

**ICAEW ACA**

LEVEL 4 ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN  
APPRENTICESHIP STUDENTS



# *Ascend in your career*

**ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR LEVEL 4  
APPRENTICESHIP STUDENTS**

[icaew.com/level4](https://www.icaew.com/level4)

# Welcome

Congratulations, you have taken the first steps towards becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant with the Level 4 Accounting Technician Apprenticeship.

This accounting apprenticeship will help you to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed within an entry-level role in accountancy and will enable you to qualify as a Level 4 Accounting Technician. You will develop your knowledge, skills and behaviours, required by the apprenticeship standard, through a combination of off-the-job training and practical experience in the workplace.

As you start your apprenticeship, we know that your employer and training provider will be supporting you, and we are here to support you too. This guide provides you with all the information you will need to complete your apprenticeship. Use it alongside the **ACA student guide**. Your apprenticeship will involve completing the first stage of the ACA qualification and you'll need to complete additional apprenticeship-specific requirements. Here we explain everything you need to know.

**Good luck.**

# Your journey

The Level 4 Accounting Technician Apprenticeship involves progressing through and completing six stages, the following pages explain each one.





## 1. KEY DOCUMENTS

You will be given the following documents:

- employment contract; and
- commitment statement and apprenticeship agreement.

Once you, your employer and training provider have signed the commitment statement and apprenticeship agreement, your training provider will register you as an apprentice with the education and skills funding agency (ESFA).

Your employer will also give you a training agreement, this relates to the ACA element of the apprenticeship. It will confirm the start and end date and length of time of your training agreement, as well as outlining the support your employer will provide.

### SUPPORT FROM YOUR EMPLOYER

Throughout your apprenticeship, your employer will provide financial support and cover the costs for your training. Studying for the ACA means your employer will support you professionally, helping you to develop the skills needed to become an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.

### SUPPORT FROM YOUR TRAINING PROVIDER

Your training provider will support and guide you in developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary for achieving the Level 4 Accounting Technician Apprenticeship. They should be your first port of call for any apprenticeship-specific queries.

### SUPPORT FROM ICAEW

We are also here to support you through your apprenticeship journey, providing a variety of resources as you progress through the first stage of the ACA qualification, including exam resources, student benefits, how to guides, webinars and more. Our dedicated student support team is also on hand to help you with your ACA-specific enquiries, call +44 (0)1908 248 250 or email [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com)



## 2. REGISTER AS A STUDENT

It's really important that you register with us as a student and correctly select the type of student you're registering as. This means we can provide you with the relevant information that you'll need during your apprenticeship and ensures that you are awarded your apprenticeship certificate.

To register as a student, go to [icaew.com/studentregistration](https://icaew.com/studentregistration). Here you will log in to our website and select your qualification and student category before adding your details within the registration process. You will first select 'ACA - student in training agreement or an ACA apprenticeship'. Click on 'View qualifications' and then select 'Level 4 apprenticeship'. If you're unsure which student category to choose, your employer will confirm. If you select ACA standard by mistake, don't worry, just log back into [icaew.com/studentregistration](https://icaew.com/studentregistration) and re-register. Select 'Level 4 apprenticeship' and follow the instructions on screen. For a detailed step-by-step guide on how to register as a student, visit [icaew.com/how-to](https://icaew.com/how-to)

Please note that, in order to study for the ACA, you will need to meet our minimum entry requirements. Information on our entry requirements is available at [icaew.com/careers](https://icaew.com/careers)

It is also a government requirement that before you attempt your end-point assessment, you will be asked to demonstrate that you have achieved Level 2 or above GCSE Maths and English (or equivalent). You may need to take an additional Functional Skills assessment, if you have not met this requirement. Your training provider will arrange this for you.

### APPRENTICESHIP-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Remember to have your 10-digit unique learner number (ULN) and your nine-digit employer's reference number (ERN) to hand before you register. Your training provider will give you these numbers. They are apprenticeship-specific and you will be asked to provide these details during the registration process. Please note that the ERN, sometimes referred to as an EDRS, is different to your employer's ICAEW authorised training employer number. You may also locate your ULN on certificates issued by other exam or qualification-awarding bodies.

If you don't provide these numbers when you register, that's OK, just remember to tell us before applying for your end-point assessment. You will be able to do this via the apprenticeship portal within your ICAEW online training file at [icaew.com/trainingfile](https://icaew.com/trainingfile)



### 3. ON-PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

During the on-programme assessment, you will need to study for the six ACA Certificate Level exams. You will develop knowledge, skills and behaviours, important for any finance or business role and undertake off-the-job training. Quarterly progress review meetings will also be held with your employer or training provider to discuss your skills development progress. They will confirm when these meetings are to take place. These meetings, along with the six-monthly reviews with your employer, will help to identify any further training you need and whether you're ready to move on to the end-point assessment. The duration of the on-programme assessment stage of the apprenticeship is flexible and depends on your progress.

Throughout this time, you will also maintain and update your ICAEW online training file, gain practical work experience, and develop your ethical and professional development skills as part of the ACA. These elements are explained in detail within the ACA student guide at [icaew.com/how-to](https://www.icaew.com/how-to)

***The apprenticeship has two stages of assessment: on-programme and end-point. You will progress through both assessments over 18-24 months.***

### KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS

During your apprenticeship, you will develop knowledge, skills and behaviours, which are essential to help you succeed in any finance or business role. These will be gained through a combination of off-the-job training and practical experience in your workplace.

Below is an overview of the knowledge, skills and behaviours you will work towards and progress.

| KNOWLEDGE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | SKILLS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | BEHAVIOURS                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical knowledge (Option 1 - Accounting, Option 2 - Tax)</li> <li>• Business awareness</li> <li>• Ethical standards</li> <li>• Regulation and compliance</li> <li>• Systems and processes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Planning and prioritisation</li> <li>• Produces quality and accurate information</li> <li>• Team working and collaboration</li> <li>• Uses systems and processes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Adding value</li> <li>• Ethics and integrity</li> <li>• Proactivity</li> <li>• Professional scepticism</li> </ul> |

This is a key component of the apprenticeship and you will need to demonstrate that you have met all knowledge, skills and behaviours to qualify as a Level 4 Accounting Technician.

**EXAMS**

You will need to study for, attempt and pass the six ACA Certificate Level exams. These cover the required knowledge element of the apprenticeship. You can take the exams in any order, at any time throughout the year. Your training provider and/or employer will guide you on which exams you study for and attempt.

The exams are:



See the ACA student guide for more information on the Certificate Level exams at [icaew.com/how-to](https://www.icaew.com/how-to)

**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REVIEWS**

You will have quarterly progress reviews with your employer or training provider throughout your apprenticeship. They will provide guidance on your performance and progress. They will also give you feedback on the steps you have achieved within the knowledge, skills and behaviour component of the apprenticeship and support you with any further development you may need. Use the ACA planner to make a note of all your progress review meetings. Print a copy of the planner at [icaew.com/acaplanner](https://www.icaew.com/acaplanner)

**ONLINE TRAINING FILE**

During your apprenticeship and as you progress through the ACA, you will need to update and maintain your ICAEW online training file. You can log on any time using your laptop, desktop computer or tablet at [icaew.com/trainingfile](https://www.icaew.com/trainingfile)

Throughout your apprenticeship, you should complete the professional development part of the ACA. This will help you attempt your portfolio and reflective statement part of the end-point assessment. Find the professional development skills areas in your training file and add in examples where you have demonstrated the skills.

The ACA student guide explains how to log your progress at [icaew.com/how-to](https://www.icaew.com/how-to)

If your employer’s professional development scheme is accredited by us, you will follow this programme. This means that you will not see the professional development tab within your training file.

**OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING**

A key benefit of the apprenticeship is that your employer is required to provide you with 20% off-the-job training. This is any learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment but within normal working hours. It is an essential element of your apprenticeship.

The training can take place away from your workplace, but it can also be done in the office, or where your employer chooses, as long as it isn’t part of your normal duties. This includes online learning and practical training, both of which can easily be done at your normal place of work. You may spend time learning new systems, visiting external clients or shadowing colleagues.

Your employer may specify what off-the-job training should look like and involve. However, it will be your training provider who monitors the process and ensures that you spend enough time on this part of the apprenticeship. They will also provide more detail on what is included or counted as off-the-job training and will provide suggestions that align with your employer’s current training process.

Here are some examples which can count towards the 20% off-the-job training requirement.

- 1 ICAEW ACA EXAM TUITION AND REVISION
- 2 MENTORING
- 3 TUITION PROVIDER SKILLS DAYS
- 4 LEARNING (eg, IT SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE)
- 5 ONLINE LEARNING
- 6 INTERNAL TRAINING
- 7 INDUCTION TO THE ROLE
- 8 STUDENTS’ EXCEL ONLINE TRAINING COURSE
- 9 UPDATING YOUR ICAEW ONLINE TRAINING FILE
- 10 ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL SCEPTICISM TRAINING



#### 4. GATEWAY

Your employer will confirm when you are ready to move on to the end-point assessment; this is known as the gateway review.



#### 5. END-POINT ASSESSMENT

The end-point assessment consists of two parts:

- portfolio and reflective statement; and
- role simulation exam.

##### PORTFOLIO AND REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

The portfolio and reflective statement demonstrates your competence in the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be an ICAEW Accounting Technician. It is an opportunity for you to show how you have developed competence throughout your apprenticeship and to think about anything you would have done differently, as well as what you have learned through the process.

The professional development section of your online training file will contribute to your portfolio and reflective statement. You will be able to take relevant examples from here, and summarise them for your portfolio and reflective statement.

There are two sections to complete within the portfolio and reflective statement, they include:

- **Section 1:** a brief description of competence in each knowledge, skill and behaviour of 50 words maximum per example; and
- **Section 2:** you will need to explore in more detail and reflect on four skills or behaviours. You will need to write a maximum of 500 words per example (not including the requirements).

When you have completed your portfolio and reflective statement, you will need to submit it to ICAEW for assessment and marking. There are three times during the year when you can submit your portfolio and reflective statement, which coincide with the role simulation exam sessions in March, June and December. You will upload your portfolio and reflective statement when you book your role simulation exam.

The pass mark for the portfolio and reflective statement is 55%.

For detailed guidance on how to complete and submit your portfolio and reflective statement, including templates, examples, marks available and the length of each statement, go to [icaew.com/portfolio](https://www.icaew.com/portfolio)

##### ROLE SIMULATION EXAM

This is a 2.5 hour long, invigilated exam which will test the knowledge, skills and behaviours you have developed during your apprenticeship.

Six weeks before the exam, you will be able to access background information on a hypothetical scenario, this is called 'advance information'. You will need to familiarise yourself with this information before the exam, with the support of your training provider. The advance information will include background information on a company, a recent set of financial statements and an organisational hierarchy. To help you prepare for the role simulation exam, explore the sample and past exams with advance information at [icaew.com/rolesimulation](https://www.icaew.com/rolesimulation), here you will also be able to view the advance information for the upcoming exam.

On the day of the exam, you will be presented with some additional information about the company, as well as a number of tasks for you to work through. The pass mark is 70%. If you score 90% or more, you will receive a distinction. The role simulation exam can be sat in March, June and December each year. There is no maximum number of attempts for this exam. However if you're unsuccessful and want to re-sit, you must attempt the exam and pass it within 12 months of your first attempt.

Find out more on how to apply and book your role simulation exam, key dates and more at [icaew.com/rolesimulation](https://www.icaew.com/rolesimulation)



## 6. CERTIFICATION

Once you have successfully completed both elements of the end-point assessment, we will notify ESFA. You will then receive your apprenticeship certificate from the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA).

### AT THE END OF YOUR APPRENTICESHIP

#### GAIN PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

As an ICAEW Accounting Technician, you can take yourself further by becoming an ICAEW Business and Finance Professional (BFP). By becoming a BFP you will gain recognition from ICAEW, a world-leading professional membership organisation, and have the right to use the BFP designatory letters. You will also have access to professional development resources and continued support from us, such as our invaluable helplines. To apply, you will need to pass our online Ethics Learning Programme and complete or provide proof of 12 months' work experience in a business environment. Find out more at [icaew.com/becomeabfp](https://www.icaew.com/becomeabfp)

#### CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY ONTO BECOMING AN ICAEW CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

Once you have completed your Level 4 apprenticeship, you will automatically be categorised as a standard ACA student. You can continue your journey either as a standard ACA student or as a Level 7 Accountancy Professional Apprenticeship student. If you go on to begin the Level 7 Accountancy Professional Apprenticeship, you can update your registration online at [icaew.com/studentregistration](https://www.icaew.com/studentregistration). You should first select 'ACA – student in training agreement or an ACA apprenticeship'. Click on 'View qualifications' and then select 'Level 7 apprenticeship'.

Remember to refer to the ACA student guide at [icaew.com/how-to](https://www.icaew.com/how-to) which provides the information you need on the ACA exams and the professional development skills, practical work experience and ethics and professional scepticism ACA requirements. It will also guide you through your ICAEW online training file, the resources and student benefits available to you, six-monthly review top tips, how to record audit experience (if relevant) and more.

## ANY QUESTIONS?

Our dedicated student support team is on hand to help and advise you throughout your apprenticeship. From queries about your ACA Certificate Level exams, the portfolio and reflective statement, and role simulation exam, through to simply updating your personal details, don't hesitate to get in touch.

T **+44 (0)1908 248 250**  
E **studentsupport@icaew.com**

If you're browsing our website, look out for the live help boxes. You will be able to speak directly to an adviser. Mia, our ChatBot, is also on hand to answer your queries.


You can also contact us using Skype. Search '[icaew\\_uk](#)' on Skype and speak to our student support team free of charge.

Stay up to date with ICAEW news, key dates and exam information by following us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook or our student community.

 @ICAEW\_Talk

 ICAEW Students

 Students@ICAEW

 [icaew.com/studentcommunity](https://www.icaew.com/studentcommunity)

There are over 1.7m chartered accountants and students around the world – talented, ethical and committed professionals who use their expertise to ensure we have a successful and sustainable future.

Over 178,500 of these are ICAEW Chartered Accountants and students. We train, develop and support each one of them so that they have the knowledge and values to help build local and global economies that are sustainable, accountable and fair.

We've been at the heart of the accountancy profession since we were founded in 1880 to ensure trust in business. We share our knowledge and insight with governments, regulators and business leaders worldwide as we believe accountancy is a force for positive economic change across the world.

[www.charteredaccountantsworldwide.com](http://www.charteredaccountantsworldwide.com)  
[www.globalaccountingalliance.com](http://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 [studentsupport@icaew.com](mailto:studentsupport@icaew.com)

 [Students@ICAEW](https://www.facebook.com/Students@ICAEW)

 [@ICAEW\\_Talk](https://twitter.com/ICAEW_Talk)

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