

## ASSOCIATION OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS

Country: UK  
Established: 1980  
Membership: 127,000  
Website: [www.aat.org.uk/](http://www.aat.org.uk/)

Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) is UK's leading qualification and membership body for accounting staff. It works across the globe with around 125,000 members in more than 90 countries. Members are represented at every level of the finance and accounting world, including students, people already working in accountancy, and self-employed business owners.

The AAT Accounting Qualification is universally respected and internationally recognised. Organisations such as Vodaphone, the NHS, the Metropolitan Police, KPMG and many more continue to hire AAT qualified members for their knowledge, skills, diligence and enthusiasm, because AAT represents the highest standards of professionalism. We support and develop our members through more than 450 AAT approved training providers across the world. We also have an extensive branch network where members can access support and training and meet other AAT members in their local area.

### **Q1. *When was AAT established?***

AAT was founded in 1980 and is sponsored by four of the UK's chartered accountancy bodies (the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland).

### **Q2. *What does AAT see as some of the most significant challenges for development of the profession?***

The 21<sup>st</sup> century business environment is changing at a frightening pace creating a need for increased levels of probity and robust financial governance. We recognise this at AAT and have increased our focus on ethics by launching dedicated e-learning resources [www.aat-ethics.org.uk](http://www.aat-ethics.org.uk). The profession must think creatively and stand together in taking a proactive and leading role in ensuring greater levels of financial management in what remain incredibly difficult global economic times. Whether that be at the highest levels of national or local government, in international corporations or smaller organisations, its importance cannot be over emphasized as the more sophisticated economies and corporates strive to maintain advantage and the developing world races to catch up.

Global resources are limited and the profession must also play its part in driving a meaningful sustainable agenda helping businesses to identify efficiencies, collate relevant data and measure performance, in turn driving effective decision-making regarding sustainable development.

But it strikes us at AAT that there is also a need for better skilled finance professionals. This must be beyond debate when one considers the direct contribution they can make to economic growth.

However, to assume that this is simply a need for more competent chartered accountants is not to appreciate the full breadth of the issue. Clearly developing and maintaining talent at the top is important but a fundamental challenge facing us within the profession is to ensure that we are addressing the skills gap throughout the finance function. Crucially this must include those working in intermediate or less formally defined finance roles. It is critical that we give people the opportunity to develop the appropriate skills and knowledge to underpin the effective financial management essential for sustainable growth. Without it, organisations and economies can only flounder and growth will not be maximized.