

*Versatile AAT***All roads lead to Rome – Finding your own path to success**

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There are various paths to achieving one's goal. Kwan Hoi Yin, Accounts Clerk at Katax C.P.A. Limited, talks to us about her route to achieving her goal of becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

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

I studied accounting at secondary school and my results were satisfactory. My interest in accounting was built on this sense of accomplishment, so I carried on with the subject beyond secondary school. Choosing to go into accounting as a profession involved considering career prospects. As a large and well-established profession, accounting seemed to be a good and obvious area to build a career on. There are tremendous opportunities for accounting professionals with their all-round knowledge and skills.

What are the key responsibilities in your current position? How do you apply what you have learnt at work?

I have recently switched from working in a law firm to working in a CPA firm. It is immediately apparent that my current work is more demanding. I need to apply more advanced and all-round knowledge in accounting to complete my work. My responsibilities at my current position initially involved accounting and company secretarial work. However, once my supervisors learnt that my intention is to take Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA)'s Qualification Programme (QP), they offered me opportunities to get involved in auditing. This has widened the scope of my responsibilities and provided me with opportunity to apply what I have learnt.

Having been able to put my auditing knowledge into practice has greatly enhanced my understanding in this area. At the same time, because of the good foundation of knowledge laid down in my previous studies, I was able to pick up the auditing responsibilities I have to perform quickly. Completing the AAT Examination and Professional Bridging Examination (PBE) was a definite a milestone for me. The solid foundation in accounting that I gained from studying for these examinations enables me to master my work efficiently.

Why did you decide to undertake the AAT qualification? Where and how did you learn about the qualification?

When I started my higher diploma, I did not have any concrete plan in terms of future career. I was first introduced to the AAT qualification through talks at school. I realized that its articulation path could help me progress to higher qualifications and offer me with ample career choices. After obtaining my higher diploma, I did not choose to study a degree as I wanted to get some work experience. The PBE and the QP therefore became an ideal way for me to climb the ladder towards the CPA qualification.

What difficulties have you faced while juggling work and studies? How did you overcome these difficulties?

Time is a crucial concern for all part-time students as we all struggle to find enough time for our studies after work. My strategy is to set out a study schedule early on. By allocating my time in the most efficient manner and adhering to the plan, I am able to start my revision early to ensure that I have sufficient time to complete it on time for the exams. For example, I reserved around two months for my revision for each PBE subject and I plan to do the same for my upcoming QP exams.

Do you have any advice for students on their career/ studies planning?

In my opinion, time management is a very important skill. As the syllabus for the exams is very wide, students have to plan well and use their time wisely. Adjusting your psychological condition is another key to success. If it has been a while since you left school, you may not be as competitive as a student who is still taking exams frequently. Thus, you need to tune your mindset and make yourself ready for a long-term battle.

In addition, I found taking exam preparatory courses quite useful. Principles and applications were taught thoroughly in these courses. The courses did not only strengthen the basis of my knowledge, but also served to remind me of the progress I should be making in my own revision.

What are your future plans?

I plan to complete the QP in the near future. I do not have a concrete schedule at the moment, as I am sitting my first paper in December and this will give me a chance to gauge how difficult the exams may be. However, based on the solid foundation that I obtained from the AAT Examination and PBE, I hope to complete the QP in two to three years. With perseverance, I hope that my goal – to be a qualified CPA – can be realized soon.

Kwan Hoi Yin's study and career path

2007	Form 7 graduate
2007 – 2009	Higher Diploma in Business (Accounting) from HKU SPACE
Dec 2009	Completed AAT Examination with full exemption
2009 – Jun 2013	Accounts Clerk at Yip Tse & Tang
Jun 2011 – Dec 2012	Completed PBE (Top student in PBE Paper II "PBE Management Accounting and Finance", Paper III "PBE Auditing and Information Systems" and Paper IV "PBE Business Law and Taxation")
Jun 2013 – Present	Accounts Clerk at Katax C.P.A. Limited
Present	Student of HKICPA's Qualification Programme