



Versatile AAT
Mapping a new career path in accounting profession

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Not every accountant enjoys a well defined career path which is set in the early stage of their working life. Having started work as a general clerk in a CPA firm, AAT graduate Pansy Lau impressed her employer with her passion and ability for accounting. Pansy explains how the AAT qualification helped her move into this exciting profession and adapt to changes at work.

Did you study accounting at secondary school?

I was a science student at secondary school: I did not have much academic exposure to accounting until I took some book-keeping courses after graduating. But the preparatory course for the AAT Examination was my first experience in formal accounting training.

How did you start your accounting career?

When I first joined Ho Tak Sang & Co, I was assigned clerical and administrative tasks. As I accumulated more experience, I was given the opportunity to handle basic accounting duties, and I developed a profound interest in this field. I then eagerly looked for formal training opportunities.

What made you choose the AAT qualification?

The AAT qualification offers a comprehensive coverage of different disciplines, enabling me to handle different tasks and challenges. As a new entrant to the world of accounting, the AAT qualification not only walked me through the key areas of this profession so that I could meet the job requirements in my new role with the company – it also helped me progress to the next level. In this highly competitive industry, acquiring a higher qualification secures better prospects. By attaining the AAT qualification, we can articulate to the higher-level qualifications, the PBE and the qualification programme (QP) offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants.



What are the most important lessons you have learnt from preparing for the examinations?

Taxation was the most practical subject for me. In my firm, one of my main duties is to help sole proprietors handle their tax returns by following the Inland Revenue Department's guidelines. Studying for AAT Examination Paper 5 "Principles of Taxation" taught me how to handle a tax return. I can advise my clients of the type of allowances they are eligible for, so as to protect their interests.

The syllabus for Paper 1 "Accounting and Computerized Accounts", in particular the teaching the use of accounting software, is very useful too. Although our company does not use exactly the same software that we had to learn for this paper, my studies imparted generic skills that enable me to use different software packages easily.

Do you have any hints for tackling the AAT Examination?

Practice makes perfect. Students should review past examination papers to familiarize themselves with the type of questions that will be asked and work on strategies for handling them. I practiced using almost ten years' past papers when preparing for the exams. Diligence is also important – students should not study only part of the materials just with the aim of tackling the examinations. Only by fully understanding all the material can one thoroughly understand the topics and, most importantly, appreciate the links between different topics at a higher level.

Paper 6 "Fundamentals of Business Law" was a challenging paper for me. Students should make sure they look up legal terms in the dictionary and develop an interest in understanding the theories behind each case study in order to excel in this paper.

Do you plan to continue your accounting studies?

I will further my studies by preparing for the PBE, which I aim to finish in the next two to three years. After that, it will be the time to achieve my ultimate career goal: to undertake QP and become a CPA.

Pansy Lau's study and career path

2005	Form 7 graduate
2005-2008	Clerk at Ho Tak Sang & Co
2007-2010	Passed eight AAT Examination papers
2008-2010	Accounts assistant at Ho Tak Sang & Co
2011-present	Accountant at Ho Tak Sang & Co