



***Employer in the spotlight***

***Written by Aldric Chau***



**Name:** Dr. Terence Wan  
**Company:** Terence Wan & Co.

The sole proprietor of Terence Wan & Co, a CPA firm in Hong Kong, Dr. Wan has employed several AATs this year. He is impressed by their performance and talks here about how his energetic AAT-qualified workforce has contributed to the firm's development as well as discussing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for them.

***Tell us about your firm and the nature of its business.***

Terence Wan & Co is a CPA firm established almost five years ago, and has 20 staff in Hong Kong. Our professional services include taxation, auditing and company secretarial services.

***What are your thoughts on the AAT syllabus?***

I would say the AAT syllabus coverage is very comprehensive. It equips candidates with good skills required in a middle-size accounting firm. After passing the eight exams, AAT graduates have a strong and all-round foundation for basic accounting operations. With the effective skill transfer in AAT training, students can easily apply the theories that they learn when pursuing their qualification to the technical areas especially dealing with the mechanics of accounting that they come across at work.

***How many HKIAAT graduates are currently working in your firm? What are their roles and opportunities?***

We have recruited three AATs so far. As they have mastered theoretical knowledge but lack experience, we have assigned supervisors to help their learning process here. At the beginning they are being exposed to more general areas of work before they can concentrate on a particular stream, which will probably happen after they have been with us for three months. Management and their supervisors will jointly decide which stream the AAT should go into, although sometimes we will have an exchange of staff between teams.



***What are your thoughts on their job performance?***

I am quite impressed by their good performance at work. The three AATs have been working with us well and we are going to recruit a fourth one very soon. As a matter of fact, we can see that they tend to grow faster than those who only possess a sub-degree qualification, probably owing to their modest and positive learning attitude as well as their strong accounting foundation. They also tend to have a clear vision of their career goals.

***Do you think the AAT examination can help them acquire the essential skills at work?***

I believe that AAT exam already gives candidates sufficient skills required in a middle-size firm. In fact, some AAT exam papers, such as Advanced Accounting and Auditing, are of a very high standard. Some small CPA firms would prefer to hire AATs rather than trainees who only possess sub-degree qualification to perform auditing work, as they believe that AATs are well trained and equipped with the relevant knowledge to support CPAs.

***Do you think a professional qualification is important when hiring accounting technicians?***

This is of utmost importance for accounting technicians. From the employers' point of view, professional qualifications focus on practical on-the-job competencies and instil a sense of professionalism in the staff as part of the qualification process.

***What roles do you think an accounting technician may play in an accounting firm?***

AATs usually take up entry level to supervisory positions and may even progress to managerial positions in small to medium-sized CPA firms. This is especially to those go on to take the Professional Bridging Examination, and then the QP they certainly have a route to become a CPA.

***What are your firm's recruitment requirements when hiring accounting technicians?***

I believe that right attitude and pleasant personality is everything. Fresh AAT graduates without much experience need to get along with the existing team and learn from their seniors. They need to be persistent to clear all the bars throughout the demanding learning process. In addition, they have to be willing to work diligently and to ask questions proactively when working under supervision. Communication skills and teamwork skills are indispensable for them as they always have to work as a team.