

ICAEW



How to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant



ICAEW stands for The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and we are a world leader of the accountancy and finance profession. We are a professional membership body that supports a global network of authorised training employers in attracting talented students to train for our chartered accountancy qualification, the ACA. Here are some facts about ICAEW...



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Welcome ...

... to our guide to becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant, where we delve into the world of chartered accountancy. It's here you'll gain an insight into the career opportunities available, explore the school leaver and graduate routes you can take and discover how our qualification, the ACA, can give you the skills you need to succeed. Read on to find out what employers want, where you can find job vacancies, and how you can get that extra edge on your own employability.

There's more information on our website icaew.com/careers and if you have any questions then we would love to hear from you [f facebook.com/icaewcareers](https://www.facebook.com/icaewcareers)

[@ICAEW_Careers](https://twitter.com/ICAEW_Careers) [✉ careers@icaew.com](mailto:careers@icaew.com)

We hope to see you at a careers event soon!

The ICAEW Student Recruitment Team

We really can help, read what someone in your position has to say ...

I first got involved with ICAEW through their BASE competition. I was able to network with employers, which helped me to understand what to expect from the career and get some top tips for interviews. The experience has definitely helped me secure a Higher Apprenticeship with PwC. I talked about BASE in my application and interview. It's really helped to show I am committed to pursuing a career in accountancy.

Salhim, Higher Apprentice, PwC

A great career choice



Straightforward – There are a range of school leaver and graduate entry routes on offer from our 3,300+ authorised training employers.



Global – The ACA qualification is recognised around the world, meaning your career can take you anywhere.



Variety – You can work in lots of different sectors, business disciplines, organisation sizes, job levels and every day is different.



Transferable skills – From communication and team working, to problem solving and decision making, these skills are valuable to all organisations.



Stability – Organisations large and small benefit from the expertise of ICAEW Chartered Accountants.

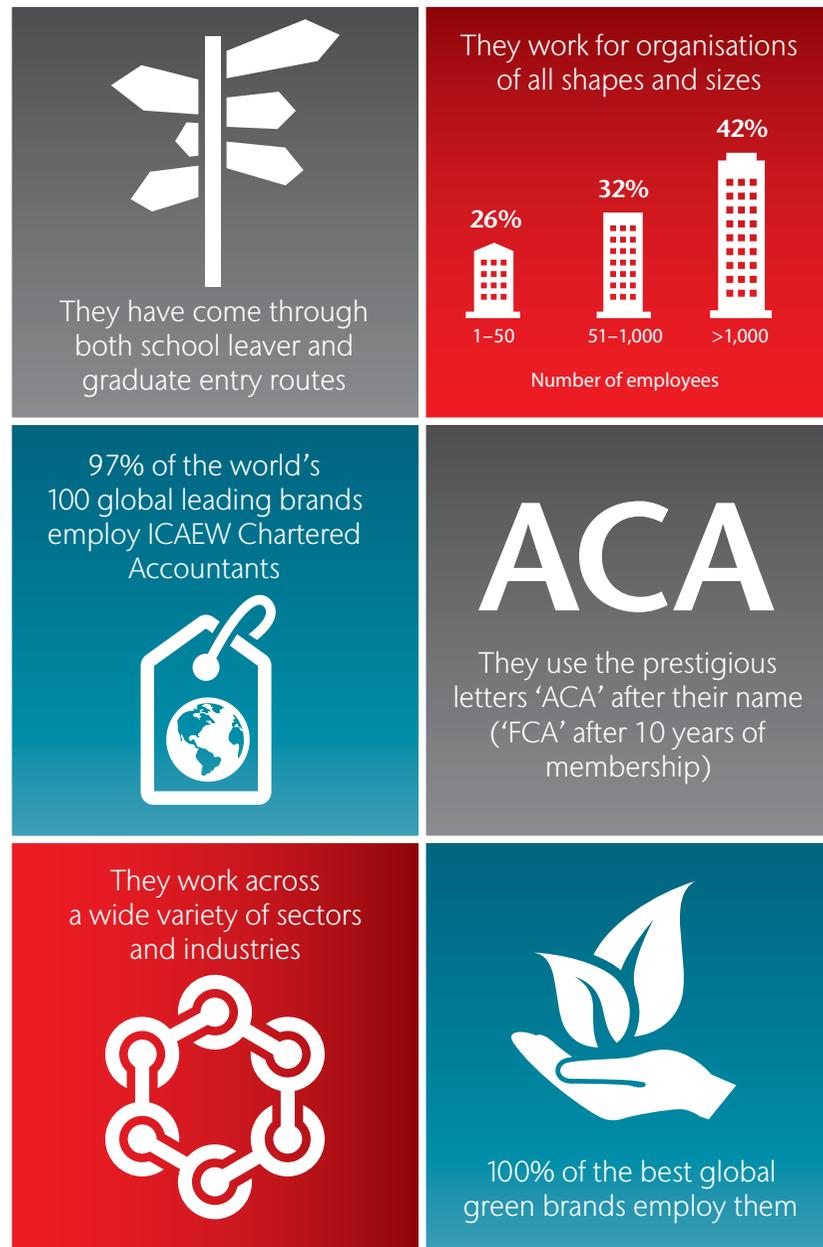
£49.9k

is the average salary plus bonus 0–2 years post qualification.*

* Source: The ICAEW and Stott & May Salary Survey 2015.

Why ICAEW?

ICAEW Chartered Accountants are recognised around the world as leaders in accountancy, finance and business. You can be one too. Let the facts speak for themselves.



“ I think being an ICAEW Chartered Accountant lets people know you're full of integrity, you're professional and you're top of your field.

Chris, Tax Accountant, Manchester United Plc

“ ICAEW is constantly thinking ahead – thinking about what future business leaders need to be and how to train them.

Zarin, CFO, Grass Roots (and former CFO at the BBC)

“ Qualifying as an ICAEW Chartered Accountant has been a fantastic platform and has enabled me to do a zillion things that I would have never ever expected to do much earlier on in my career.

Andy, FD, Standard Chartered (and former CFO at Vodafone)

“ Providing ACA training to employees benefits us by creating students who are able to add value to our clients, both during and beyond their ACA training agreement.

Rachel, Manager, Smith & Williamson

Have you got what it takes?

While technical knowledge is vital, there is more to becoming a successful ICAEW Chartered Accountant. Here are some of the key skills you'll need:



People skills – You'll need to be able to communicate with colleagues, managers and clients in an easy to understand way.



Team working – Knowing when to act as a team member or a team leader is vital, so is the ability to support and motivate others to achieve common goals.



Decision making and problem solving – You will need to be able to collect, analyse and interpret data from a number of sources to help make good business decisions.



Professionalism – You will need to behave professionally and do business in an ethical way at all times.



Commercial awareness – You will need to be able to think creatively about problems and find solutions to give the organisation you work for a competitive edge.



IT skills – You will need to be able to keep up to date with technology and use it to solve problems and develop good business advice.





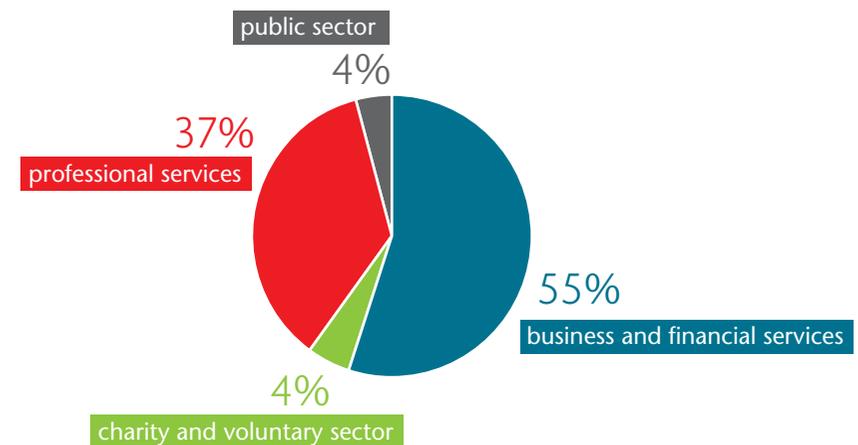
Work globally and in any sector

If you choose to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant, you will have the flexibility to shape your career to suit your interests and aspirations.

Imagine a career where you can investigate fraudulent activity and act as an expert witness in court. Or a career that gives you the opportunity to make a real difference, through making sure a charity has the funds to deliver its work. Sound interesting? As an ICAEW Chartered Accountant you will find yourself at the heart of business. You will make decisions that affect the strategy, direction and profitability of organisations around the world.

With a range of industries and sectors to work in, chartered accountancy offers lots of exciting opportunities. You will need to complete our chartered accountancy qualification, the ACA, to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant. The ACA is internationally recognised which means you can work in various countries, and careers in chartered accountancy often offer international travel and worldwide prospects too.

Where ICAEW Chartered Accountants work



Source: ICAEW member data at January 2016.

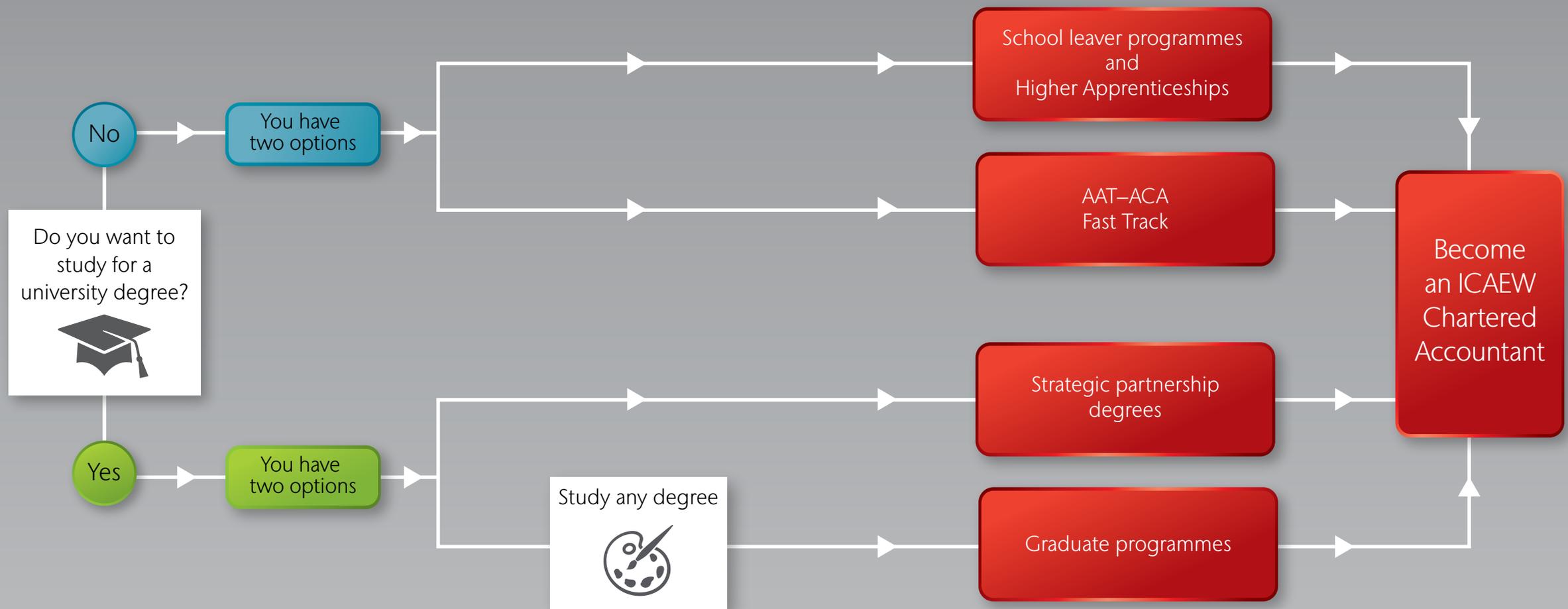
Choose your route to a successful career

The good news is there is more than one route to becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.

Use our route planner to help find the perfect route for you. Read more information about each route on the following pages and visit icaew.com/careers to find out everything you need to know.

Did you know?

- There is more than one route to becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.
- You can start ACA training with or without a degree.
- You can start your training after your GCSEs through the AAT-ACA Fast Track or ICAEW CFAB.
- You don't need an A-level or a degree in maths, business studies or accountancy.
- You will earn a salary while you train.
- You could qualify as an ICAEW Chartered Accountant by the time you are 21.



Entry requirements

ICAEW's entry requirements relate to your school, college or other relevant qualifications and full details can be found at icaew.com/careers. Employers will also have their own entry requirements, so we recommend that you check their website before you apply.

School leaver programmes and Higher Apprenticeships

School leaver programmes offer exciting opportunities straight from school or college.

There are a range of options available if you want to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant once you've left school or college. We recommend you start by looking for a school leaver programme with an ICAEW authorised employer. Many employers ask you to start your professional training with a qualification such as the Higher Apprenticeship in Assurance/Audit or Tax or the ICAEW Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business (ICAEW CFAB). School leaver programmes typically last three to five years and combine on-the-job learning with ACA training. This means you gain a globally recognised qualification at the same time as being paid a salary.



Florentyne,
ACA Student
Trainee Associate
EY, UK

The most enjoyable part of my job is all the networking I get to do. I love meeting new clients and getting to know them on a professional level. I'm constantly working with new EY employees as well which is great as each person teaches me something new. I've matured a lot since joining EY, I have to take a lot more responsibility. It is up to me to ensure that I balance my work with my studies and personal life. I am amazed at how much knowledge I've gained, I complete work now that I never thought I'd be able to do when I first joined.

I have never once regretted not going to university and I've never felt like I've missed out. Not only am I studying something I enjoy, but I am earning a salary as well. I really do think I've got the best deal.

To read Florentyne's full story visit [icaew.com/florentyne](https://www.icaew.com/florentyne)

AAT-ACA Fast Track

We offer an integrated progression route for AAT students and members.

The AAT-ACA Fast Track is an alternative to the Higher Apprenticeship and ICAEW CFAB school leaver programmes. It allows you to progress towards 'chartered' status after starting your journey with AAT's Accounting Qualification. Once you have successfully completed AAT's Level 4 Diploma in Accounting, you can start the ACA qualification building on the fundamental knowledge gained through the AAT. This approach means that you may be able to complete both qualifications in as little as four years after finishing school or college.



Liam, ACA
Audit Principal
National Audit Office,
UK

I was given the chance to join the National Audit Office in Newcastle straight out of sixth form as part of the AAT-ACA Fast Track. This seemed like an opportunity too good to turn down, gaining experience, training and being paid to study all at the same time.

I have been at the NAO now for five years and in my time I have worked as part of numerous audit teams; ranging from the Department of Health group account to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

I don't regret not going to university as the AAT-ACA Fast Track meant that I became qualified by the age of 22 and I have also gained some great friends at work.

To read Liam's full story visit [icaew.com/liam](https://www.icaew.com/liam)

Strategic partnership degrees

If you are looking to make the most of your time at university, our strategic partnership degrees could be for you.

We have a number of partnerships with employers and universities designed to combine a university degree with real-life experience of the workplace. These programmes combine accountancy and finance degrees, with time spent in the workplace on internships and placements. Each programme is different in structure, but each one allows you to count the knowledge, skills and experience gained during your degree towards the ACA qualification.



Laura, ACA
Manager
PwC, UK

The experience I got through the strategic partnership degree was fantastic. I was able to get a degree which had ICAEW and PwC involved and complete three placements in my second, third and fourth year at Newcastle University. I was able to take the technical skills I learnt at university and apply them to real-life situations with PwC. I was also able to apply softer skills I gained on placement, such as working in teams and writing reports, back at university and in exams. I think this route gave me a massive head start in my career as an ICAEW Chartered Accountant. When I joined PwC full time, I was ahead of those starting straight after university as I had completed 12 out of the 15 exams and a number of days work experience. This meant it only took me another year to qualify as an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.

To read Laura's full story visit [icaew.com/laura](https://www.icaew.com/laura)

Graduate programmes

ICAEW Chartered Accountants come from a wide variety of degree disciplines.

Because successful businesses and organisations need people with varied backgrounds, interests and knowledge, you can train to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant whatever your degree background. If you choose to study for an accountancy, finance or business-related undergraduate degree you may be eligible to apply for exam credit towards the ACA qualification too. Programmes typically last three years and combine on-the-job learning with ACA training.



Funke, FCA
Chief Operating
Officer
FBN Capital,
Nigeria

During the early years of my career I experienced a breadth of roles that exposed me to the global banking sectors of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific and the US, and I covered investment banking inside out. That vast experience provided the architecture for my career.

But my accountancy training really equipped me with the vital analytical skills and strategic mindset that you need as Chief Operating Officer, to be able to go into any area of the business, ask the right kind of questions, process huge volumes of data and gain an accurate measure of any business situation. I can't think of another form of professional training that equips you so well and stays with you throughout your entire career.

To read Funke's full story visit [icaew.com/funke](https://www.icaew.com/funke)

ICAEW members and students: their story

Jonathan, BGM, UK



The part of the job that appeals to me most is that there is no monotony or sense of routine; every day brings its own unique challenges. I am not limited to working for one department which means I am constantly learning and developing. I have been able to gain an insight into a number of different sectors, from property firms to high profile entertainers. The diverse client base really helps to build genuine commercial awareness.

Minahil, Sajjad Haider & Co, UAE



A family friend recommended the ACA to me as an ideal way to get a head start in my professional life. So far, I agree with him 100%. I am now an Audit Associate in Dubai and after almost a year and a half, I've become a significant member of the audit team who's allowed to handle clients independently. I consider the growth that I have experienced as a result of my audit career is my biggest achievement to date.

Ysabella, Deloitte, Gibraltar



I chose the ACA because it is a prestigious and globally recognised qualification and its professional reputation attracted my interest. I've had many high points so far in my career, which include recently being promoted to Audit Assistant Manager. My highest point has been becoming the first ICAEW Chartered Accountant to have trained in Gibraltar. I hope to inspire new accountants in Gibraltar and help them achieve the ACA too.

Jackson, PwC, Singapore



After graduating I wanted to pursue a professional qualification and the ACA was a natural choice. I am now a Tax Manager, meaning I provide tax advice to clients and conduct regular research into uncertain tax and accounting issues. The most enjoyable part of my job is that I get to meet and deal with clients in a variety of industries and geographies. I feel an incredible sense of satisfaction whenever I am able to provide advice and add value to my clients' businesses.

Katerina, KPMG, Cyprus



Growing up, my father was my motivation. He's an ACA and a member of ICAEW's Corporate Finance Faculty. Seeing my brother qualify as a chartered accountant also inspired me to follow the family profession. Becoming president of the Cyprus Chartered Accountants' Student Society has helped improve my communication, presentation and social skills and involves a lot of teamwork.

Gavish, Mauritius



I am chairman of the ICAEW Student Network Mauritius. We hold lots of events, but above all, the network is a good platform to share issues regarding studies, coping with work-life-study balance, or career ambitions. The best part of training in my home country is that I don't miss out on the great family and social life here. You might study or work anywhere in the world, but there's nowhere like home.

 Countries where ICAEW members and students live and work



How you can become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant

Successful ICAEW Chartered Accountants need the right mix of knowledge, skills and on-the-job experience.

To follow in the footsteps of our members and become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant, you will need to complete our globally recognised ACA qualification. The ACA has four integrated components that have been carefully designed to build on each other. This means that you will develop the skills and expertise you need as you progress through the qualification.

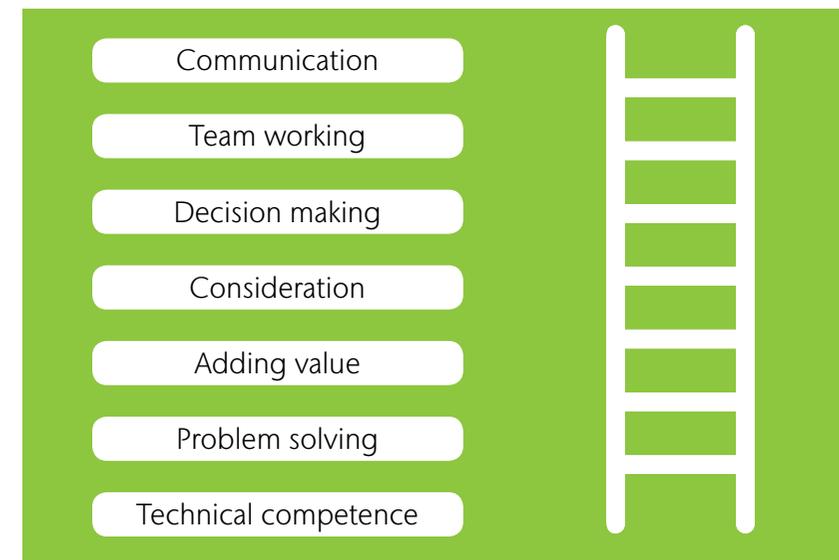


Professional development



Professional development is an essential part of ACA training. It prepares you to successfully handle a variety of situations that you will come across throughout your career. The skills framework is made up of seven ladders, each containing seven or eight steps that represent a particular skill.

The seven professional development ladders



At the start of your ACA training with your authorised employer, you'll discuss your current skills and agree where you should start on each of the ladders. This means that the more skills you develop while you are at school, college, university or through work experience, the higher up the ladders you will start! As you progress through your ACA training, you'll be asked to demonstrate your competence in each of the required skills. Once achieved, you'll be asked to record your success in your online training file. You will continue to progress through the skills ladders during the remainder of your ACA training.

Ethics and professional scepticism training



Ethics is more than just knowing the rules around confidentiality, integrity and objectivity. It is about being able to identify an ethical dilemma, understand the impact and behave appropriately. Ethics is an essential part of the accountancy profession. We integrate ethics throughout the ACA qualification to develop your ethical capabilities – so you'll always know how to make the right decision, even when no one's looking!

You'll develop your ethical capabilities in three ways:



Learn – not only is ethics integrated throughout the ACA modules, you'll also need to complete our online training programme.



Practise – our practising ethics webinars help you understand ethical dilemmas through a range of scenarios.



Apply – once you understand the principles, you'll need to show your employer that you are able to apply your ethical capabilities in your day-to-day role.

You'll record your progress in your online training file with your employer completing the final sign-off at the end of your training.

Three to five years' practical work experience



Practical work experience is a key component of ACA training. You will need to gain and show evidence of at least 450 days of work experience, which must be completed as part of a training agreement with one of our 3,300+ authorised employers around the world. The agreement is separate to your employment contract and details the commitment both you and your employer have to you achieving the ACA qualification.

While you can start the ACA qualification on your own, securing an ACA training agreement with an authorised employer will mean you receive the highest standard of training and support from the start. Your employer will guide you through your ACA training and you'll benefit from six-monthly reviews. These regular reviews will give you the chance to discuss your progress through all components of ACA training with your employer. Once completed, you will record your practical experience in your online training file.

Practical work experience means real-life work of a financial, business and/or commercial nature. It will need to be completed in at least one of the following categories:

- accounting
- taxation
- financial management
- insolvency
- information technology
- audit or assurance (audit is not compulsory).

Experience is progressive, so you'll also be guaranteed to get more responsibility throughout your ACA training too.

15 accountancy, finance and business modules



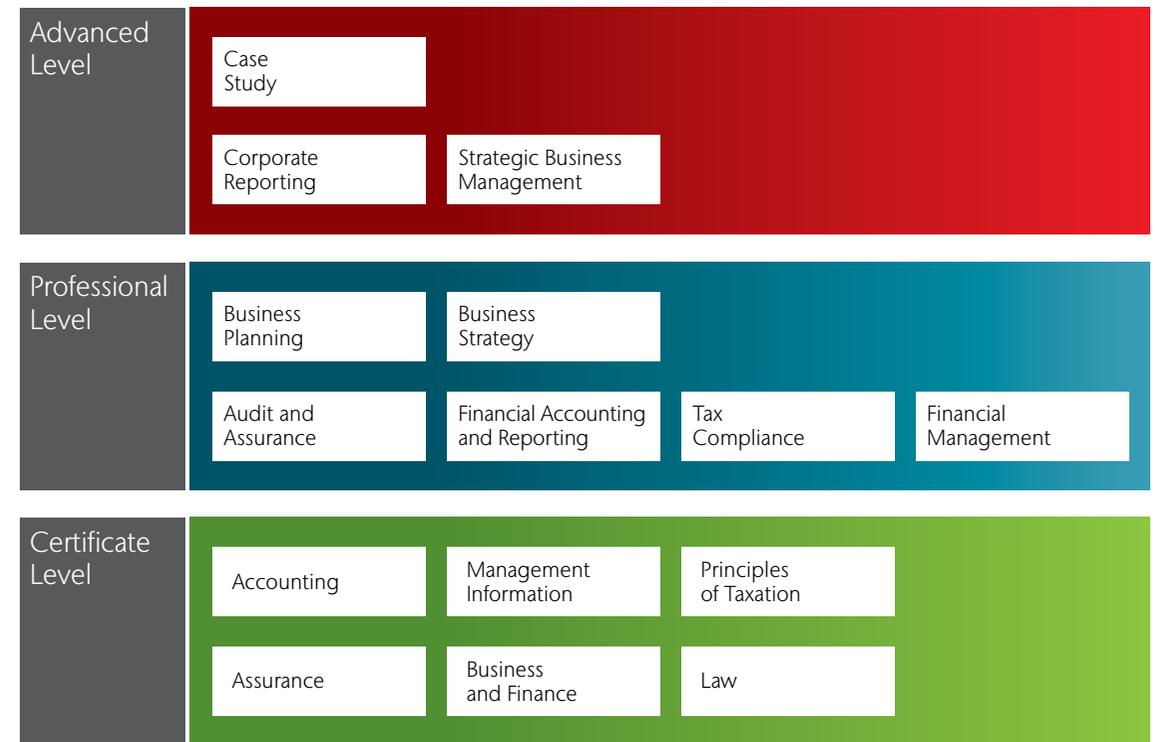
The ACA modules cover a wide range of subjects, which helps you to develop a broad understanding across accountancy, finance and business. The modules progress over three levels and are designed to complement the practical experience, professional development and ethical learning you gain during your ACA training. This means that you'll be able to apply theory in the workplace right from the start.

If you are in an ACA training agreement your employer will guide you on the pace and order that you complete the ACA modules, and discuss professional tuition with you. If you start the ACA independently, you can progress through the modules in any order and at a time that is convenient for you. Typically you will either complete the Certificate Level (often within the first year) before the Professional Level, or a combination of the two if you are specialising in a particular area, such as tax or insurance. You will then move on to the Advanced Level.

To support you in applying your knowledge in exams, there are alternative modules for Business Planning, Financial Accounting and Reporting, and Corporate Reporting. When you start an ACA training agreement, your employer will guide you on the modules that are right for you. If you start the ACA independently, you should consider your future ambitions when selecting which modules to sit.

Don't forget! If you choose to study for an accountancy, finance or business-related undergraduate degree, a Masters or professional qualification, you may be eligible to apply for exam credit towards the ACA qualification. Visit icaew.com/cpl to find out more.

This is a snapshot of what training for our chartered accountancy qualification will involve. Visit our website icaew.com/careers to find out more about the ACA qualification and how it will help you to develop into a business professional.



Certificate Level

- Six modules
- An introduction to accountancy, finance and business
- Each has a 1.5 hour computer-based exam
- Exams can be sat at any time
- Can be taken in any order
- Available as a stand-alone qualification – ICAEW Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business (ICAEW CFAB)

Professional Level

- Six modules
- Learn to apply technical knowledge in real-life scenarios
- Each has a 2.5–3 hour exam
- Exams can be sat in March, June, September and December
- Can be taken in any order
- Alternative modules available for Business Planning and Financial Accounting and Reporting

Advanced Level

- Three modules
- Strategic decision making at a senior level
- Real-life scenarios with increased complexity
- Each has a 3–4 hour written exam
- Exams can be sat in July and November
- Alternative modules available for Corporate Reporting

What bosses want and how to achieve it

“Being bright and numerate really helps but attitude is what makes people stand out. I value people with drive and energy; people who ask questions and find better ways of doing things.

Emily, Chief Finance Officer, Office Shoes (UK)

“I look for authenticity, for self-belief and for people who can relate to others easily. Technical skills we can teach but that ability to connect with clients is not easy to develop in those that don't have it. My advice is be yourself, because you'll fail miserably if you try to be someone else.

Gerard, Chief Executive Officer, BDO (UAE)

“They need to demonstrate emotional intelligence (or EQ) as well as IQ, to be able to connect with and better serve the businesses we work with.

Maggie, Partner and Head of Talent, EY (UK)

“A very important cocktail of hard and soft qualities is required: solid financial acumen, communication skills, professionalism, reliability, time management skills, multi-tasking abilities, quick grasp of issues and resolutions, positivity and a can-do attitude.

Aliki, Former Finance Director, Yahoo (Switzerland)

1 Build that network

Our Student Recruitment team host business games, skills sessions and exhibit at careers events throughout the year. Networking is a key skill so come along to our events and talk to our employers. Visit [icaew.com/careers](https://www.icaew.com/careers)

2 Get involved in BASE

Have you registered to take part in BASE? If you are aged 16-19 and based in the UK, ask your teacher to enter you and five friends into our national competition. You'll get a real insight into the career and meet lots of local employers. Visit [icaew.com/base](https://www.icaew.com/base)

3 Do your research

There are diverse opportunities on offer. Research the type of organisations, size, sectors and locations that appeal to you. You'll be applying for an ACA training vacancy so make sure you know all about the qualification and ICAEW. Find out more at [icaew.com/careers](https://www.icaew.com/careers)

4 Update your CV

Is your CV up to date, clearly and concisely worded, with no spelling or grammatical mistakes? Make sure you show how your work experience and extra-curricular activities meet an employer's requirements. Visit [icaew.com/employability](https://www.icaew.com/employability) to get our tips.

5 Start your search

Don't forget to create a personal profile and upload your CV on our dedicated jobs portal [icaewtrainingvacancies.com](https://www.icaewtrainingvacancies.com). You can search school leaver, graduate and work experience opportunities and be kept up to date through our job alerts and newsletters.

6 Know who you are applying to

Once you've found an ACA opportunity, make sure you research the job, the organisation and the industry sector thoroughly. Tailor each application as every employer has their own recruitment and application process. And don't forget to check the application deadline!

7 Think about your experience

More and more recruiters are filling their vacancies with candidates who have been on work experience placements with them before. Consider applying for insight programmes during school, college or university.

8 Prepare

Make sure you have the best chance by practising different interview questions and methods. Interviews could be one-to-one, or with a selection panel, while some will be face-to-face and others by phone or Skype.

9 Think about your skills

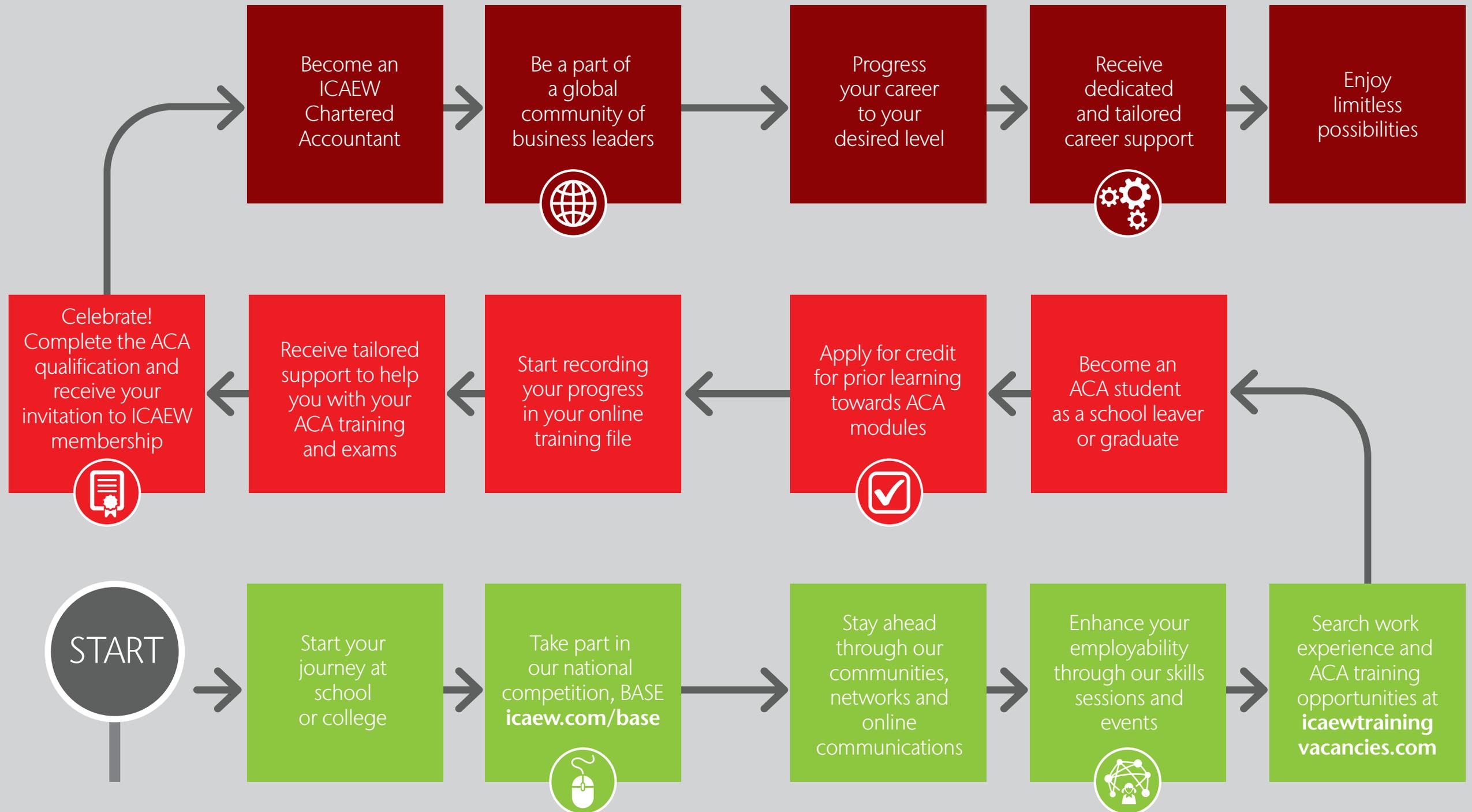
Prepare yourself for assessment centres, where a number of candidates are invited together to perform tasks relevant to the job vacancy. You'll be evaluated on a number of different skills including participation, listening, analytical and presentation skills.

10 Have a positive impact

Remember that first impressions count. When you meet any potential employers, dress and act professionally. But most of all – be on time!

An insight into your career journey

We are here to support you at every stage of your journey to becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant. From giving you advice, insight and support while you are at school, college or university, to helping you with exam resources once you start your ACA training. It doesn't stop once you qualify either. Once you become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant, our expertise will help you excel throughout your career.

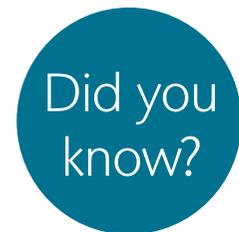


Taking the next step is easy

Getting a head start and applying to employers early has a number of benefits for your career prospects.

You can start studying for the ACA qualification on your own as an independent student. However, we recommend you secure a training agreement with an authorised employer as soon as you can. ICAEW authorised employers must meet strict standards to train ACA students, meaning you'll benefit from a first-rate employer who is committed to giving you support and guidance throughout your training.

Securing a training agreement early on also means that, not only will you gain a world-leading qualification, you'll be paid a competitive salary while training too!



90% of the 100 most popular employers for school leavers employ ICAEW Chartered Accountants.*

Find an employer

Don't delay your search on our jobs portal [icaewtrainingvacancies.com](https://www.icaewtrainingvacancies.com). Our employers advertise a range of school leaver, work experience and graduate opportunities which you can search by location and type. Make sure you register on the site, create your profile and upload your CV to receive relevant job alerts and to help employers search for you too. Employers' websites contain useful information and hints about their recruitment processes and roles available.

If you've already found an employer who you want to train with who isn't authorised, don't worry! We can help your employer to become authorised to train you for the ACA. It is a straightforward process which is also free of charge for the employer. Ask your employer to visit [icaew.com/trainACA](https://www.icaew.com/trainACA) to find out more or to arrange for one of our team to visit.

* Source: ICAEW member data at January 2016 and *The UK's 100 most popular employers for School Leavers*, GTI media



One of our ICAEW Members supporting her team at the BASE 2015 National Final.

Further information and support

Deciding on your future career is a big commitment so we understand you'll want more information. There are several ways to find out more.



Visit [icaew.com/careers](https://www.icaew.com/careers)



Sign up for our e-newsletter to start receiving updates and job alerts – email academy@icaew.com



Find us at [facebook.com/icaewcareers](https://www.facebook.com/icaewcareers)



Tweet us [@ICAEW_Careers](https://twitter.com/ICAEW_Careers)



Watch our videos at [youtube.com/icaewcareers](https://www.youtube.com/icaewcareers)

ICAEW is a world leading professional membership organisation that promotes, develops and supports over 145,000 chartered accountants worldwide. We provide qualifications and professional development, share our knowledge, insight and technical expertise, and protect the quality and integrity of the accountancy and finance profession.

As leaders in accountancy, finance and business our members have the knowledge, skills and commitment to maintain the highest professional standards and integrity. Together we contribute to the success of individuals, organisations, communities and economies around the world.

Because of us, people can do business with confidence.

ICAEW is a founder member of Chartered Accountants Worldwide and the Global Accounting Alliance.

www.charteredaccountantsworldwide.com

www.globalaccountingalliance.com



ICAEW

Chartered Accountants' Hall Moorgate Place London EC2R 6EA UK

T +44 (0)1908 248 250

F +44 (0)1908 248 260

E careers@icaew.com

 /icaewcareers

 @ICAEW_Careers

 /icaewcareers

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