

Versatile AAT

Embarking on the path that suits you



Name: Sally Yan
Title: Senior accounts clerk
Company: R-Pac (Hong Kong) Limited

Choosing a position that fits yourself in any particular point of your professional life involves making an important decision, and one which will affect you for years to come. Sally Yan tells us how her series of career choices began with the AAT Examination.

What drew you to the accounting profession?

My studies in accounting began at secondary school. I took a liking to the subject early on because I am good with numbers. I believe the accounting profession offers ample opportunities and stability as it is required by all companies in every industry. I see it as a profession in which one can develop a long-term career with promising prospects.

What are your key responsibilities at R-Pac (Hong Kong) Limited, and how do they differ from your responsibilities at your previous employments?

My responsibilities at R-Pac (Hong Kong) Limited (R-Pac) are multi-faceted. They include preparing monthly schedules and other accounting issues, dealing with payments to suppliers, handling staff claims and company's petty cash, and other issues related to the full set accounts. We also need to provide accounting reports to our headquarters in the US.

Before joining R-Pac, I worked in a number of companies, some of which were of relatively large scale. At these large companies, the job nature was more stressful and challenging, as you need to deal with a large number of transactions as well as with routine tasks such as preparing budgets and forecasts and consolidating different accounts. Although R-Pac's corporate structure and operation procedures are not as complicated as the companies that I previously worked with, my duties here focus on the accounts payable part are still very challenging. Fortunately, I have some good colleagues and therefore my work is quite enjoyable.

Why did you decide to undertake the AAT qualification?

I came across the AAT qualification by chance. After graduating from Form seven I began working, and realized that I should take some courses to improve my technical knowledge and to widen my career options. I knew from various friends that AAT is the qualification most commonly sought by accounting personnel, and courses for preparation for the AAT Examination are widely offered and readily accessible then I began to study for the qualification.

AAT Examination allows for great flexibility for me as I could choose which subject to study at a pace suitable for my own career and needs. This enabled me to take a break from my AAT studies a few years ago due to career changes and the need for extra time to care for my family. After all, I managed to finish the remaining subjects and successfully completed all examination papers because of the HKIAAT's flexible policy.

What have you learnt from studying for the examination, and how do you apply this knowledge at work?

I find a number of subjects in the AAT Examination particularly useful and applicable to my daily work. Paper 7 "Financial Accounting" covers many of the areas which I have to deal with daily, whatever the size of the company. Understanding auditing is essential for most accounting professionals, and my studies for Paper 8 "Principles of Auditing and Management Information Systems" helped me get to grips with the procedures involved, which in turn allowed me to carry out my internal audit work such as stock taking.

Another useful subject is taxation. I believe it is one of the most important subjects, primarily because everyone has to deal with taxation issues whether in a personal or professional capacity. Studying for Paper 5 "Principles of Taxation" gave me a good understanding of the Hong Kong taxation system, allowing me to understand how exactly to arrive at a figure for a tax liability.

Do you have any tips for balancing work and studies?

One of my teachers has taught us a couple of handy tricks, which I still use today to help me cope with time management. Firstly, get up one hour earlier than we have to every day, and go to sleep one hour later than we want to every day. By doing this, you gain two extra hours for your studies each day. This can really add up into a big difference in the long run and help release some of the stress when things are particularly busy at work and you have little time left for studying. Secondly, turn your notes into a mental picture. This method can boost your memory.

Can you tell us what your next study plan is?

I will not stop learning as this is the only way to equip myself for future challenges. I am currently studying for the Professional Bridging Examination and have already finished the first paper. I hope to complete the rest of the papers in the very near future.



Sally Yan's study and career path

1997	Form 7 graduate
1999-2003, 2009	Completed eight papers (with one exemption) in the Accredited Accounting Technician Examination
1998-2008	Accounts clerk in several companies (A.S. Watson Industrial, Alps Transportation, Wharf Group (Wharf Estates Development Ltd), Karstadt Quelle (Far East) & Co))
2008-present	Senior accounts clerk in R-Pac (Hong Kong) Limited
2010-present	Completed one paper of the Professional Bridging Examination

