

Accountant

Accountants analyse, report and give advice about the financial dealings of organisations and individuals, and advise on associated record-keeping and compliance requirements.

Accountants may perform the following tasks:

- assist with the formulation of budgetary and accounting policies
- prepare financial statements for presentation to boards of directors, management, shareholders and statutory bodies
- conduct financial investigations, undertake audits, prepare reports and advise on such matters as the purchase and sale of businesses, mergers, financing, suspected fraud, insolvency and taxation examine the income and expenditure of institutions
- provide assurance about the accuracy of information contained in financial reports and their compliance with statutory requirements
- provide financial and taxation advice about business structures, plans and operations
- liaise with bankers and brokers to establish funds management arrangements
- advise on the selection and application of computer-based accounting systems
- appraise cash flow and financial risk of investment projects.

Specialisations:

Auditor

An auditor ensures financial statements are true and fair by checking that assets and liabilities mentioned in reports exist, analysing samples of work done and interviewing staff. Auditors are increasingly asked to audit figures relating to environmental emissions.

Budget Accountant

A budget accountant primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of budgeting systems. This involves monitoring budgets and comparing them with actual costs and revenues. They analyse records to determine trends, which assists in managerial control.

Bursar

A bursar is responsible for the accounting and general business operation of schools or tertiary institutions. This may include fundraising.

Cost Accountant

A cost accountant develops and directs systems so that costs can be recorded and analysed to determine each unit cost. This involves analysing changes that affect production costs (raw materials, manufacturing methods, factory overheads and wages, for example). They provide management with reports to assist in decision-making about production volumes, sale prices and additions or deletions to product lines and/or manufacturing or distribution resources.

Finance Manager

A finance manager prepares reports for management, summarising the business' financial position in the areas of income, expenses, capital usage and cash flows, and assists with the preparation of strategic plans, budgets and financial forecasts. Finance managers also determine fund requirements and strategies to invest surpluses and assist in the development of accounting and management policies and procedures.

Forensic Accountant

A forensic accountant analyses and prepares accounting documents for use as evidence, often for a court of law.

Investment Analyst

An investment analyst evaluates the value of companies for potential buyers and investors, and investigates businesses being sold, bought or merged.

Liquidator and Receiver

A liquidator and receiver assists and advises businesses in financial difficulties, organises company closures in line with legal requirements and, in the case of bankruptcies, sells assets.

Systems Accountant

A systems accountant analyses financial information needs for organisations by reviewing existing systems and working out the best way to meet those needs.

Taxation Consultant/Taxation Agent

A taxation consultant/taxation agent prepares taxation returns and reports, provides advice about tax issues and handles disputes with taxation authorities.

Treasurer

A treasurer plans short-term and long-term finance and advises on the financial consequences. They design and manage investment portfolios to minimise financial risk.

Accountants may work on their own or with other accountants. Accountants in private practice have a high level of public contact. Some positions involve travel, which is often interstate or overseas. Personal Requirements:

- good communication skills
- good presentation skills
- able to build rapport with clients
- able to analyse and solve problems
- good organisational skills
- discretion when dealing with confidential information
- professional and ethical
- able to work as part of a team.

Related Jobs:

Actuary
Bookkeeper
Computer Systems Auditor
Economist
Financial Dealer and Broker
Financial Planner
Hospital Administrator
Management Consultant
Mathematician

Education and Training, Employment Opportunities and Additional Information

Education and Training:

To become an accountant you usually have to complete a VET qualification in accounting. As subjects and prerequisites can vary between institutions, you should contact your chosen institution for further information. You may be able to study through distance education.

You can also become an accountant by completing a degree in accounting or a related field such as business or commerce with a major in accounting. To get into these courses you usually need to gain your VCE. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English and mathematics are normally required. Most universities in Australia offer degrees in these areas. Universities have different prerequisites and some have flexible entry requirements or offer external study. Contact Open Universities Australia or the universities you are interested in for more information as requirements may change.

Additional Information:

Graduates may qualify for membership or entry to the Chartered Accountants Program offered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA), CPA Australia or the Institute of Public Accountants (IPA). Eligibility for membership varies and may require work experience and/or further study.

Related Courses:

While the following courses are related to this occupation, they may not necessarily lead directly to employment, nor provide the most direct pathway to the occupation. Courses which provide preliminary or informal training, as well as those which provide additional job skills following initial qualifications may also be listed.

*Course is offered by more than one institution.

- Diploma of Accounting *
- Diploma of Business - Enterprise
- Advanced Diploma of Accounting *
- Associate Degree in Accounting
- Associate Degree in Business *
- Associate Degree in Commerce - Applied
- Associate Degree in Logistics
- Bachelor of Accounting *
- Bachelor of Accounting / Bachelor of Economics
- Bachelor of Accounting / Bachelor of Finance
- Bachelor of Accounting / Bachelor of Information Technology
- Bachelor of Accounting and Finance
- Bachelor of Arts - Chinese / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Business *
- Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Business - Accounting
- Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Commerce *
- Bachelor of Biomedical Science / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Business *
- Bachelor of Business - Accountancy
- Bachelor of Business - Accounting *
- Bachelor of Business - Accounting / Bachelor of Business - Banking and Finance
- Bachelor of Business - Accounting / Bachelor of Business - Management
- Bachelor of Business - Accounting and Finance *
- Bachelor of Business - Economics and Finance - Applied
- Bachelor of Business - Management *
- Bachelor of Business - Professional Accountancy

- Bachelor of Business / Bachelor of Communication
- Bachelor of Business / Bachelor of Visual Arts
- Bachelor of Business Administration *
- Bachelor of Business Administration / Bachelor of Global Studies
- Bachelor of Business Information Systems *
- Bachelor of Business Information Systems / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Commerce *
- Bachelor of Commerce - Accounting and Finance
- Bachelor of Commerce - Applied
- Bachelor of Commerce - Applied Finance
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Business Administration
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Business Information Systems
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Economics
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Global Studies
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Information Systems
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Laws *
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Management
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Science *
- Bachelor of Computer Science / Bachelor of Accounting
- Bachelor of Global Studies / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Health Science / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of International Business *
- Bachelor of International Studies / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of International Studies / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Journalism / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Journalism / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Laws / Bachelor of Accounting
- Bachelor of Laws / Bachelor of Business *
- Bachelor of Music / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Nursing / Bachelor of Business Administration
- Bachelor of Professional Accounting
- Bachelor of Property and Real Estate / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Psychological Studies / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Public Health and Health Promotion / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Accounting
- Bachelor of Sport and Recreation Management / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Civil and Environmental Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering (Honours)
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Education - Secondary (Honours)
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Laws (Honours)
- Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Mechatronics Engineering (Honours)
- Bachelor of Engineering - Computer and Network Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Business - Management
- Bachelor of Engineering - Electrical (Honours) / Bachelor of Business - Management
- Bachelor of Engineering - Electrical and Electronic (Honours) / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Engineering - Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Business - Management
- Bachelor of Engineering - Electrical Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Engineering - Robotics and Mechatronics (Honours) / Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Environmental Engineering (Honours) / Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) / Bachelor of Commerce
- Graduate Certificate in Accounting *
- Graduate Certificate in Business *
- Graduate Certificate in Chartered Accounting Foundations

- Graduate Certificate in International Finance
- Graduate Certificate in Professional Accounting *
- Graduate Certificate in Taxation
- Graduate Diploma of Accounting *
- Graduate Diploma of Chartered Accounting
- Graduate Diploma of International Tax
- Graduate Diploma of Professional Accounting *
- Graduate Diploma of Taxation
- Master of Accounting *
- Master of Accounting - Professional Practice
- Master of Accounting / Master of Business - Enterprise Resource Planning Systems
- Master of Accounting / Master of Business - Finance
- Master of Accounting / Master of Business Administration
- Master of Accounting and Financial Management
- Master of Accounting Practice
- Master of Applied Finance / Master of Business - Accounting
- Master of Business - Accounting
- Master of Business - Accounting / Master of Business Law
- Master of Business / Master of Professional Accounting
- Master of Business Administration *
- Master of Business Administration - International / Master of Professional Accounting
- Master of Commerce *
- Master of Commerce - Professional Accounting *
- Master of Commerce / Master of Business Administration
- Master of Finance *
- Master of Financial Analysis
- Master of Financial Analysis / Master of Professional Accounting
- Master of Information Technology / Master of Commerce
- Master of International Finance
- Master of International Finance / Master of Professional Accounting
- Master of Laws - Global Business Law
- Master of Management - Accounting
- Master of Management - Accounting and Finance
- Master of Management - Finance
- Master of Management - Marketing *
- Master of Practising Accounting
- Master of Professional Accounting *
- Master of Professional Accounting (Advanced)
- Master of Professional Accounting (Global Leadership Program)
- Master of Professional Accounting (Non-Graduate Entry)
- Master of Professional Accounting - CPA Extension
- Master of Professional Accounting / Master of Business Administration
- Master of Professional Accounting / Master of Business Law
- Master of Professional Accounting / Master of Commerce
- Master of Tax
- Master of Taxation
- Master of Commerce (By Research)

Employment Opportunities:

Accountants work in diverse environments, including sporting organisations, retail outlets, government organisations, finance companies, banks and building societies, real estate firms, taxation consultancies, community service organisations and accounting firms. They can work in partnership with other accountants or be self-employed.

Employment opportunities for accountants can vary from year to year for many reasons, such as changes in taxation and other commercial laws, changes in the demand for financial advice and planning services, industry restructuring and the general level of activity in all sectors of business. The financial viability of firms and advances in technology may also have an effect on employment. For Further Information:

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Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (VIC/TAS Office)
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Institute of Public Accountants (VIC Division)
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