



# ***AUDIT QUALIFICATION (AQ) APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE***

## **WHAT IS THE AUDIT QUALIFICATION**

The Audit Qualification (AQ) is awarded to ICAEW members who have demonstrated that they have achieved sufficient knowledge and supervised experience in audit through examination and work experience gained within an ICAEW Authorised Training Employer (ATE).

The Audit Qualification is free of charge and, once granted, it remains yours indefinitely. In your career it will:

- allow you to qualify towards the control percentage of an audit registered firm; and
- provide you with one of the elements required to make an application for UK audit signing rights.

## **DOES HOLDING THE AQ ENTITLE ME TO SIGN AUDIT REPORTS?**

Holding the AQ alone does **not** entitle you to sign UK audit reports.

In order to gain the rights to sign a UK audit report, you must:

- a) hold the Audit Qualification; and
- b) hold a valid practising certificate; and
- c) apply for registered auditor status as a sole practitioner; or responsible individual (RI) status if you are a partner within a firm of registered auditors.

## **AM I ELIGIBLE FOR THE AUDIT QUALIFICATION?**

To be eligible for the AQ you must:

1. Be an **ICAEW member**
2. Have gained sufficient **work experience, completed:**
  - a) **Under appropriate supervision**
  - b) **Within an ICAEW Authorised Training Employer (ATE)**
  - c) **Under the supervision of an appropriately qualified individual**
  - d) **In accordance with ICAEW regulations**

Further details on each of these criteria is provided below.

### **ICAEW Members prior to 2010**

If you were a member before 1 January 1990, it is likely that you will have been granted the AQ under the grand parenting arrangements.

If you were a student qualifying within a registered auditor authorised to offer adequate audit training, prior to 2010, then it is possible that you will have previously submitted your audit experience to us with your training records, and thus have been granted the AQ automatically.

To confirm if you have the AQ already or discuss this further, please call our Audit Qualification team on +44 (0) 1908 248 250 or at [aq@icaew.com](mailto:aq@icaew.com)

## FURTHER DETAILS ON AQ CRITERIA

### 1. ICAEW membership

**To apply for the AQ you must be a current member of ICAEW who completed the full set of ACA examinations (including those who gained credits for prior learning).**

If you have joined us via a reciprocal or advanced credit route then you may need to sit further examinations, and to complete additional practical training.

Members who have joined us through the Pathways to Membership programme may be able to apply for the AQ using the Audit Qualification awarded by their **home professional body**.

Please contact our enquiry team at [aq@icaew.com](mailto:aq@icaew.com) for more information on any of these routes.

### 2. Work experience

You must have completed an appropriate period of work experience:

- a minimum of three years' general training and work experience obtained within an ICAEW Authorised Training Employer (ATE).
- at least two of the three years must have been completed under the supervision of an individual who holds a UK audit qualification or be eligible to sign audit reports in accordance with the law of a country where the audit work has been deemed by the FRC as comparable to that of the UK. Detail of the countries the UK regulator recognises can be **found here**.
- achieved a minimum of 240 days' appropriate audit experience. This experience can be gained both during training and post qualification, whilst in membership. Of the 240 days audit work experience;
  - at least 120 days must be in **statutory audit work** as defined in the Companies Act 2006, and;
  - the rest must be in either statutory audit work or **other audit work** similar to statutory audit work, where the nature of such work conforms to the definitions agreed by ICAEW and the Financial Reporting Council.

If you are citing work experience from outside of the UK please read our guidance on **gaining audit experience outside of the UK** carefully before applying.

#### a) Appropriate supervision

Your audit work must have been supervised by an individual eligible to sign audit reports as per the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. They must hold an audit qualification themselves or be eligible to sign audit reports in accordance with the law of a country where the law and practice with respect to the audit of accounts has been assessed as similar to that in the United Kingdom, these countries can be found **here**. Please refer to the AQ application form and notes for further information on Authorised Individuals.

#### b) ICAEW Authorised Training Employers

All of your audit work experience must have been obtained at an ICAEW Authorised Training Employer.

Please read the [Audit Qualification regulations](#) for further information on eligibility for the AQ.

#### **c) UK Audit Registered Firms**

The audit experience must be gained under the supervision of an individual who holds a UK audit qualification or be eligible to sign audit reports in accordance with the law of a country where the audit work has been deemed by the FRC as comparable to that of the UK and must be an ICAEW ATE. Please note that in order to recognise the 120 days' statutory audit experience within the firm it must be gained either within the UK, or [within a country or territory outside the United Kingdom](#) which has been approved as meeting the requirements of the UK Companies Act.

#### **d) In accordance with ICAEW regulations**

ICAEW awards the audit qualification based on:

- Criteria specified in [Schedule 11 of the Companies Act 2006](#);
- The Financial Reporting Council's interpretation of the Companies Act;
- The Audit Qualification regulations

## **WHICH FORM?**

As part of the Evolved ACA – from 1 July 2013 – students must use the online training file to complete their training records, and this includes a log for audit experience. The online training file is also available to students who were already in a training agreement on 1 July 2013.

Students, who completed their training agreement prior to July 2013, must continue to document their audit experience on the application form supplied to them.

Members and any post qualification experience should be documented on the paper application form - [AQ Application](#)

The detail of the audit experience that needs to be documented in your application for the AQ remains the same throughout the online training file and both the old and new forms.

## **COMPLETING THE PAPER FORMS**

In order for your AQ Application to be processed efficiently, it is important that you complete ALL relevant sections of the form.

It is important that you use block capitals for completing the form for ease of processing. The application may be returned or delayed if the information provided in this section is illegible.

### **Splitting pre and post qualification experience**

Applicants may use UK statutory audit experience from any point during their period of training or membership.

Pre-membership experience can be counted for the period of your training agreement and a period of 12 months immediately following it. After which any experience must be after you have been admitted to membership.

*Post July 2013 experience cited during training will be captured online, whilst post qualification experience will be documented on the manual form.*

*If you are using the form, please ensure that you split experience gained since qualification accordingly and please mark as appropriate on the form whether you are citing any pre-qualification experience or post qualification experience.*

## Office details

You must complete the details for the office in which you received your experience.

In order for your audit experience to be considered:

- the office will need to have been authorised to train ICAEW students at the time of the experience
- the experience will need to have been under the supervision of an appropriately qualified individual

If you are unsure as to your ICAEW firm number, which will be prefixed L00/X00, please ask the ICAEW approved Qualified Person Responsible for Training (QPRT) at your office; your application cannot be processed without this.

I am declaring pre-membership experience:		<input type="radio"/> YES (complete the section below)	<input type="radio"/> NO (go to membership)
Employer name	<input type="text"/>	ICAEW training employer number (ie. L00 or X00)	<input type="text"/>
Employer address	<input type="text"/>		Postcode/zipcode <input type="text"/>
Date from	<input type="text" value="DD MM YYYY"/>	Date to	<input type="text" value="DD MM YYYY"/>
		Was this office a registered auditor between these dates?	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO

If you worked in multiple offices over this time, please record this information in the additional office section.

## Audit definitions

It is important that you read these definitions carefully as to what is considered 'audit' work. These definitions are as described in the Companies Act and have been further clarified by the FRC who are charged with ensuring that all bodies in the UK awarding the recognised qualification (the Audit Qualification) adhere to Companies Act requirements.

UK statutory audit work	<p>Statutory audit work of UK companies and UK Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs).</p> <p>Where the FRC agree the law and practice, of a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, with respect to the audit of company accounts is similar to that in the UK.</p> <p>Currently experience as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ireland from 1 October 1991</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Germany from 11 October 2000</li> <li>• Cyprus, Netherlands, and Luxembourg from 7 May 2010</li> <li>• Crown Dependencies from 4 April 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only market traded companies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• United States from 16 January 2024</li> <li>• Switzerland from 22 October 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Swiss law recognises two different types of audit: ordinary audit and limited audit.</li> <li>○ Only ordinary audit can be claimed.</li> <li>○ Swiss limited audit work cannot be counted towards the AQ.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Other audit work	<p>The ISA audit of other entities (whether in the UK or not) that are not companies/LLPs, and the auditors are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ICAEW Authorised Training Employer (ATE);</li> <li>• Appropriately qualified in an approved territory.</li> </ul> <p>Work completed under Solicitors Accounts Rules prior to 1 May 2025.</p>
Experience gained outside of primary ATE	Any experience gained whilst on secondment to another Authorised Training Employer during your training agreement (not internal employer transfers).

### **Experience Gained Outside of the Primary Registered Authorised Training Employer (ATE)**

If your experience was gained outside of the primary registered ATE, but was still in an ICAEW ATE, we may be able to consider the experience in counting towards the AQ. These days should be separated out on the form appropriately and a covering letter supplied to ICAEW on submission of your form providing details of the secondment.

If you were seconded to an office that is not an ICAEW ATE the ICAEW is unable to recognise any statutory audit work or work similar to statutory audit work undertaken as eligible towards the audit qualification.

### **Experience Gained Outside of the UK**

There are circumstances where it may be possible to count company audit work undertaken outside of the UK. The Companies Act allows for the recognition of some overseas statutory audit work where it appears that the law and practice, of a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, with respect to the audit of company accounts is similar to that in the United Kingdom.

The FRC has approved audit experience of companies registered in the following countries as similar to that in the United Kingdom.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
Republic of Ireland	1 Oct 1991
Germany	11 October 2000
Republic of Cyprus	7 May 2010
Luxembourg	7 May 2010
The Netherlands	7 May 2010
United States	16 January 2024

Appropriate audit experience gained from the approval date within these countries may therefore count towards the 120 statutory audit days required for the AQ. Please note that this audit experience must also have been gained under a firm of registered auditors and within an ICAEW ATE.

### **Audit experience within the Crown Dependencies**

The UK Financial Reporting Council has assessed audit work in the Crown Dependencies and has concluded that Crown Dependency audit experience may be cited as qualifying audit experience for the UK audit qualification with ICAEW as long as the experience was gained:

- Within an ICAEW ATE
- Within a UK registered auditor
- Under the supervision of a 'responsible individual'
- On the audit of 'market traded companies'
- On or after 4 April 2011

ICAEW cannot accept work experience which does not meet the above requirements.

### **Audit experience on Swiss companies**

The UK Financial Reporting Council has concluded that experience on the Ordinary audit of companies registered in Switzerland gained on or after 22 October 2024 may be included as statutory audit work for the purpose of the UK audit qualification.

Swiss law recognises two different types of audit: ordinary audit and limited audit. Swiss law mandates ordinary audit for public interest entities and for companies that exceed two of the following size thresholds for two consecutive years:

1. CHF 20 million in total assets;
2. CHF 40 million in turnover;
3. 250 full-time jobs on average per year.

It is the law and practice relating to ordinary audit that FRC has determined is similar to that in the United Kingdom.

For the purposes of the award of a UK audit qualification, Swiss limited audit work cannot count as statutory audit work or as other audit work but can count towards the three years' practical experience requirement.

### **Documenting your audit days**

The detail of the form will need to be completed by both you, your ICAEW approved Qualified Person Responsible for Training (QPRT) and, where relevant, Counsellor.

As the AQ applicant you are responsible for completing:

1. Start and End Date for six-month period
2. UK statutory audit work (in days)
3. 'Other' audit work (in days)
4. Experience gained outside of primary registered office

**DO NOT COMPLETE THE COLUMNS SPECIFIED FOR COMPLETION BY YOUR QPRT.**

Each six-month period is numbered (1 to 10), and these numbers correspond to the rows within the “Accompanying Narrative” section on the subsequent pages.

The default day is 7 hours duration.

## Documenting your accompanying audit narrative

Please complete the columns:

### Nature of Audit Work

Add to this box the size and industry type of the entity audited. If multiple audits were undertaken, please list all information in the same box.

### Name of Entities Audited

Add to this box the name of the entity(ies) audited. If multiple audits were undertaken, please list the names of these consequentially in the same box.

### Audit Experience and Development

You need to demonstrate over the full period of the audit log that you have received a variety of audit experience and that you have moved onto more complex areas. By the time you submit your AQ application, you would be expected to have moved into a 'field managing' type role.

When completing each six-month period, consider your audit development and your development from previous periods and audits. Identify what audit tasks were performed and what new audit experiences were achieved.

Demonstrate how your development has impacted on work performance, knowledge, and professional development.

You do not need to repeat similar information, as repetition adds little to the application although the time spent continues to count.

The information required to support the days claimed (ie the detailed assignment details) can be provided as an attachment, providing it covers all the areas as listed on the form.



## Approval of each period's audit experience

As each period is completed, pass the form to the appropriately authorised individual – ie your Counsellor, QPRT or Deputy QPRT for appropriate feedback and confirmation of the experience documented in the period. They will need to complete the following sections:

### Audit Narrative

Feedback can be provided by your Counsellor or QPRT.

1. Feedback narrative for the period – How well was this work completed?
2. Name
3. ICAEW number
4. Date

Your QPRT or Deputy QPRT will need to check that they are happy with the information already provided the form, and will then need to complete the following sections:

### Audit days

1. Name of QPRT
2. Signature of QPRT
3. Completed competently
4. ICAEW number of QPRT
5. Date

The authorised individual who signs off both the days and narrative, must hold the AQ.

If the QPRT was not the individual who directly supervised your training, they will need to confirm this with the appropriate individual prior to completion.

Please ensure that your forms have been signed by the appropriate individual. Any forms signed by an unauthorised individual will be returned which may result in a delay in your award.

## Declaration and submission to ICAEW

Please read the declaration section carefully and ensure you have completed all of the relevant sections accurately before signing and dating the declaration.

DECLARATION	
<p>By signing and completing this application for the UK Audit Qualification you are declaring the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The information provided is accurate.</li><li>• The pre-membership experience in UK Statutory Audit Work<sup>1</sup> was gained:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) in an ICAEW authorised training office;</li><li>(b) in a registered auditor; and</li><li>(c) during the 12-month period immediately following the end of your training.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The membership experience in UK Statutory Audit Work<sup>1</sup> was gained:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) in an ICAEW authorised training office;</li><li>(b) in a registered auditor; and</li><li>(c) while in ICAEW membership.</li></ul></li><li>• You have provided details of all the offices in which your experience cited in this application was gained.</li><li>• You fully understand and are compliant with ICAEW CPD regulations, specifically in the area of audit.</li><li>• You have read the accompanying guidelines fully.</li><li>• You understand that the Audit Qualification alone does not enable you to sign audit reports.</li></ul>
Signature <input type="text"/>	Date <input type="text" value="DD MM YYYY"/>

Please note that all audit experience should have been documented with feedback and approval from the authorised individual and completed on a timely basis.

Any experience gained during your training agreement must be submitted to ICAEW within six months following the end of your ACA Training Agreement.

It is no longer permissible to construct records retrospectively.

There is no charge for the AQ and, once granted, the AQ remains yours indefinitely.

Should you have problems with completing the application, and require additional support in completing the form, please contact our post qualifications team on +44 (0) 1908 248 250 or at [aq@icaew.com](mailto:aq@icaew.com)

## COMPLETING THE ONLINE TRAINING FILE

The online training file requires the same information as the paper form. It is merely presented electronically, in a more intuitive manner.

If you have any specific queries regarding the completion of the online training file refer to the guidance within the file as well as the guidance provided above for the manual form.

The online file automatically picks up your training agreement dates and the appropriately authorised individuals that may review, provide feedback, and approve your audit experience.

Please note if you have not completed enough audit experience at the end of your training agreement any experience that has been gained should still be logged, approved, and submitted to us. This experience will then be reviewed and banked, so that it can be counted towards your total AQ experience.

Any experience not approved and submitted within six months of the end of your training agreement cannot be counted in a future application for the AQ.

You may continue to gain experience after you have qualified; this should be documented on the paper AQ form.