

Getting started with ACCA



What is ACCA?

What does it take to become a chief financial officer? How do you control a £100 billion balance sheet at a bank? If you want to know the answers, then the ACCA qualification is for you!

ACCA is an accountancy qualification ideal for those who would like a rewarding career in finance, or wish to become a chartered certified accountant.

During the ACCA qualification, you will study a broad range of topics that will help your career, including:

- financial management
- corporate reporting
- taxation and audit
- leadership and ethics.

The skills you pick up from these topics will help you progress in your chosen field and open up new career paths in the future.



Why study ACCA?

ACCA is a globally respected qualification, with 110 years experience as a leading professional accounting body.

The qualification is based on international accounting standards, so employers around the world know that an ACCA qualification indicates professional excellence.



252,500 members,
526,000 students,
over 180 countries*

93%

93% of employers say the
ACCA qualification delivers the
skills their organisation needs**

£74k

The average annual salary
for a chartered certified
accountant is £74,000†

Where can ACCA take you?

From fashion to football, accountancy is essential in all industries, meaning ACCA can lead to a wealth of opportunity in almost any sector. After all, the success of a business is dependent on sound financial management.

The ACCA qualification also opens up many career opportunities in external auditing, banking and corporate finance.

And because of its global reputation, an ACCA qualification is your passport to work around the world.

Top three career achievements according to ACCA Members*



Leading a finance team



Broadening horizons and knowledge by working internationally



Becoming an expert in a specialist finance role

If you're interested in a career in accounting and tax **Kaplan's YouTube series, Career Goals**, will inspire you to make informed career choices that are right for you.

Kaplan Career Goals

*ACCA Career Survey



Can I study ACCA?

Whether you've just finished school, want to change career, or already hold a financial qualification, there are lots of ways to start ACCA. The three main entry routes are highlighted below.

Foundations

Foundations is a suite of awards from the ACCA that teaches you the fundamentals of accounting. If you are new to accountancy, or if you're already working in finance but have no formal qualifications, ACCA Foundations is the perfect place to start. There are no minimum entry requirements, and once you've passed, you can move onto Applied Skills.

Applied Knowledge and Skills Levels

The first step toward ACCA membership, the Applied Knowledge Level teaches you essential financial, business and management accounting techniques. Alongside basic business and management principles and the skills required of an accountant. The Applied Skills Level builds upon these skills further, equipping you with a broad understanding of the role of accounting in business, and how to interpret financial information.

Strategic Professional Level

The final stage of the ACCA qualification. The Strategic Professional level, advances your techniques, skills, and develops the professional ethics required to be an accountant or consultant operating at a senior level.

Find the starting point that's right for you

Many believe that they don't have the right qualifications or skills to start studying accountancy. Whilst it does help to be comfortable with maths, English, and using a computer, most accountants today use spreadsheets or accounting software to do a lot of the calculations and processes.

You can find your starting point, and check whether you're eligible for any exemptions, by visiting the [ACCA's website](#) before you start applying.

What will it cost me?

Though ACCA courses can be expensive, it is worth considering the cost of not being qualified, such as the salary increase for fully qualified accountants and missed opportunities. **Kaplan ACCA student Craig Coda explains:**



“

Being a true accountant, throughout my qualification I have kept a record of the costs of my course. To date, my ACCA qualification has cost me £4,835 over two years – which I actually think is pretty reasonable, especially when you consider the true cost, which is what I would have earned had I been fully qualified throughout my accountancy career.

There can be a big pay gap between being part qualified and fully qualified and I'm very aware that had I been picking up the same work as a qualified accountant I could have been paid up to £9,000 more. Some rough calculations show that over my career I've forfeited over £100,000 due to not being qualified.”

Financial support

There's lots of extra financial support available for ACCA students. In our survey, **60% of people** said they got financial support from their employer or training provider.*

Kaplan offers interest-free payment plans, letting you split your course fees into smaller, manageable chunks over 6–12 months or choose PayPal Pay in 3, both with no extra cost.

Discover funding

*Kaplan career changer survey 2016

Which study method is right for me?

Many factors can affect how you perform in your ACCA exams, but one key question is frequently overlooked – **what's the best study method to use?**

Your unique learning style and situation can make all the difference to your ACCA success.

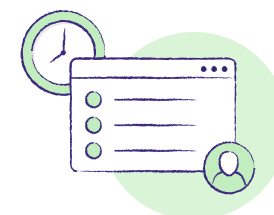
Luckily, Kaplan has **four different ways to study ACCA** to suit different needs. Not sure about whether structured or flexible learning is right for you? Find out more below.

Structured



Classroom

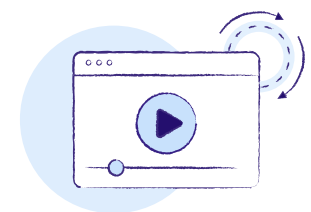
A traditional scheduled programme, with face-to-face tutor led classes at one of our centrally located Kaplan Training Centres.



Live Online

Live interactive online classes at a set time with expert tutors. Every session is recorded so you can watch them back later.

Flexible



OnDemand

An online course with resources specifically designed for online learning, with the flexibility to start studying anytime, anywhere.



Distance Learning

Study independently in your own time, at your own pace, using a range of online and printed learning materials.

Get started today with one of our **ACCA free trials** to see whether it's the right study method for you.

FREE ACCA trial

ACCA levels explained

To become a fully qualified chartered certified accountant, you need to complete three ACCA Levels – Applied Knowledge, Applied Skills, and Strategic Professional.

The ACCA syllabus is changing in 2027. For more information, view our [ACCA syllabus guidance](#).

Applied Knowledge

Overview: This level consists of three mandatory subjects which can be sat in any order. Once you've completed all three subjects, you can move onto the next level – Applied Skills.

What you learn: This level will develop your understanding of essential financial, business and management accounting techniques. You'll learn basic business and management principles and the skills required of an accountant working in business.

Career progression: Studying at this level gives you a wide range of job opportunities to choose from, such as a finance trainee, trainee business analyst and internal auditor.

Applied Skills

Overview: Consists of six mandatory subjects which are examined individually. To be awarded the Advanced Diploma in Accounting and Business you must successfully complete all six subjects and the Ethics and Professional Skills module.

What you learn: You'll develop a broad understanding of accounting in business and learn how to understand and interpret financial information.

Career progression: By achieving this diploma you'll gain the knowledge equivalent of a Bachelor's degree. You'll be able to progress onto the Strategic Professional Level and start to work towards an accountancy, audit, or analysis role.

Strategic Professional Level

Overview: This level which consists of six subjects from Essentials and Options. You will sit four of these exams to complete this level.

ACCA advise that you attempt their Ethics and Professional Skills module before you sit any exams on Strategic Professional. ACCA say that students who do so are statistically proven to increase their chances of passing the exams.

What you learn: You'll learn advanced techniques, skills and the professional ethics required of an accountant or consultant operating at a senior level.

Career progression: With experience, your qualification could lead to very senior positions such as a financial manager, chief financial officer or a partner in a professional firm.

How do I progress?

On average, it takes most students **three to five years to pass** all the exams that make up the ACCA professional qualification.

For the Applied Knowledge level, exams are on demand, allowing you to take them anytime during the year.

For the more advanced Applied Skills and Strategic Professional levels, exam sittings

occur four times a year – in March, June, September, and December.

When planning your studies, consider your workload, personal life, learning approach, and timeline for progression. You can read more advice about how to use the four sittings to your advantage and which ACCA exams are best taken together on our [exam sitting advice page](#).

ACCA Qualification Structure

Applied Knowledge

Business and Technology (BT)

Management Accounting (MA)

Financial Accounting (FA)

Applied Skills

Corporate and Business Law (LW)

Performance Management (PM)

Taxation (TX)

Financial Reporting (FR)

Audit and Assurance (AA)

Financial Management (FM)

Strategic Professional Level

Essentials

Strategic Business Leader (SBL)

Strategic Business Reporting (SBR)

Specialisms (choose two)

Advanced Financial Management (AFM)

Advanced Performance Management (APM)

Advanced Taxation (ATX)

Advanced Audit and Assurance (AAA)



Why study with Kaplan?

If you've decided that ACCA is the right qualification for you, and you've decided how you should study, the final question is – **why study with Kaplan?**

Because we listen. We've recently redesigned all our courses based on student feedback, to give you the best chance of completing your studies, whatever study method you choose.



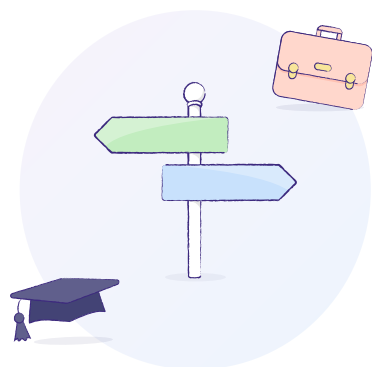
ACCA Platinum partner

The highest ACCA accreditation, proving excellence in course management, delivery and pass rates.



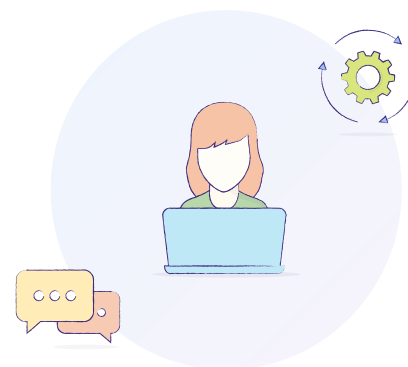
Proven track record

The UK's largest ACCA training provider, training over 10,000 learners every year.



Unrivalled choice

We offer more pathways to becoming ACCA-qualified than any other provider.



Everything you need to succeed

From academic and well-being support to a pass guarantee, we are here for you every step of the way.

Your ACCA checklist

We know that starting ACCA can be overwhelming, so we have put together a handy checklist below to guide you through the process from start to finish. Follow these steps and you'll be ACCA qualified in no time.

1

Choose your course

Make sure ACCA is right for you, and find out which level you should start with.

2

Choose your study method

Flexible or structured, in class or at home? Pick the study method that will give you the best chance of success.

3

Choose your training provider

That's where we come in. Decide who you would like to study with based on factors such as tutor support and course content.

4

Check your funding options

You might be surprised at what is available to you. And always ask your employer if they are willing to help fund your studies.

5

Register with ACCA

Separate to your training provider, you also need to register as an ACCA student with the [institute itself](#). Otherwise you can't take your exams.

6

Start studying

You should now have everything in place to be able to start your training – now hit those books and schedule your first exam when you feel ready.