



Featured AAT
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The recession may be denting the economy, but employees with a professional qualification can secure a job more easily than others. The AAT qualification offers employees with little experience get an understanding of the accounting profession, while offering them a structured pathway, while working, to pursue higher academic attainments or professional qualifications. Norris Pang, junior accountant at a local CPA firm, looks at how AAT, as his first qualification, leads him to a road of success.

Tell us briefly about your employer and your main roles.

I am a junior accountant at Jenny Kun & Co. CPA, a local CPA firm providing auditing and accounting services. I prepare audit reports in-house and regularly call at our clients to carry out auditing procedures. I would say 70% of my work is auditing-related while I also handle some book-keeping tasks.

Did you study any accounting-related courses before taking the AAT examination?

I was a Science student at high school. Upon finishing my form seven studies, I decided to take the challenge of moving to another field. I was interested in knowing something about accounting so I chose to study the Diploma in Accounting Studies at Hong Kong School of Commerce (HKSC) for two years. That's when I first came in touch with accounting, and where I started building my career in the profession. The diploma course allowed me to claim an exemption for five out of eight papers of the AAT examination. Having finished my studies at the HKSC, I took three more papers – Hong Kong Taxation, Advanced Accounting and Auditing – before I qualified as an AAT. I took these three papers part-time over the course of a year while working.

What made you choose the AAT qualification and how did you first hear about it?

From time to time I heard about the AAT from teachers and classmates at the HKSC. Then I began to find out more about it. As I did more research on it online and talked to people in the accounting profession, I was impressed by its wide recognition which has been continuously on the rise over the years.



How do you think the AAT qualification can help with your career development?

A professional qualification is an asset to every accounting personnel. I have a much clearer idea of all the accounting, auditing and taxation rules after attaining the AAT qualification. Since I am rather new to work in the audit field, I sometimes come across situations that I have not handled before. At these times, I can always relate what I have learnt from the AAT syllabus to the real life situation. The practical aspect of the AAT syllabus means a lot. In general I found the auditing, taxation and advanced accounting subjects to be the most helpful. As well as improving my technical knowledge, I have also made a great leap forward in terms of IT and communications skills – both of which are vital for my job in supporting the auditor.

Attaining the AAT qualification has greatly enhanced my marketability in the job market. I have been given far better opportunities looking for positions in the accounting and auditing fields. I'd like to draw readers' attention to the Employment Placement Service on the HKIAAT official website, where job openings from a spectrum of firms can be found. Indeed I found my current job via this website so I recommend trying this effective job hunting channel.

What challenges did you face during your studies?

One of the biggest challenges was time management – how you schedule your work well to make sure you get enough time to prepare for the examinations. Company support is critical – but I believe companies in general, like the CPA firm I worked for, are very positive towards the colleagues' initiatives to improve their skills at work. I was given study leave during the AAT exam period.

What are your career plans?

Very soon I would like to enrol for a top-up degree programme in accountancy. After that I will consider taking the Qualification Programme to deepen my understanding of accounting and auditing.