



Guide to Accounting Careers



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DISCLAIMER

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Introduction

Turn Your Passion Into a Career

Do you want to develop the newest social media platform? Organise live events and music festivals? Or maybe you want to change the world through your own not-for-profit? No matter how niche your passion is, you can turn it into a profession through a career in accounting.

“Accounting is the language of business.”

Behind every brand you love and every business you use, there's a financial expert – an accountant – helping to make it successful. Accounting is one of the most versatile careers out there, opening the doors to just about any industry you're interested in, and this is especially true for Chartered Accountants.

Accountants are professionals who manage financial records and statements and who provide financial advice to individuals and businesses. They work in a variety of fields like public accounting, corporate finance, and government, or they can be self-employed.

Read on to learn more about the exciting possibilities a career in accounting offers!



Introduction

The Future of Accounting

Growth and demand

Just like the law needs lawyers, healthcare depends on doctors, and education is guided by teachers, local global economies hinge on accountants to help them grow and prosper.

Accountants play a crucial role in the global economy by ensuring the efficient allocation of resources, promoting financial transparency, and fostering trust in financial markets. They help businesses make smart financial decisions, maintain accurate financial records, and adhere to international accounting standards, contributing to economic stability and growth on a worldwide scale. Accountants support governments, organisations, and individuals to navigate complex financial landscapes; is essential for sustainable global economic development.

An accounting career offers job security and stability, even as the role continues to evolve. There is consistently high demand for skilled accounting professionals with the Australian [Jobs and Skills Atlas](#) showing that demand for accountants in Australia skyrocketed from 2000 vacancies in July 2020 to 5000 in June 2023.

An accounting qualification also opens doors to a multitude of roles beyond traditional accounting jobs such as managing businesses, contributing to strategic decisions, working in various finance positions, and leading teams.

Technology advances

While accountants of the past focused on recording and summarising financial information, today's accountants harness automation and AI to streamline routine tasks. This shift is improving efficiency and allowing accountants to focus on the in-depth analysis and strategic thinking that leads businesses toward success in an increasingly data-driven world.

Sustainability

As businesses evolve, so do the roles of accountants. Emerging growth areas, such as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting have created demand for accountants with specialised skills. Companies are increasingly focusing on sustainability, and accountants play a pivotal role in helping businesses report on their environmental and social impacts.

Will an Accounting Career Suit Me?

Strengths and Interests

Accountants share strengths and interests that drive their success and contribute to their job satisfaction. How do your unique qualities align?



Make decisions about financial data to advise on business strategies.



Influence financial decisions by providing valuable insights from their analysis.



Handle sensitive financial data so must be **trustworthy** and **honest**.



Have a deep understanding of business because of their **commercial awareness**.



Pay close **attention to detail** which is essential in calculations, reports, and audits.



Are excellent **communicators** and **negotiators**.



Are **big picture thinkers** who consider the broader impact of decisions.

Will an Accounting Career Suit Me?

School Subjects

If you like these school subjects, you may also enjoy studying accounting after school. While many accounting degrees don't have prerequisites, some do, so check entry requirements with the Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC) or institution you're applying to. Even if the courses you want to study don't have prerequisites, choosing these subjects in your senior years will help set you up for success by providing a strong foundation for your accounting degree.



Accounting

for a direct link to the knowledge of the role.



Business & Enterprise Studies

for understanding the business world.



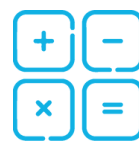
Economics

for understanding & analysing financial trends.



English

for effective communication & presentations.

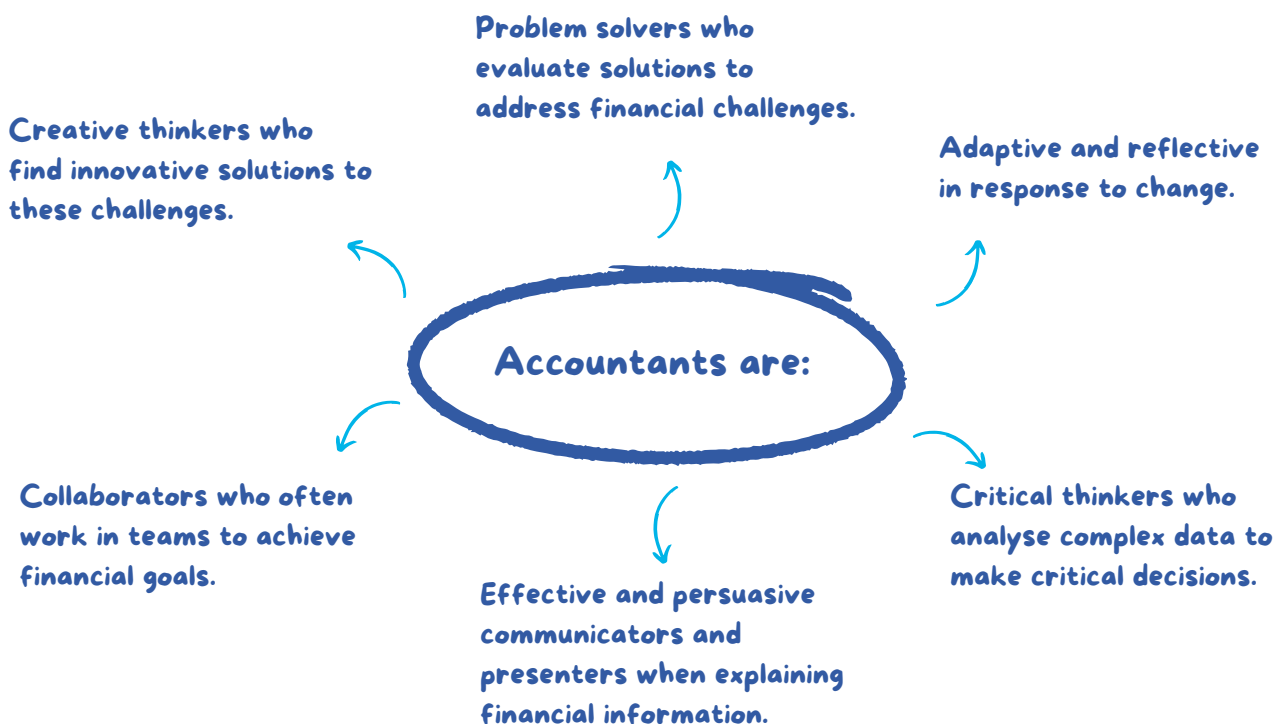


Mathematics

for financial calculations & analyses.

Enterprise Skills

These skills play a key role in accountants' success. How developed are yours?



Life as an Accountant

Advantages of an Accounting Career

An accounting career opens doors to a world of opportunities and epic adventures. If you're seeking global experiences, a dynamic lifestyle, influence, and you thrive on challenges, accounting could be your ticket to a fulfilling and impactful profession.

As an accountant, you'll get to:

- ✓ **Pursue your passions, whether you're into tech, entertainment, or environmental sustainability, accountants have a role.**
- ✓ **Enjoy strong earning potential and lead the lifestyle you want.**
- ✓ **Many CEOs have an accounting background; so, you can climb the ladder in an accounting career.**
- ✓ **Chartered Accountants hold special status making them highly regarded and respected – see what it means to be a Chartered Accountant on [p.17](#).**
- ✓ **Develop transferable skills that transcend industries to serve you well in any career change you make.**

Work-Life Balance

Accounting careers offer flexibility through full-time, part-time, and contract employment options.

While some accountants work a typical Monday-to-Friday 9-to-5 week, others have variety and flexibility specific to their industry, employer, and role. During busy periods accountants may put in extra hours to meet deadlines and client needs.



Life as an Accountant

Work Settings

Accountants work in environments that can include the comfort of their office, the great outdoors of a client's farm, and cozy meetings in cafes. Flexibility may also be an option with hybrid or remote arrangements on offer. While a significant part of the role involves connecting with colleagues and building client relationships, and accountants are found in a range of settings such as:

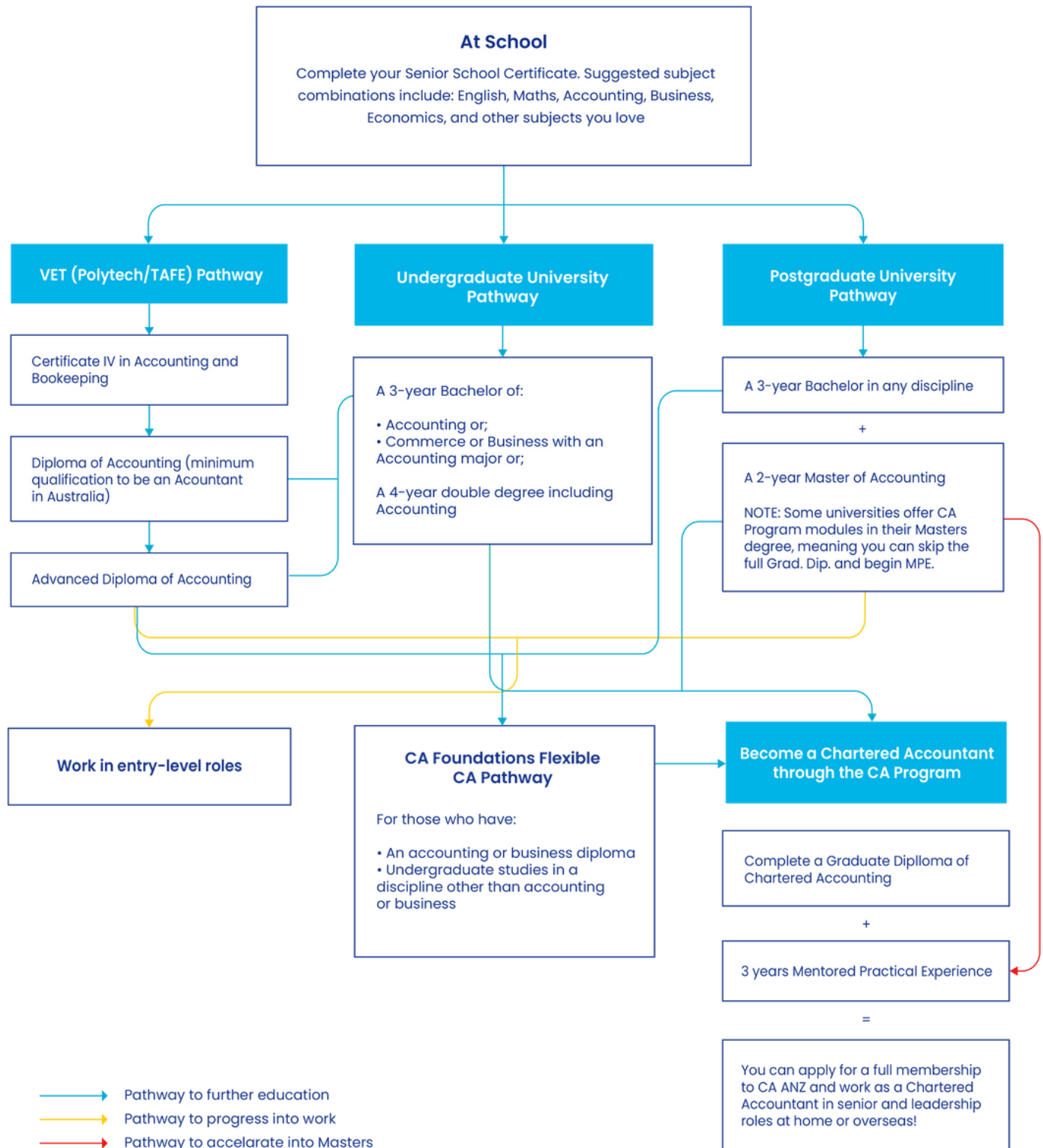
Corporate offices ranging from small businesses to multinational enterprises.	Government organisations at federal, state, or local levels.	Public accounting firms across many industries, with a wide range of clients.	Non-profit organisations contributing to causes that align with their values.
Educational institutions such as university, college, and school administrative departments.	Consulting firms specialising in financial advisory, mergers and acquisitions, or forensic accounting.	Self-employment offering their services as independent consultants or freelancers.	Community organisations , not-for-profits, and charities to improve financial wellbeing.

Income

Accounting offers competitive salary ranges, making it an attractive career choice. Income potential varies based on factors such as specialisation, experience, and location. The [Hays Salary Guide FY23/24](#) reports the average income for a graduate accountant in Australia and New Zealand ranges from \$60,000 – \$98,000; well above the average of \$76,000 for graduates across occupations. As accountants gain experience and expertise, they see an increase in their earning potential which surpasses that of many other professionals.



Pathways to Accounting



Pathways to Accounting

What Should I Look for in a Course?

All courses are the same, right? Wrong! Each institution has its own specialty and focus so it's important to find the right fit for you. Here are some things to look for:

01 **Ensure your course is accredited so you can work as an accountant after graduating. Check the annual list of [CA ANZ accredited courses](#).**

02 **Accredited courses prepare you with skills and knowledge in the following areas. Check the subject descriptions at the institutions you're considering to make sure you want to commit to studying them:**

- Accounting Systems and Processes
- Financial Accounting and Reporting
- Audit and Assurance
- Business Law
- Economics
- Finance and Financial Management
- Management Accounting
- Quantitative Methods
- Tax
- Information and Communication Technology
- Business Acumen

03 **Institutions that have industry partnerships with organisations that appeal to you and check what sort of workplace learning opportunities, like internships, they offer. Getting hands-on experience in an industry or business you're interested in during your course will help give you a competitive edge when it comes to job-hunting!**

04 **Open days and information sessions where you can speak to staff and students about their experiences and ask questions. This will help you get a real sense of what it would be like to study at the institution.**

Pathways to Accounting

Accounting Cadetships

Accounting Cadetships are a great way to earn while you learn. They are entry-level roles advertised in the same ways as other job vacancies. Advertisements may specify that they are looking for a recent school-leaver, or a student beginning a Diploma of Accounting or an Accounting undergraduate degree.

Cadetships offer:

- Paid employment.
- Study and career support.
- Flexible study arrangements; for example, 3-4 days of work and 1 day of study.
- Mentoring from qualified accountants or Chartered Accountants.
- Hands-on industry experience so you can put what you're learning in your course into practise and get ahead of your peers.
- In some cases, the opportunity to progress within the organisation.

Tip! Begin looking for a cadetship from the middle of Year 12, as some require you to apply before you finish school. Speak to your school's Career Practitioner about your interest, check your careers newsletter for opportunities, search for 'accounting cadetship' on any major job-search site, and visit the 'careers' section of major accountancy firms to find advertisements.



What Kind of Accountant Can I Be?

Kinds of Accountants

An accounting career isn't one-size-fits-all. You can specialise in areas aligned with your interests to create a tailor-made career path. The following pages outline some of the different kinds of accounting you could get into.

Average salaries are from the [Hays Salary Guide FY23/24](#).

Agricultural Accountant “Financial Harvester”

Agricultural accountants play a crucial role for farmers. They manage the financial needs of agricultural businesses including tax, cash flow, and estate planning and they provide strategic and general advice.

Agricultural accountants work:

- On their own farms.
- In accounting firms, at commercial banks, and consultancy agencies.
- In any type of agricultural business.

Average salary starting from:

- \$100,000



Business Advisory Accountant “Professional Influencer”

Business advisory accountants analyse the problems and potential risks that businesses are facing. They use the latest technology and real-time data to help them become more efficient at managing business needs. They also have opportunities to cross-skill to become a business and technology advisor.

Business advisory accountants work:

- At small to large accounting firms.

Average salary starting from:

- \$71,000



What Kind of Accountant Can I Be?

Auditor “Financial Sleuth”

An auditor checks an organisation’s financial reports to make sure they are accurate and correctly prepared. They can work within a particular organisation or at a specialist auditing firm.

Audit accountants work at:

- Global charities.
- Local businesses.
- Financial services organisations.
- Multinational consumer companies.
- Accounting firms or specialist firms of all sizes.

Average salary starting from:

- \$82,000



Corporate Accountant “Business Trailblazer”

The role of a corporate accountant can vary depending on the needs and model of the business they’re supporting. Their role can range from forecasting and reporting to analysis.

Corporate accountants work at:

- Government organisations.
- Not-for-profit organisations.
- Public and private companies.

Average salary starting from:

- \$110,000



What Kind of Accountant Can I Be?

Corporate Finance Accountant “Money Master”

Corporate finance accountants focus on how to raise and allocate finances so business can be ready for investment opportunities as they arise. This includes investment loans, financial backing, and restructuring.

Corporate finance accountants work at:

- Banks.
- Accounting firms.
- Large corporate organisations.

Average salary starting from:

- \$71,000



Cybersecurity Analyst “Cyber Defender”

Cybersecurity analyst accountants ensure that businesses protect sensitive data and that systems are maintained and updated. They also provide ongoing monitoring and investigation in situations where breaches may have occurred.

Cybersecurity analyst accountants work at:

- Banks.
- Accounting firms.
- Large corporate organisations.

Average salary starting from:

- \$120,000



What Kind of Accountant Can I Be?

Environmental Accountant “Climate Change Warrior”

Environmental accountants help calculate the impact business decisions will have on the environment. They may also collect data on the impact, such as carbon emissions or biodiversity loss, for external reporting to investors and regulators.

Environmental accountants work at:

- Engineering firms.
- Large corporations.
- Government organisations.
- Accounting and consulting firms.

Average salary starting from:

- \$71,000



Forensic Accountant “Crime Fighter”

Forensic accountants investigate fraud and financial issues and help lawyers to prosecute criminals who fund illegal activities. They are trained to delve into the figures to spot details and discrepancies that identify criminal actions.

Forensic accountants work at:

- Legal firms and insurance companies.
- Government and law enforcement organisations.
- Specialist accounting firms.

Average salary starting from:

- \$95,000



What Kind of Accountant Can I Be?

Management Consultant “Business Guru”

Management consulting accountants drive business performance by solving problems and finding new and improved ways of doing things. They work in teams analysing and reporting on business strategy, structure, management, and operations.

Management consulting accountants work at:

- Specialist firms or consultancies with clients including large corporate or government organisations.
- They may also use their skills to own their business as an entrepreneur.

Average salary starting from:

- \$92,000



Taxation Accountant “Number Ninja”

Taxation accountants help businesses interpret and understand tax laws to ensure they meet their legal obligations. This includes providing advice on operational matters and strategic business decisions such as asset acquisitions.

Taxation accountants work at:

- Small and large accounting firms.
- Their own businesses.

Average salary starting from:

- \$71,000



Chartered Accountants

What Does It Mean to Be a Chartered Accountant?

“All Chartered Accountants are accountants, but not all accountants are Chartered Accountants.”

While the minimum requirement to practice as an accountant typically ranges from a Diploma to a Bachelor of Accounting qualification, a Chartered Accountant is one who has achieved a higher level of expertise and is accredited by a professional body. They have completed an extra qualification and have more in-depth knowledge and skills in areas like auditing, taxation, and analysis. Their status is internationally recognised, making their qualifications highly desirable and portable.

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) is the professional body for Chartered Accountants in both countries and they are our partner for this guide. They developed the Chartered Accountants Program and are the education provider for accountants who want to become Chartered Accountants. As an education provider, they offer unique benefits like FEE-HELP student loans and TEQSA accreditation. As part of the Global Accounting Alliance (GAA), CA ANZ connects you to a network of 1.8 million professionals in 180 countries, ensuring your qualifications are globally recognised for a thriving international career.



Get Involved

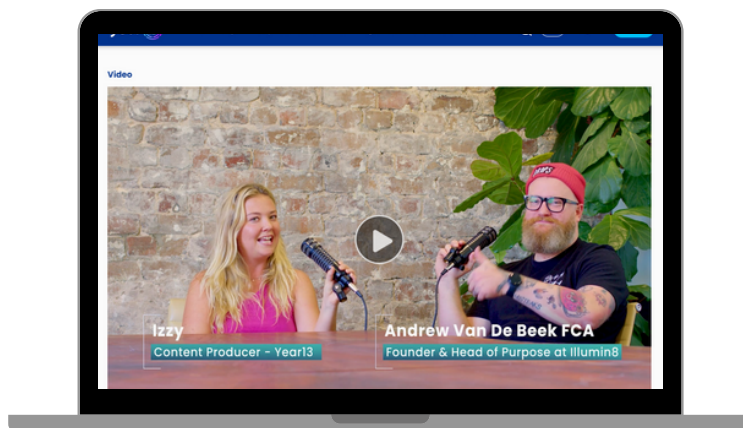
Business Class

Discover how accountants use their strategic knowhow, business skills, and cutting-edge technology to help their customers achieve their goals, to see things from a different angle, and to even change the world in the [Year13 X CA ANZ Business Class Academy!](#)



Turn Your Passion Into A Career

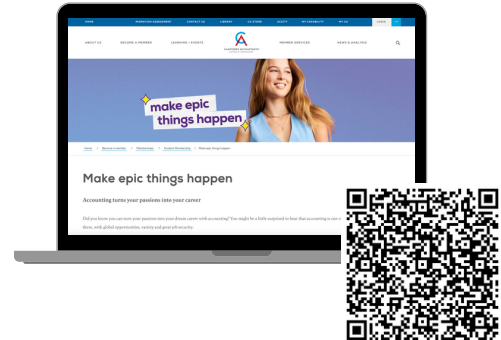
Watch Izzy and Andrew, Founder of Illumin8 and a Chartered Accountant, discuss how and why accounting can change lives for the better. This short webinar is part of the 2023 Year13 Expo where you can find more great information about becoming a Chartered Accountant.



Get Involved

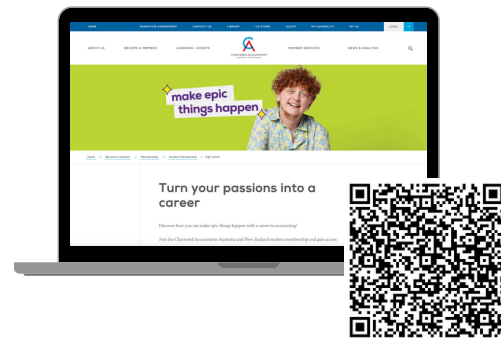
Make Epic Things Happen

Visit the [CA ANZ Epic Futures page](#) for inspiring resources that show you the endless possibilities with a career in accounting. Find courses, learn about accounting specialisations, the benefits of becoming a Chartered Accountant, and the pathways that can get you there.



Become a Difference Maker

Take your first step to becoming a difference maker and a successful career by [signing up](#) to access internships, networking events, and monthly newsletters tailored for you!



Other tips to help you find the area of accounting you're passionate about:

- Explore your interests, learn about the businesses/brands in the industries you're passionate about.
- Get experience working in those businesses/brands by approaching local businesses for work experience opportunities.
- See if your school or local area have any entrepreneurial programs to give you a taste of the business world.

"Through these experiences, you'll discover that accounting is at the heart of every business."

Follow CA ANZ on Social Media

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