

## Career Profile: Accountant

In a company, the accountant is at the centre of all financial activities. The accountant's main responsibility is to analyse and evaluate financial information and to effectively communicate the results to senior management to enable them to make good business decisions.

Chartered accountants are most in demand because of their specialised and rigorous training. Accounting graduates with lower qualifications will probably work as accounting officers and will not usually rise to the same levels of seniority.

Accountants can specialize in any one of the following fields of accountancy: auditing, pure accounting, taxation, legal accounting, financial accounting, management accounting, computer accounting, cost and management accounting.

## Education Requirements

### National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in accounting students are advised to select English and Mathematics and to add to this a selection from the designated subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Accountants can qualify at different levels and qualifications are offered at both universities and universities of technology. In addition, there are a number of institutions and associations that insist on practical training in conjunction with the theoretical knowledge.

### Bachelor Degree

A three year degree programme that focuses on developing knowledge and skills for entry into careers in accounting.

**BCom (Hons) in Accounting offered at:**

- [North-West University](http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/ekon/srw/index_e.html)<sup>1</sup> (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences - Potchefstroom Campus)
- [University of Johannesburg](http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=staging.uj.ac.za/accounting)<sup>2</sup> (Department of Accountancy)
- [University of Pretoria](http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=42)<sup>3</sup> (Department of Accounting)
- [University of the Witwatersrand](http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=42)<sup>4</sup> (School of Accountancy)

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/ekon/srw/index\\_e.html](http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/ekon/srw/index_e.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=staging.uj.ac.za/accounting>

<sup>3</sup> <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=42>

- [University of Venda](#)<sup>5</sup> (Department of Accounting and Auditing)
- [UNISA](#)<sup>6</sup> (College of Economic and Management Sciences)

Students who prefer a more practical approach can enrol for programmes to qualify for accountancy at BTech and Diploma levels. Specializations are offered in these programmes.

## National Diploma / BTech

The National Diploma is a three year course which includes guided practical experience. The diploma is a pre-requisite for admission to a Bachelor of Technology - BTech

Bachelor of Technology BTech is offered at:

- [Tshwane University of Technology](#)<sup>7</sup> (Departments of the Faculty of Economics and Finance)
- [University of Johannesburg](#)<sup>8</sup> (Department of Accountancy)
- [UNISA](#) (College of Economic and Management Sciences)
- [Vaal University of Technology](#)<sup>9</sup> (Faculty of Management Sciences)

## Admission requirements

As admission requirements vary from one institution to another, find out what the specific requirements are by checking on the website and contacting the university if you have any queries.

## Possible Employers

- Companies and organizations in commerce and all kinds of industries.
- Registered firms of practising chartered accountants.
- Public sector institutions.
- Higher education institutions such as universities and universities of technology.

## Find out more

Find out more about accounting, accounting bursaries and jobs:

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<sup>4</sup> <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/CLM/Accountancy/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.univen.ac.za/management\\_sciences/dep\\_manage\\_account\\_audit.html](http://www.univen.ac.za/management_sciences/dep_manage_account_audit.html)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=32>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.tut.ac.za/Students/facultiesdepartments/EconomicsFinance/departments/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=staging.uj.ac.za/accounting>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.vut.ac.za/metadot/index.pl?id=47811>

- [The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants](#)<sup>10</sup> provides information on the routes for becoming a professional chartered accountant via Training within Professional Practice (TIPPs) or Training outside Professional Practice (TOPPs)
- [The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants](#)<sup>11</sup> (ACCA) is a global professional accountancy body.
- [SAICA](#)<sup>12</sup> continues actively to promote the TOPP (Training Outside Public Practice) programme to produce CAs(SA) in the numbers required to support the South African economy, particularly in commerce and industry.
- [UNISA](#)<sup>13</sup> provides some useful information on accounting and how to proceed.
- [South African Institute of Secretaries and Administrators](#)<sup>14</sup> is a useful website.
- The [Institute of Commercial and Financial Accountants of Southern Africa](#)<sup>15</sup> - Members are qualified to accept appointments as accounting officers in close corporations.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.saica.co.za/Default.asp>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.acca.org.za/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.saica.co.za/Default.asp>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=20345>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.icsa.co.za/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cfa-sa.co.za/>

## Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this occupation. The questions are based on interests, characteristics and values typical of people who work as accountants.

Quiz	Yes	No
Do you have a strong aptitude for mathematics?		
Are you able to make sound judgements?		
Are you able to analyze, compare and interpret facts and figures quickly and accurately?		
Are you good at solving problems?		
Do you communicate your ideas clearly to others, orally and in writing?		
Do you listen carefully to others?		
Are you a good organiser who pays attention to detail?		
Are you able to work with all kinds of people?		
Are you able to cope with stress?		
Would you say that you have integrity and are prepared to maintain high standards?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is an occupation to consider.