promotion to accountant at Ready System Engineering Limited

