

## AAT opens doors to other bodies

Recently we announced that AAT membership can be available to part qualified, fully qualified and full members of other accounting bodies including ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, ICAEW and ICAS. This news will no doubt raise a number of questions from members and non-members of AAT alike.

Firstly I think it's important for me to say that AAT full membership has been open to those that are fully qualified and full members of the other chartered and certified bodies for some time now. This kind of reciprocal route to entry is considered standard practice across associated membership bodies, for example ATT have a membership option for CIOT members who have not done the ATT qualification and CIM offer professional membership to those with a relevant alternative qualification, not purely their own.

We have now widened the remit so that a greater proportion of those within the finance and accountancy arena can now come forward and apply for AAT full membership, whilst also ensuring that standards of membership are maintained.

We've done this for two very valid reasons. Firstly to bring within a regulatory community those that are part qualified. We want to encourage part qualified students to complete their qualification and to join their membership body, however we recognise that some part qualified individuals, for whatever reason, may postpone or discontinue training but remain working in a finance or accounting role. By extending membership to these individuals AAT can support them in gaining the experience and confidence they need via our extensive CPD programme, until such time that they may choose to renew their studies at the next level. This initiative will provide a greater consistency and reassurance across the profession benefiting all those within it.

The second reason is that there are many individuals that hold and value dual membership, understanding that membership of each body has huge worth and benefit in its own right. Individuals that retain their professional designatory letters after their name while continuing to work towards chartered status are visibly demonstrating their commitment to the profession (to their employers and prospective employers) and importantly, will also have access to AAT's CPD resources.

We already have AAT full members taking advantage of our products, services and joining the professional community, especially in respect of our Members in Practice (MIP) scheme and the AAT's mastercourse programme, having been awarded membership on the merit of their alternative qualifications. By opening up a route to AAT membership, more individuals within the profession are benefitting from a more rounded and varied learning approach at great value.

We have mapped against the syllabi of the other UK accountancy and finance qualifications to create a route for prospective members who have reached a level equal to that of our own level 3 and 4 within the AAT Accounting Qualification. Part qualified chartered students applying for AAT membership have to demonstrate the same caliber of education and experience as all AAT full members. This includes relevant work experience, professional recommendations and an additional test of professional competency.

The thorough entry requirements are in place to ensure the professionalism and reputation of AAT membership is retained and standards stay consistently high, regardless of the chosen route taken into AAT membership.

Jill Blofield comments: "I qualified directly from ACCA without having done AAT first, but on becoming self-employed, I found that the availability of relevant continuing professional development courses through AAT were better suited to me and my business. Overall AAT are much more focused on providing support to those within the small business sector and therefore their membership is invaluable to me."

Annie-Lee Smith of Marcus Bishop Associates also comments: "I am part qualified with ACCA but my employer praised and valued the AAT membership so much that he has actively encouraged all his employees to apply for AAT membership. I fortunately met the entry requirements and am already reaping the benefits. It's regarded highly by clients and all our employees now are AAT members."



To find out further details on the route to entry for prospective members who have not come through the traditional route of completing the AAT qualification please visit the dedicated webpage <http://www.aat.org.uk/joinMAAT/>. Here you will find all the information on entry requirements including educational requirements, work experience requirements and professional recommendations.