



Versatile AAT

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Never too late to work towards a professional qualification!

Jericho Yuen, a Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) degree graduate in civil engineering, tells us of his unusual route to a career in accounting, and talks about the practical application of his AAT studies to his work.

You are a civil engineering graduate. Why did you move to accounting?

To be frank, I have to admit that I made a mistake when I chose my degree discipline, as I didn't have a thorough understanding of civil engineering at the time. I gradually found myself losing interest in this discipline. My interest in accounting was ignited when I was a second year student. Like the majority of HKUST students, I was living in a dormitory. Many of my hostel mates were business majors. From time to time, I saw them dressed up for presentations; their professional appearance interested me. The more I talked with them, the more I found how useful business studies were – from how to manage one's finance to running a business; from taxation issues which everyone faces to understanding more about initial public offerings. Since I was a non-accounting graduate, my university friends suggested that I take the AAT Examination as a way of starting my professional development journey in accounting.

What is your career history?

I joined S. F. Kwok & Co., a CPA firm, as an assistant auditor when I was a fresh graduate. At the same time, I started studying for the AAT Examination. I finished all eight papers in three examination sessions. I then got promoted to semi-senior auditor two years after, as a result of the knowledge and experience I had accumulated. In order to prepare myself for my next move, taking the PBE, I resigned and spent two months in intensive study. My efforts paid off and I passed all four papers of PBE in one go. After that, I returned to the job market and found my current job in Dominic K. N. Tai & Co.



What is your job title and what are your main duties in your current position?

My job title is audit semi-senior and I am now one of the auditors in an eight people audit team of six auditors, one manager and our boss, Dominic Tai. There are four other non-audit staff members in the company. My main job duties include taxation, auditing, book-keeping and accounts preparation. Working as an auditor, I have to be on top of every rule and every change in accounting and auditing standards. I have to communicate well with clients, and to understand their needs and expectations thoroughly.

What made you to choose the AAT qualification? Does the knowledge you gained from your AAT training help you in your daily work?

Since I was new to accounting, I need to acquire accounting knowledge step by step to ensure a profound understanding. The AAT syllabus is clear and well organized, and following this syllabus helped me realize what accounting is and adapt my knowledge to the workplace. In addition, the AAT’s articulation path provides a bright future as an accounting professional. Each of the eight papers of AAT Examination is useful. For example, I found Paper 5 “Hong Kong Taxation” helped me a lot in distinguishing between taxable and non-taxable items; it’s hard to acquire this kind of knowledge on-the-job.

Do you have any tips for managing studying and working at the same time?

Make a good plan and stick to it. Follow your revision schedule strictly.

Do you have any other thoughts on your unusual journey from your engineering studies to your career in accounting?

My family felt that it was a pity that I did not use my civil engineering knowledge despite devoting three years to this field. However I think these previous studies were worth while since they trained my analytical powers, which are very useful in my work. Luckily, my family fully supported me through my AAT studies and as I developed my career in accounting. I am grateful to have made this critical decision in my life because I enjoy my work and profession so much now. I will take the last module exam and final exam of Hong Kong Institute of CPA’s Qualification Programme this September and December respectively. I believe everything will go smoothly.

Finally, for those who are uncertain about their direction, my advice is, take me as an example. It is never too late to start pursuing a professional qualification.

Jericho’s study and career path

Year	
2006	Graduated with degree in Civil Engineering from HKUST
2006-2007	Undertook and passed AAT Exam Papers 1-8
2006-2008	Assistant Auditor / Semi-senior Auditor – S.F. Kwok & Co.
2008	Undertook and passed PBE Papers I to IV
2009-current	Undertook Hong Kong Institute of CPAs Qualification Programme (QP)
2009-current	Audit Semi-Senior – Dominic K. N. Tai & Co.