



career choice

ACCOUNTANCY



What is accountancy?

Accountancy is the communication of financial information about businesses. Depending on their job, accountants can be involved in providing financial advice, managing budgets, or carrying out independent checks on a company's finances (known as 'audits').



What do accountants do?

Every business needs an accountant. This means that accountants can work anywhere, in any industry. As well as working for different businesses in industry, accountants can work for banks, in the public sector, for example, the NHS, or for public practice firms. Public practice firms are specialist accountancy firms which offer accounting services to different clients.

Some accountants work to improve their company's financial position, while others work to prevent fraud, or manage tax responsibilities. For more information about the different roles accountants can work in, read our accountancy roles articles online.



What do accountants earn?

Accountants are well rewarded for all their hard work. Graduates who have just entered the profession can earn up to £25,000 a year, and this sum increases as they pass exams and progress through a company.

Accountants who have just passed their ACA qualification (which takes around three years) can expect to earn c. £40,000 a year, or perhaps even more if they're based in London.



How do I become an accountant?

There are many different routes into accountancy:

School leavers

School leavers can join a company straightaway and begin training for their professional accountancy qualifications. This has the advantage of avoiding expensive university fees and getting immediate on-the-job experience, as well as earning a salary straightaway.

These schemes generally require entrants to have good A levels, around ABB or equivalent, as well as a minimum of a B in GCSE maths. If this appeals to you, visit our accountancy school leavers section for information on where to start and personal accounts from other accountancy school leavers.

Graduates

Graduates typically enter the profession via an accountancy graduate training scheme. Applications are made directly to companies for admission to their graduate training schemes. On these, graduates work towards their professional accountancy qualifications, sometimes initially working in different departments in the company to decide where they want to specialise.

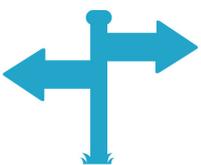
Most graduate schemes ask for the same qualifications as school leaver schemes, plus a 2:1 at degree level. Some will take candidates with a 2:2, so you will need to check with each company. The good news is that your degree can be in any subject.



Accountancy employers

Accountancy employers can range from huge, multinational companies, such as the 'Big Four' Accountancy firms – PwC, Ernst & Young, Deloitte and KPMG – to small local offices with just a handful of employees, and everything in between.

As well as working for accountancy practices, you could work in industry for any kind of business – from telecommunications companies to football clubs: all businesses need accountants. You could also work for public institutions, such as HMRC or the NHS.



More online

For more information, employers and jobs visit www.insidecareers.co.uk/accountants