

ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROFESSION



CAPA's commitment to the public interest leads it to advocate the adoption of, and compliance with, professional values throughout the accounting sector. Professional accountancy organisations (PAOs) can have a fundamental role to play in considering whether and how accounting technicians (ATs) might be brought into a framework embodying the values and quality requirements already core to the accountancy profession.

The publication, *Accounting Technicians – Exploring Opportunities for the Profession*, aims to encourage PAOs to consider the importance of ATs in the accounting sector, and whether and how they might create, support, partner, liaise with, or otherwise assist with developing and/or strengthening an AT (or equivalent) cohort within their country.

WHO SHOULD USE THE PUBLICATION?

This publication is for PAOs who want to have a better understanding of:

- The AT sector, the services it provides and the benefits it brings
- The various operating models and programs that exist
- Potential opportunities for PAOs, including either developing or sustaining the AT sector

Other stakeholders, including development partners who have regularly advocated the need for an established AT sector, are also encouraged to use this publication.

WHERE TO OBTAIN THE PUBLICATION?

Accounting Technicians – Exploring Opportunities for the Profession is available on the CAPA website (www.capa.com.my) in electronic format and can be downloaded at no charge. Printed copies can be requested from the CAPA Secretariat.

WHAT IS IN THE PUBLICATION?

The publication sets out important terminology definitions, followed by 'why', 'what' and 'how' sections.

WHY: The Case for Considering the Topic of ATs

Whatever their stage of economic development, all countries, across all sectors, have a workforce supporting the preparation of financial information at an operational level. Timely, credible and reliable financial information preparation is fundamental to successful investment, to effective governance and to the quality of service delivery both by the AT workforce and by the more senior, higher-qualified professional accountants that rely on it. ATs play an important and significant role at the forefront of the accounting supply chain.

This is why CAPA wishes to encourage PAOs to consider the importance of ATs in the accounting sector. Training and professionalising this workforce is not just about benefiting the individuals by opening up access to professional qualifications, nor about benefiting the organisations that will benefit from it. More importantly, it is about benefiting national and regional economies, businesses and governments, and ultimately benefiting the public interest.

HOW: The Case Studies

The organisational arrangements and programs from eleven jurisdictions (nine from Asia Pacific) are described, which show the wide diversity of operating models and AT or similar programs.

Any PAO seeking to explore opportunities further will need to consider the approaches in the context of their own national market and regulatory structures, along with their current stage of development and access to resources.

HOW – THE CASE STUDIES	
PHILIPPINES	
<p>The National Institute of Accounting Technicians (NIAT) is a professional AT member organisation in an ASEAN lower-middle income economy and is overseen by the Commission on Higher Education. The national PAO, the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), is a member of IFAC, CAPA and AICPA. NIAT and PICPA do not have a formal working relationship and NIAT is overseen by the Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Accountancy.</p> <p>Current Arrangements: NIAT has developed an industry partnership program. The qualification is a vocational course focusing on skills such as bookkeeping, accounts management, payroll and taxation. There are membership agreements with a number of business organisations.</p> <p>Commentary: NIAT is a substantial organisation recognised within the country's educational framework, and has high student and member numbers. Demand for ATs is high due to the growth of BPO in the Philippines.</p>	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS (NIAT)
AWARDED BODY	NIAT
LEGAL STRUCTURE	A legal independent membership organisation
SPONSORS	NIAT
FINANCED MEMBERS	No
INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK	Yes – It is based on the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) approved BSC Accounting program which provides a 30% benchmark
BENCHMARKED TO BSC/GLEE	Yes – are considering
STUDENT NUMBERS	Approximate 50,000
MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS	20,000
PROGRAM ARRANGEMENT	
WELFARE CREDIT	CHED approved. Award BSc degree in Accounting graduates are exempted from Part 1 & 2 examinations
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING	Exemptions are available to those holding relevant qualifications from recognised universities and accredited providers, relative to students enrolling to NIAT within 10 years of obtaining these qualifications.

WHAT: The Design and Implementation Considerations

In considering what an AT-styled organisation and program may look like, the publication explains:

Four Alternative Organisational Arrangements and Structures

1. A separate organisation sponsored by a national PAO, as can be found, for example, in Sri Lanka or South Africa.
2. A program embedded within a national PAO, as can be found, for example, in Canada or New Zealand.
3. An organisation established independently of any national PAO, such as in China, Japan or the Philippines.
4. An arrangement whereby the PAO or AT member organisation partners with others offering an AT program, as occurs in Cambodia and Singapore.

In the light of experience and as organisations mature, the research shows the organisational arrangements and programs also evolve.

Nine Common Characteristics and Attributes of an AT Program



These characteristics, all of which drive towards establishing a high-quality program, are discussed in detail in the publication.

The Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA) is recognised by the global accountancy profession, represented by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), as a regional organisation representing national PAOs in Asia Pacific. CAPA's mission is to develop, coordinate and advance the accountancy profession in the region by, inter alia, contributing to the formation and growth of sustainable accountancy organisations.

This guide is also endorsed and recommended by IFAC to all existing and aspiring PAOs around the world.

