

Minds and hearts
How the profession is promoting wellbeing and good mental health

Levelling up
Make sure you're well prepared for the step up to Professional Level

Artificial ethics
The application of new technologies raises some big ethical questions

Food exploration
A gift for the new year - global food destinations that cannot be missed

vital

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OUT

OF

THE

SHADOWS

Co-chairs of the Future Fraud Professionals Network discuss how they're taking on the scourge of fraud





Sitting the Case Study exam?

Classroom & Online tuition

with Neil Russell FCA

ex-ICAEW Examiner and experienced tutor

6 weeks of tuition using the live AI



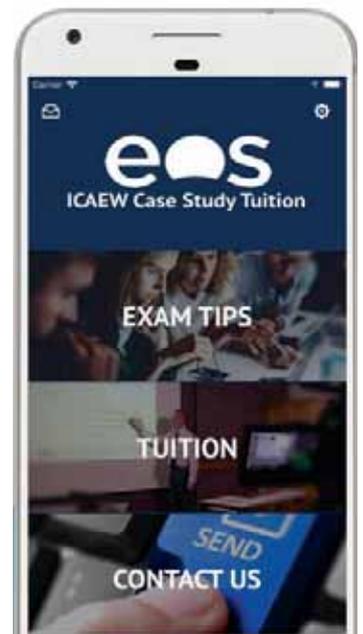
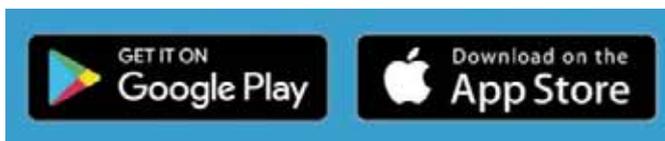
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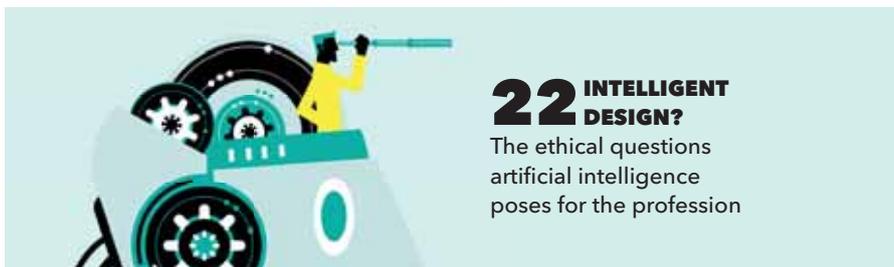
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Welcome

to the December edition of *Vital* and, as this is the last edition of the year, we've packed a lot in



For many this is the time of year for family, food and festivity. So it's forgivable to forget that some may be going through difficult times. As always, the Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association (CABA) is there to provide support and advice. With this in mind, we've included a special report on what the profession and financial services are doing to encourage best practice around wellbeing and to support those who may be suffering from mental ill health.

While this important aspect of the profession is rightly in the spotlight, we wanted to explore another, often overlooked part of the profession - the shadowy world of fraud investigation. So we spoke to Tara Prendergast and Jamie Roberts, who with the help of the Fraud Advisory Panel

established the Future Fraud Professionals Network to engage with others dedicated to eliminating the scourge of fraud.

Looking ahead to the New Year we wanted to include important information for what lies ahead, including what you need to know about computer-based exams, Business Planning: Insurance and changes to the Business Strategy and Technology exam.

And, while on the subject of the future, we took the chance to speak to Ali Qasim, ICAEW ambassador for One Young World, on why he thinks the global event is so important and his ideas on how we might build a better future for all.

We couldn't finish the year without including a gift and in this case the gift of food. Check out our comprehensive collection of some of the best food destinations to try in 2019.

We wish you all the best for the new year and as always we like to hear from you, so get in touch with your thoughts on vital@icaew.com

Marie

Marie Lake
Vital Editor

FROM THE FACULTIES



FS Focus

Growing hubs, digital taxes and bitcoin booms and busts - an in-depth look at the fintech issues that are hitting the headlines, and why they are important.

icaew.com/FSF



Corporate Financier

The interplay between online and bricks-and-mortar stores is changing the way we shop. So what is the role of M&A in the changing composition of our high streets?

icaew.com/CFF



ETHOS

For all those excited by innovative and progressive approaches to business, both in the UK and abroad



COURIER

A periodical on all aspects of modern business and start-up culture from around the globe



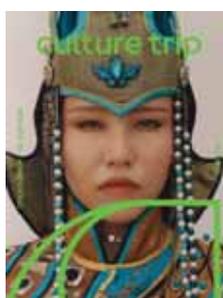
THE IDLER

This bi-monthly journal, or “literature for loafers”, offers some fun and relief in a busy world



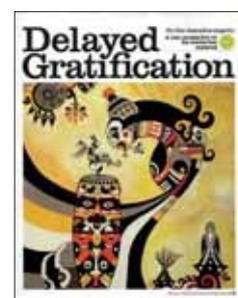
HOLE & CORNER

A publication that sets out to celebrate creativity and craftsmanship away from the mainstream



CULTURE TRIP

The app designed to provide cultural insights from local experts now has its very own print magazine



DELAYED GRATIFICATION

As the title suggests, this quarterly investigates events outside of the frenetic news cycle

Editor's picks

Here are some of the independent magazines we think you might like, but only after you've finished reading *Vital*



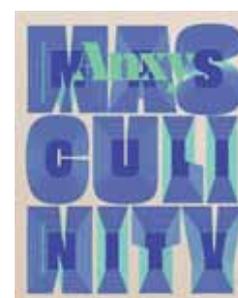
LITTLE WHITE LIES

The bi-monthly about films and their makers, for those who love films, from those who love films



THE GENTLEWOMAN

Stunning photography and insightful journalism giving a “fresh and intelligent perspective” on fashion



ANXY

Creative and intelligent content to further open up the conversation on mental health

In Review

YOUR CERTIFICATE LEVEL EXAM UPDATE

From 1 January 2019, we are implementing some exciting changes to our Certificate Level exams. There will be no changes to the exam questions or the exam delivery software, but the colours used will reflect the new ICAEW brand. There are also improvements that will help you prepare for and complete your exams.

In response to feedback from students asking if they can use their own calculators, we have updated the exam policy to allow this. From 1 January 2019, you will need to take your own calculator to the exam. The following scientific calculators are permitted:

- Casio FX models
- Sharp EL531X
- Texas Instruments TI-30X

● Hewlett Packard HP 10S or HP 300S+.

The following financial calculators are permitted:

- Hewlett Packard - HP 10bII
- Texas Instruments - TI BA II Plus
- Sharp EL733A
- Casio FC 100V.

An on-screen calculator will be available if you need it.

As well as the current identification and admission requirements, when you arrive at the exam centre and at the start of the check-in process, you will be asked to provide a digital signature. This helps us to identify you and also confirms that you agree with all the candidate rules. A high-quality digital photo will also be taken, to produce a standardised passport-style photo. The invigilator will then compare your signature and photo with your ID and previous exam data. All student data will be securely stored and protected by Pearson VUE in line with GDPR.

You will also receive a reminder email 48 hours before your scheduled exam time. Please ensure that all details are accurate. If your plans have changed, you must reschedule or cancel your exam up to 24 hours before you are due to sit it so you can be eligible for a refund. Please ensure you read the exam guide and candidate rules before you attempt an exam. For further information visit

icaew.com/examchanges

NEW FOR 2019

You will find the 2019 ACA planner inserted into this edition of *Vital*. A much larger planner has been created for you this year, so you can easily fit in all your key dates for exams, work and social. The planner also provides the key dates and deadlines that you'll need for ACA exams, as well as student benefits available and information on CABA.

icaew.com/acaplanner

The transition to computer-based exams is nearly complete, finishing in July, when the Case Study will move to computer. See page 14 for more information and a look at the computer-based exam journey so far. Find resources and support at icaew.com/cbe

If your training agreement is soon to end, be sure to achieve a minimum of 70% within the ethics assessment (as well as completing all other elements of the ACA) before submitting your training file for final sign off. From January 2019, you will only be able to submit your training file for sign off when you have achieved 70% or more and completed your professional development ladders (if required).

bit.ly/2Ksrdbx

For exams in 2019, the cost of the ACA Certificate and Advanced Level learning materials has increased to £32.50 and £87.50 respectively. The learning materials are reviewed and approved each year by examiners, so it's important that you use the correct edition to study.

bit.ly/2Ag3aba



KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

7 January-4 February

Exam booking open for March Professional Level exams

18 January

December Professional Level exam results released

24 January

Cyprus graduation ceremony

11-13 March

Professional Level exams

1 April-7 May

Exam booking open for June Professional Level exams

16 April

International prizegiving ceremony

18 April

March Professional Level exam results released

13 May-17 June

Exam booking open for July Advanced Level exams

10-12 June

Professional Level exams

It's essential that you book your exams early, as after the exam booking deadline no late bookings will be accepted. Keep updated with the key dates and deadlines you need in 2019 at icaew.com/exams



ICAEW CEREMONIES AROUND THE WORLD

The success and achievements of ACA students in Malta, Mauritius and Malaysia were celebrated between October and December. New members were also welcomed into ICAEW membership at ceremonies in Islamabad

(pictured), Lahore and Karachi, Pakistan.

There were 250 guests in attendance at this year's ICAEW Middle East Annual Honours ceremony at the Four Seasons Resort, Dubai. Frank Gardner OBE, the BBC's security correspondent, was welcomed as guest speaker at the event on 5 December.

USEFUL LINKS

Track progress of your ACA training at icaew.com/trainingfile

Explore the useful exam resources while you study at icaew.com/examresources

Use the practice software and watch webinars for Professional and Advanced Level computer-based exams at icaew.com/cbe

Read our series of how-to guides on all aspects of ACA training at icaew.com/how-to

Book your exams via your online training file at icaew.com/trainingfile

For exam results, visit icaew.com/examresults

CABA: SUPPORTING YOUR FUTURE

None of us know what the future holds, but as an ACA student you and your family can rely on free support such as counselling and career coaching from CABA wherever you live in the world. Services are constantly evolving so, if you'd like to keep up to date with the support that's available, you'll need to give CABA consent to stay in touch.

caba.org.uk/ACA-consent



TRANG DANG THE LOWDOWN

ICAEW's head of Vietnam answers our questions

Can you briefly describe your role and what it involves?

I promote and protect ICAEW's reputation, build awareness, establish and maintain stakeholder partnerships, and grow student and member numbers.

What's the best part of your job?

The opportunity to interact with people at different levels from many industries, such as accounting, education and even government.

What do you find challenging?

Managing two offices - Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City - my challenge is to maintain the three 'c's: communication, collaboration and consistency.

What is the key to your success?

I strongly believe my success is due to my team's enthusiasm, spirit and camaraderie.

What do you think is the key to a healthy work/ life balance?

Do what you love and love what you do.

How do you relax outside work?

My daughter is very talkative. I enjoy listening to her stories and that helps me unwind and bond with my kids.

What useful advice do you have for students?

Do everything with passion. But be patient to build your passion.

Future boss

Ali Qasim, investment banker at Rothschild & Co and ICAEW ambassador for One Young World on why global social change is crucial

One Young World is a unique platform that brings together young global leaders to discuss and come up with innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

More than 190 countries are represented and every person there has been identified as a leader of today or tomorrow.

It creates relationships so that we can collaborate to make a positive impact.

My role is a global ambassador for ICAEW. I was selected by a judging panel from a short video on how we can build trust and leadership in business and finance.

There are more than 1.7 million of us that sit under the Chartered Accountants Worldwide umbrella, representing our own respective membership bodies from all over the world.

These events are important because, given the complex and uncertain global climate we live in, they empower young people across the world who have the potential to make a difference.

We need to implement positive change now in order to reap the benefits in the future. The world is not in a good place at the moment, from many perspectives - economically, socially, wars being fought, pervasive education and healthcare problems - so

how do we build a better, more inclusive world?

The accountancy profession is fundamental to the economy and essentially the world. You need chartered accountants for business. Without finance, there is no economy. The economy underpins society, employment, education and how people live. We have an important role, as we're in key decision-making positions - many CEOs and CFOs as well as FTSE 100 board members are chartered accountants.

The young chartered accountants of today will get to these positions in the future. We want to encourage the mindset from the beginning that they can make the world a better place, not just make profits but consider the impact on people, the environment and society.

When it comes to the future, I have learned that it's important to keep a holistic and long-term perspective. It's easy to become comfortable in our daily lives, but there is a bigger world out there and not everyone is as fortunate as us. But we can all make a difference. This starts with having self-awareness. In terms of tangible changes, I can contribute towards ensuring that my organisation continues to be proactive in community investment and social change.

It's our moral and civic duty to help those not as privileged as us, so I aim to give up my free time to mentor disadvantaged kids and give free advice. I've also accepted offers to join the advisory boards of a few charities. No one expects us to achieve change straight away, but changing the world could start with one person's world. ●

If you are interested in getting involved in the 2019 One Young World summit, look out for information in early 2019 at icaew.com/charteredstar

The independents

Studying for the ACA as an independent student is one way to start or continue your journey to becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant



If you're studying for the ACA qualification, but don't have an ACA training agreement with one of our authorised training employers or principals, you will be registered as an independent student. You may have just finished school and be studying full time, currently at university and studying the ACA to get ahead, or have previously been in a training agreement. In any instance, studying as an independent student is a great way to show your future employer that you're motivated and serious about your career.

While you can study the ACA exams, you can only start to gain and record practical work experience, professional development and ethics and professional scepticism once you have a training agreement. You will also need to be in the final year of your training agreement before you can sit the Advanced Level Case Study exam.

Roshan Ramesh, an ACA student from Dubai, started studying independently

and then secured a training agreement with PwC. He found the greatest challenge when studying independently was the lack of practical knowledge he was able to apply to his studies. Ramesh's main advice to independent students is, "seek guidance when in doubt and go through a tuition provider when preparing for exams as this plays a major role in developing and mastering exam technique. At the same time, hard work and proper planning along with practice are also vital elements that are essential to ace all the exams."

Studying as an independent student can be challenging, but there are a variety of resources and services available to you and all ACA students that will help you succeed.

You can find exam resources including sample exams, question banks within the practice software, webinars, exam top tips and more at [icaew.com/examresources](https://www.icaew.com/examresources)

You can also access a free online

Students' Excel training course, connect with fellow ACA students through our online student community and get involved in social activities through your local ICAEW student society.

By starting a professional qualification independently, you have already shown potential employers that you are serious about your career, you have the ability to pass professional exams and that you have an understanding of what is needed for a successful career in finance, accounting and business. If you are looking to secure a training agreement, you will find a comprehensive list of training opportunities, placements and internships via our Training Vacancies website. You can sign up to receive alerts when new vacancies are posted. You can also create a profile and upload your CV to showcase your availability to potential employers.

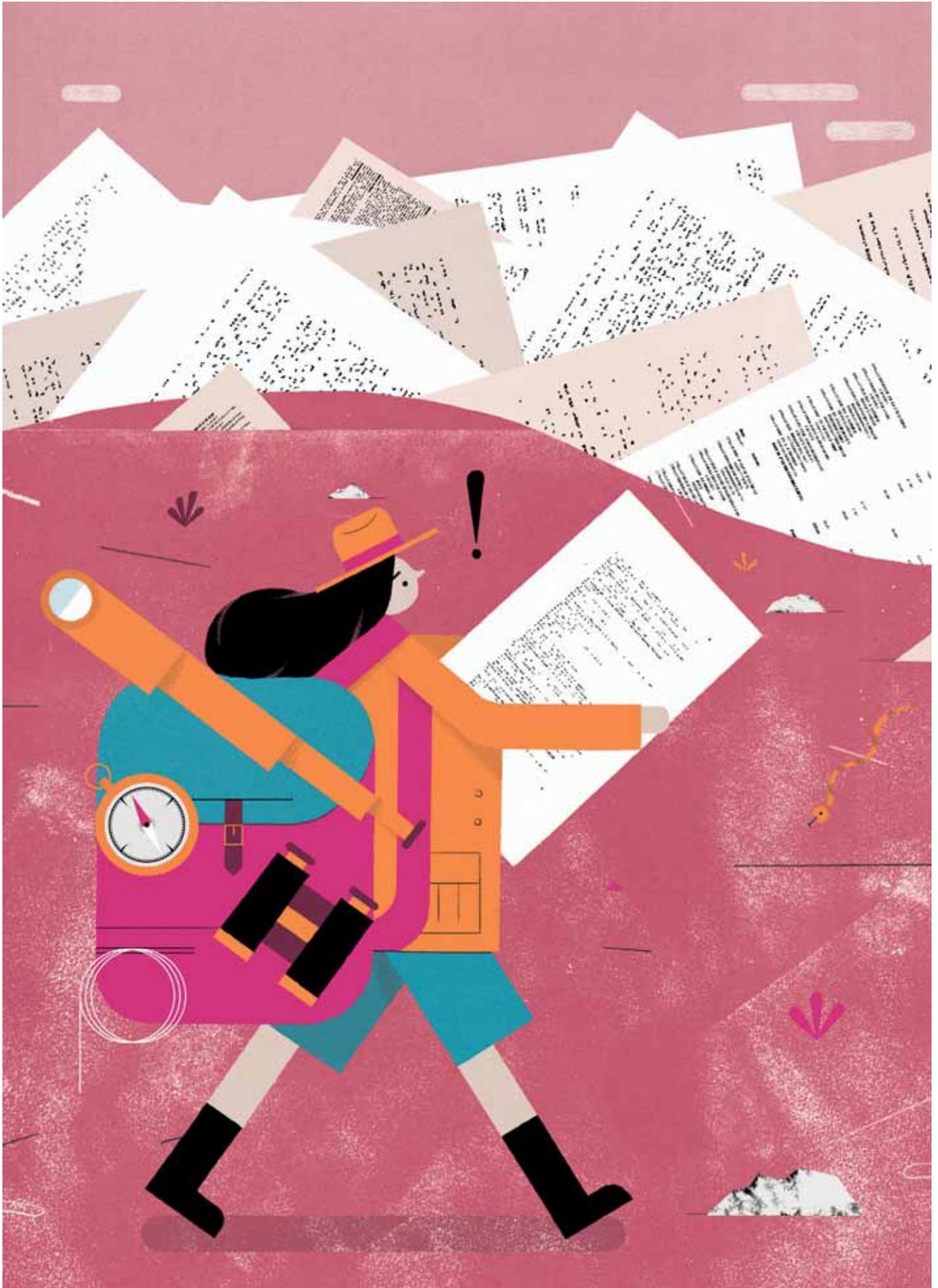
If your training agreement with your employer has been cancelled, don't be discouraged, as there are many opportunities available to you. You may be eligible to sign up as a priority candidate on the Available Student Register. This register is accessed by authorised employers who are looking for candidates who have shown they are capable, across the UK and internationally. Authorised employers have direct access to this

"Hard work, proper planning and practice are vital elements that are essential to ace all the exams"

register and will be in contact if you are selected for an interview. Visit [icaewtrainingvacancies.com/priority](https://www.icaewtrainingvacancies.com/priority)

If you are already working in a finance-related role for an organisation that is not currently an ICAEW authorised training employer or principal, we encourage you to speak to them about becoming one. Your local ICAEW Business Development Manager will be happy to speak with your employer about the free and simple process.

Anees Sayed was studying as an independent student before gaining employment with d&t. Although it wasn't an ICAEW authorised training employer at the time, Sayed explains: "When I spoke to partners, directors, and managers, I knew they would be able to support me in my training agreement. With a little help from ICAEW support staff, I was able to get my training agreement for ICAEW ACA." Further information for employers is available at [icaew.com/trainaca](https://www.icaew.com/trainaca) ●



Preparing for the Professional Level

Stepping up to the Professional Level of the ACA can feel daunting. Moving from the fundamentals of accountancy, finance and business at the Certificate Level, the Professional Level will test your ability to use technical knowledge in real-life scenarios

The examiners have presented their insight to mirror the progression within the knowledge streams of the ACA.

Financial accounting stream

The Professional Level Financial Accounting and Reporting exam is built on your fundamental understanding of topics and concepts initially learned from the Certificate Level Accounting exam.

The learning materials will introduce new financial reporting standards and group financial statements, as well as requiring you to be familiar with differences between IFRS and UK GAAP when dealing with transactions. The exam consists of four questions and reinforces an understanding of the integration of financial statements. The first question usually consists of a list of balances along with some transactions. The requirement tends to ask you to prepare single company financial statements and possibly individual notes to the financial statements.

An understanding of double entry is critical. The transactions that require adjusting are usually based on an application of financial reporting standards that form the core of this exam.

Statements of cash flow, examined in Accounting, are also part of Financial Accounting and Reporting. They will either be tested from a group perspective or extracts from a single company.

The main new areas are knowledge and application of financial reporting standards. You'll be asked to explain the appropriate accounting treatment of a transaction, which may involve recalculating key metrics such as profit or debt, or showing the journals required to adjust the financial statements. Group financial statements is also new at the Professional Level. This will involve preparation of consolidated financial statements and application of double entry fundamentals, although this will usually be implicit rather than explicit in the question requirements.

Audit stream

The Professional Level Audit and Assurance exam builds directly on the Certificate Level Assurance

exam. All topics and concepts remain relevant. It is imperative that you have a solid grounding in concepts, ethics, risk assessment, internal controls and audit procedures.

The exam contains four questions. The first consists of six short-form questions, which we expect to be answered in note form. The second question is based around a large scenario and is usually around 40 marks. It requires you to justify why specified areas of audit risk have been identified and design appropriate audit procedures to address those risks. You will be expected to interpret financial information as part of your justification. The two remaining questions cover any of the examinable topics and could have multiple parts. All topics can be tested via the short-form questions or within a larger question.

Whereas in Assurance you were required to select the most appropriate internal control or audit procedure from given options, you now have to generate your own internal controls and audit or review procedures for a given scenario.

A number of new International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) are introduced at Audit and Assurance, and could be tested anywhere on the exam. However, the main additional topic is that of modified assurance reports. While the basic principles underlying assurance reports are covered in Assurance, you'll now have to identify and explain the type of assurance report needed for a given situation.

Business analysis stream

While the Certificate Level Management Information and Business, Technology and Finance exams require you to answer multiple choice questions or complete limited data entry, the Professional Level Financial Management and the Business Strategy and Technology exams require you to undertake much longer numerical and written tasks. It is up to you to choose the appropriate layout and presentation of your answer (and workings); develop these skills by practising with the exam software.

At Certificate Level, pure knowledge and the limited application of knowledge in small scenarios is

examined. Financial Management and Business Strategy and Technology build on that knowledge - it is developed, integrated, extended and enhanced. For example, in Business Strategy and Technology you are required to perform data analysis using Management Information techniques in conjunction with concepts and models from Business, Technology and Finance in order to assess performance, identify issues etc. In Financial Management you extend your knowledge of investment appraisal from Management Information in order to undertake more sophisticated and complex net present value calculations.

Knowledge is also assessed very differently at the Professional Level. The Financial Management and Business Strategy and Technology exams both contain three questions covering multiple syllabus areas. These test your ability to apply technical knowledge in longer and more complex real-life scenarios than at Certificate Level. You are required to develop reasoned solutions to specified problems, exercise your judgement (ethically) and recommend action. Written and communication skills are essential. For example, in Business Strategy and Technology only 25% of the marks are for applying knowledge. The rest are for applying your skills to the given scenarios.

Tax stream

The Certificate Level Principles of Taxation exam is designed to teach you about the core taxes. The objective is to be able to recognise which tax will apply to a transaction, so questions test the taxes individually and are simplistic. Although there are two long-form questions, they are still only 10 marks each. Most are two mark objective test questions.

Tax Compliance is the next exam in this stream. Questions become longer and more complicated. They still test each tax separately, apart from a small amount of interaction between VAT and stamp taxes. The objective is to show your competence in preparing tax computations for historic transactions. New taxes are also introduced: stamp taxes and inheritance tax. However, it remains a knowledge-based exam with a small element of application of skills.

Business Planning: Taxation is the final exam in this stream. Questions often change from the past to the future tense and from single taxes to multi-tax scenarios that consider the interaction of taxes. The objective is to consider various different options for a client who needs advice on a particular scenario, such as tax planning. The emphasis shifts from detailed technical knowledge to an ability to demonstrate skills. You do not need detailed technical knowledge, but you do need to demonstrate that you can apply technical rules to a scenario involving multiple taxes.

Similarly to Business Planning: Taxation, Business Strategy and Technology, along with the other Business Planning modules (Banking and Insurance), focuses on the skills you apply rather than the technical knowledge you can show; the marks for the Business Planning exams are split 25% knowledge to 75% skills you apply.

The emphasis on skills within these exams are indicative of the next stage in your ACA learning, and give you a first glimpse of what you can expect at Advanced Level. ●

TUTOR TIPS

Matt Dyson, ACA tutor, First Intuition

Question style

At this level there are long-form questions, which require a mixture of discursive and computational skills. Although daunting at first, many students ultimately prefer this style of question as you can state assumptions, explain your rationale and also achieve follow-through marks when you make a computational error.

Study skills

You will face two challenges in progressing through the Professional Level. Firstly, you must learn the detailed rules embedded within the syllabus. Many students will be sitting two or three exams at the same time, so you must be prepared for the volume of information you will be expected to take in. Your tuition provider will supply you with summary notes but you should feel free to make your own flash cards, mind maps and summary tables, if this helps you learn. Secondly, you must practise questions. Exam technique is absolutely vital and many students struggle to apply what they have learned to the scenario faced in a question. You will only overcome this by practising questions, eventually in timed conditions, and carefully reviewing the solution.

Exam technique

It is essential that you plan your answers carefully. You can do this on screen, by planning the section sub-headings for your answer before starting to type in

detail. Alternatively, you will be provided with blank paper in the exam, which you can use to make notes and draw diagrams as you are reading the scenario. This will not be marked, so you need to ensure that all these ideas make it to your answer on screen.

Exam software

It is essential that you familiarise yourself with the exam software. It is pretty intuitive but there are differences from other software you may use. You can view and practise in a blank template by going to icaew.com/cbe

When answering computational questions you need to decide how much you will use the spreadsheet functionality and how much you will use your own calculator. Don't forget that no matter what, you must show your workings as the markers have no ability to see the formula which you put into a cell.

Booking your exam

Don't forget, the exam booking process is very different from Certificate Level. You will need to book via your online training file and there are set booking windows for each Professional Level exam session. Make sure these are in your diary and book early to make sure you get your location of choice. Spaces fill up very quickly.

Good luck as you embark on the next exciting stage of your journey to qualification.



To help you prepare for the Professional Level, you can access past exams, webinars and more at icaew.com/examresources

Standard delivers

The Business Planning: Insurance examiners look at the impact of IFRS 17

IFRS 17 is long-awaited and represents a very significant change in accounting standards for insurance contracts. It is a much-needed replacement for IFRS 4.

Adoption requires significant enhancements in data collection and management systems for many insurers. Although early adoption is permissible, we do not expect that many insurers will adopt IFRS 17 before it becomes mandatory from 1 January 2022. It can be expected to feature significantly in Business Planning: Insurance exams from 2018 onwards.

IFRS 17 has yet to be endorsed by the EU. The UK's expected exit from the EU also raises a possibility that IFRS 17 may never become mandatory in the UK, although that appears a remote possibility. For the purposes of this exam, you should assume that IFRS 17 has already been approved for use in the UK.

Much of the estimated £3bn cost of UK implementation is expected to be spent on consultants' fees. There is a chance that you will work on an IFRS 17 implementation engagement, so an ability to work with this standard is a useful skill. Each exam could include any content from the ICAEW study manual for that year. Questions on the General Measurement Method (GMM) of IFRS 17 could include the subjects shown in the box, right.

IFRS 9 became mandatory with effect from 1 January 2018, but only becomes mandatory for insurance companies from 1 January 2022. So IAS 39 will have three years of continuing use in the insurance industry after its more general demise. The date for mandatory adoption of IFRS 9 by insurers is to coincide with the mandatory adoption date of IFRS 17.

In theory, this means an insurer could adopt IFRS 9 before adopting IFRS 17. Exam questions will only feature companies that have either adopted both IFRS 9 and IFRS 17, or are still applying IAS 39 and IFRS 4 because they have adopted neither IFRS 9 nor IFRS 17. Exam questions will clearly state if an insurer has adopted, or intends to adopt IFRS 17 early.

We, the examiners, are aware of the time it takes to master IFRS 17. The syllabus for Business Planning: Insurance will be reviewed with care every year to ensure that any extra time needed to master this is balanced by other areas being either removed from the syllabus, or downgraded in the level of detail required. ●

Year of exam	Questions may require you to:
2018	<p>Apply all aspects of the Premium Allocation Approach.</p> <p>With respect to the GMM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● value contractual service margin at inception of a profitable insurance contract; ● reconcile the key components of liability for remaining coverage from policy inception to the end of the year of cover, where there are no differences between actual cash flows and those expected at policy inception; ● produce key extracts from profit or loss for the first year of cover.
2019	<p>As for 2018, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognise the effect of actual cash flows to date differing from those expected at inception; ● produce figures for year two of cover onwards; ● recognise the effect of expected future cash flows differing from those expected at inception; ● deal with contracts that are expected to be loss making, either at inception or after inception.





The basis of computer-based

Over the past two years, the ACA Professional and Advanced Level exams have been moving to computer. Vital looks at the journey so far

All exams are now computer-based, except for Case Study which will move to computer in July 2019. With almost 50,000 ACA exams having been taken in the new format, the move from paper to computer-based exams marks a new era in exam delivery, making them more reflective of the everyday work environment.

Technology plays a large role in the workplace. It is likely you regularly use a computer for report writing, creating tables and spreadsheets, and making calculations. Our computer-based exam platform is designed to reflect the activities you are already undertaking as part of your ACA training, allowing you to prepare your answers as you would for a client.

The introduction of computer-based exams has not affected the style and format of ACA exams or the syllabus,

which receives annual updates as normal. With subject pass-rates comparable to their paper-based equivalents, the only difference is the way you enter answers to the exam questions. You can continue to study, practise questions and prepare for your exams as you do now, with additional practice software available so you can get to know the functionality.

Like anything new, familiarising yourself with the functionality is important and will help you to overcome any fears or concerns you may have. Ilyana Ibrahim, an independent student from Malaysia, says her biggest fear going in to her computer-based exam was “the stability of the software”.

She was worried that “the system would crash in the middle of the exam” or that questions would take some time to load “while the timer is still running”. After

sitting her Financial Accounting and Reporting exam without problems she no longer has these concerns.

The exams are delivered via a secure, locked-down application that is resilient to internet connectivity problems. ICAEW has completed extensive testing on the exam software, ensuring it delivers consistently and without fault. In the unlikely event that your computer does crash, your exam will automatically save and you will be able to pick up where you left off by re-entering your keycode.

If you feel something has negatively affected your exam, make the invigilator aware as soon as possible. They have the ability to pause your exam while they investigate and, hopefully, fix the issue. After your exam has finished, make sure you complete an invigilator report before you leave the exam room. You can also



apply for special consideration, but you must do this no more than two weeks after your exam. The Instructions to Candidates details further information about the special consideration process.

RESIZE FITS ALL

All computer screens meet our minimum specifications and guidelines. While screen sizes may vary, this will not affect the amount of content visible on screen. Larger screens will just have more blank space around the exam software. You will be able to move and resize the question window to fit side-by-side with the response area.

The software is the same for all Professional and Advanced Level exams, with the exception of a couple of buttons; a 'Formula and Discount tables' button for Financial Management and an 'Exhibits' button for Corporate Reporting and Strategic Business Management.

Many students have told us they prefer to type their responses, as it can be faster and neater than handwriting. Matt Dyson, ACA tutor at First Intuition, says: "In written questions it is possible to 'build' an answer by starting with the sub-headings, brainstorming ideas, and then fleshing out these ideas into proper sentences and paragraphs."

Ibrahim, who has now completed all her Professional Level exams on

computer, felt she could finish the exam faster because she "tends to write really slowly". In addition, she said "since I am an environmentally-conscious person, I love how we could save so much paper just by moving to the digital platform."

Although you will be provided with a pen and loose-leaf paper to make notes, you are still expected to show all workings as part of your response on screen. Ensure that all your answers are visible and not hidden within cells, as they will be presented to the examiner exactly as they appear on screen.

To make sure you're prepared and confident going in to your next exam, familiarise yourself with the practice software and make this part of your revision process. Ibrahim says her biggest tip when preparing for a computer-based exam is "practise, practise, practise. The practice software provided on the ICAEW website is crucial for computer-based exams. You have to get used to the software and make full use out of it. If you can master the software, it will really help you in answering the exam."

You can access a variety of exam resources for all ACA exams at icaew.com/examresources. For FAQs, exam tips, support and more information on computer-based exams visit icaew.com/cbe ●

PREPARING FOR THE CASE STUDY

The Case Study exam will be computer-based from July 2019. Look out for more resources in early 2019, to help you prepare.

As always, the Case Study exam resources are available for you to access, including the syllabus, past exams and sample answers, webinars and more, which is at icaew.com/examresources

Techno chances

The style of the Business Strategy and Technology exam is evolving in 2019

Business Strategy and Technology aims to provide you with an understanding of how organisations develop and implement strategy in a world of developing technology. The addition of Technology to the title of the exam in March 2018 was to recognise formally the way that the content of the exam has evolved over time.

The exam has had scenarios where organisations are affected by, or are building on, new technologies. There are requirements seeking analysis of the threats from, and opportunities presented by, technology. From 2019, the syllabus includes even more coverage of technology topics and data, so the trend for increasing technology continues.

There will be at least one scenario where developing technologies are key. In previous exams we've seen for example, online estate agencies (March 2018 question 1) or technology for measuring customer movements in a retailer (June 2018 question 3). There will also be at least one requirement on the application of a technology topic in the context of a specific organisation's strategy (as in June 2018 question 1.1 or September 2018 question 1.2).

You'll be expected to use numerical data presented in the exam, often in varied formats (ie, a graph, diagram or pie charts) and from varied sources (eg, social media or a blog) in a variety of ways. As well as the extensive data analysis requirement typically seen in the longest question, exams will regularly feature two other types of requirement where use of numbers is expected.

- A requirement asking for a specified calculation, for example the breakeven point, the forecast profit, a price or a cost.
- A requirement asking for a discussion or explanation of an issue on the basis of supporting calculations - so you must decide what calculations, using the numerical data in the question, are of use to their analysis.

In all three types of numerical data requirements, where specified you'll be expected to discuss or comment on the implications of calculations for the organisation. Balancing calculations and discussion in these requirements is key.

Business Strategy and Technology has always covered the skill of developing

solutions. In 2019, there will be requirements where there is no single correct solution, so you will need to identify your own creative and pragmatic solutions for a problem, or proactively spot opportunities to add value.

You should aim to develop and explain your own ideas for a possible strategy or performance measure, based on your understanding and analysis of the context presented to you in the scenario. The examiner will be looking for you to think on your feet by seeing the nature of the issue in the scenario and responding to it proactively.

Access exam resources at icaew.com/examresources

“The syllabus includes even more coverage of technology topics and data”

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FRAUD SQUAD

The first rule of Future Fraud Professionals Network is... to talk about it as much as possible. Vital hears about the engaging and rewarding work it does from co-chairs Tara Prendergast and Jamie Roberts

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY LO PÒ

“I was told that forensic accounting was very niche,” says Jamie Roberts. “When I asked someone about it, they told me: ‘You’re siloing your career, closing off career paths.’ But working in anti-fraud teams has opened up opportunities.”

Tara Prendergast, sitting beside him, nods vigorously. “It’s fascinating to see where the potential risks lie, examining relationships between people, which often requires an approach of thinking outside the box. Some people seem to have this misconception that accountancy’s just about sitting in a room with a spreadsheet and a calculator. It’s nothing like that - and working in anti-fraud is fantastically engaging and rewarding.”

They are not just passionate about their own anti-fraud work, they are keen to help others who are interested in

counter-fraud as a career path. Prendergast and Roberts co-chair the Future Fraud Professionals Network (FFPN), a sector-wide community for new professionals looking to develop their skills in counter-fraud and students interested in embarking on such a career. Its meetings and social events are a way to glean and share information and advice in an engaging, accessible and relaxed setting.

“Our aim is to connect new professionals or those interested in moving into this arena with people who are already successful,” says Prendergast, as we meet in the ICAEW’s ornate Victorian headquarters - Chartered Accountants’ Hall. “We want it to show just how many professions encompass anti-fraud and help people learn just how dynamic this industry is.”

Roberts agrees. “It’s such a broad field - everything from employee misappropriation of funds to multi billion international frauds. You might be dealing with insider dealing, breaches of contract, or senior management setting up fictitious loans to siphon into their other companies. It’s not just about uncovering it, but about compliance, prevention, exploring companies to discover where they are most vulnerable. It’s a people profession and it’s hugely varied.”

Their enthusiasm for the network is in part borne out of wishing it had existed earlier in their own careers. Both studied law and graduated around five years ago, before seeing accountancy as a more attractive career. Prendergast is an associate at EY while Roberts, after stints at EY and Kroll, is now a forensic accountant at the Financial Conduct

Authority (FCA). But for a long time both were unaware of the opportunities in anti-fraud.

“Forensic accounting was never presented to me as a career option,” says Prendergast, “but as I went through my career I realised I wanted to fix problems before they arose. It was only when doing my masters, and studying competition law, that I ‘discovered’ fraud and realised forensic accounting was the career I’d been looking for all along. The FFPN promotes anti-fraud as a career and hopefully simplifies that pathway for others in the position I was in.”

Prendergast and Roberts, who met when they both worked at EY, were approached by the Fraud Advisory Panel

“I REALISED I
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(FAP) about how they might help point other new professionals into counter-fraud. FAP - set up 20 years ago by ICAEW, which continues to support its work - shares knowledge, resources, skills and research to counter fraud across the globe. It embraced the idea of a separate organisation for newer professionals and the FFPN was born.

Says Prendergast: “Mia Campbell and Zara Fisher from the FAP have been beyond wonderful, working with us to launch the network, and the FAP - and ICAEW - have been hugely supportive.”

The network was an instant success across the accountancy sector and beyond. In the 18 months since it launched, it has held professional and/or social events hosted by firms at their offices and at the ICAEW building in which we’re sitting. Roberts estimates around 350 people have so far attended their events. “They are aimed at new professionals but several students have attended, and many people from other sectors who just have an interest in how counter-fraud works.”

The network is focused - though not proscriptively - on counter-fraud professionals with less than five years’ experience with the aim of supporting them in their career. Prendergast and



“WE WANTED OUR MEETINGS TO BREAK DOWN PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO GET. IT WAS GREAT TO HAVE THREE SENIOR FEMALE EXECs ON A RECENT PANEL, WHICH I DON'T THINK I'D SEEN BEFORE”

Roberts were adamant from the outset that it should be an inclusive, diverse, egalitarian community. Prendergast recalls how she had experienced events which were not engaging.

“We wanted our meetings to be different, to break down perceptions of what people thought they were going to get. And I think our events do feel, and are, very different.

“We have panels that are diverse in terms of race and gender - it was great to have three senior female execs on a recent panel, which I don't think I'd seen before - but also in terms of professional background and the sectors they represent. Of course some of our speakers are accountants, but many others represent organisations with a strong interest in counter-fraud - for instance GoFundMe, disruptor online banks such as Monzo, other fintechs.

“Such organisations give us, and our community members, a wonderfully fresh and varied perspective on the fraud issues of the day.”

The network meetings are themed but are only planned a few weeks in advance, to ensure those themes always reflect current thinking, developments and events in counter-fraud. Their impressive speakers - Phillip Hagon from FAP chaired a recent event and Monzo Bank's head of financial crime Natasha Vernier has been a panellist - are also briefed to address the room for only around 10-15 minutes to ensure their contributions are sharp and to the point. But they contribute significantly outside this time.

“We've all been to meetings where the speaker says their piece for about 30 minutes and that's it, they're gone and

there's no further opportunity for interaction,” says Roberts. “We invite speakers that we know will be interesting and engaging, but will also be happy to answer questions from the floor and then mingle with the audience afterwards. They're not just taken round and introduced to a few people, they're very accessible and they properly mingle, talking to everyone.”

Such a relaxed atmosphere makes for a safe space for network members to ask questions, too. “Our panellists come from different firms, different sectors, sometimes different industries,” says Prendergast. She explains that she has found that people are relaxed enough at their meetings to ask those on the panel questions about counter-fraud, or a move into the area, which they may not have thought to ask or wanted to raise before, and to engage with and speak to these individuals that may often be equivalent to their boss.

Membership of the FFPN is free and its co-chairs are hopeful it will continue to expand - not least because of the increasing prevalence of financial fraud. “It's all around us,” says Roberts. “Fraud potentially affects every business, and combating it effectively means staying a step ahead, knowing the latest developments in counter-fraud technology and best practice, and sharing information - which is what our network does. It also shows that counter-fraud opportunities aren't just restricted to the private sector, but exist in the public sector through the FCA and other bodies.”

The FFPN also, says Prendergast, underlines the variety throughout the

accountancy profession to new recruits, trainees and students. “The accountancy qualification has enabled me to understand the language of businesses, how they operate, how they're financed, their strategy, their weaknesses. I can look at financial records and essentially understand a business.

“But forensics then builds on these skills, encouraging you to combine your knowledge of audit with problem solving and creative thinking, assessing how people interact with each other and their business, and trying to figure out how and where they might manipulate those around them.”

That message is being spread not just through the network's meetings but through its seminars, covering advice and tips for fraud investigation. The FFPN also has a strong and vibrant LinkedIn community and works closely with ICAEW, FAP, the Young Fraud Lawyers Association, the Cabinet Office and the Council of British Chambers of Commerce in Europe.

“All of these give our members excellent opportunities to meet and engage with people who can advise or guide their careers in counter-fraud,” says Prendergast. “And, as the network grows, I hope its composition will reflect just how dynamic the world of anti-fraud is.”

But the FFPN is not all serious business. At the time of writing it was about to host a network pub quiz.

“It's just a social,” says Roberts. “It's a chance to connect on another level, just to enjoy a night out. Although there will be a counter-fraud round in it!” ●

More information at fraudadvisorypanel.org

Can you trust a robot?

Sophie Falcon, ICAEW's integrity and law manager, explores the ethics of new technology

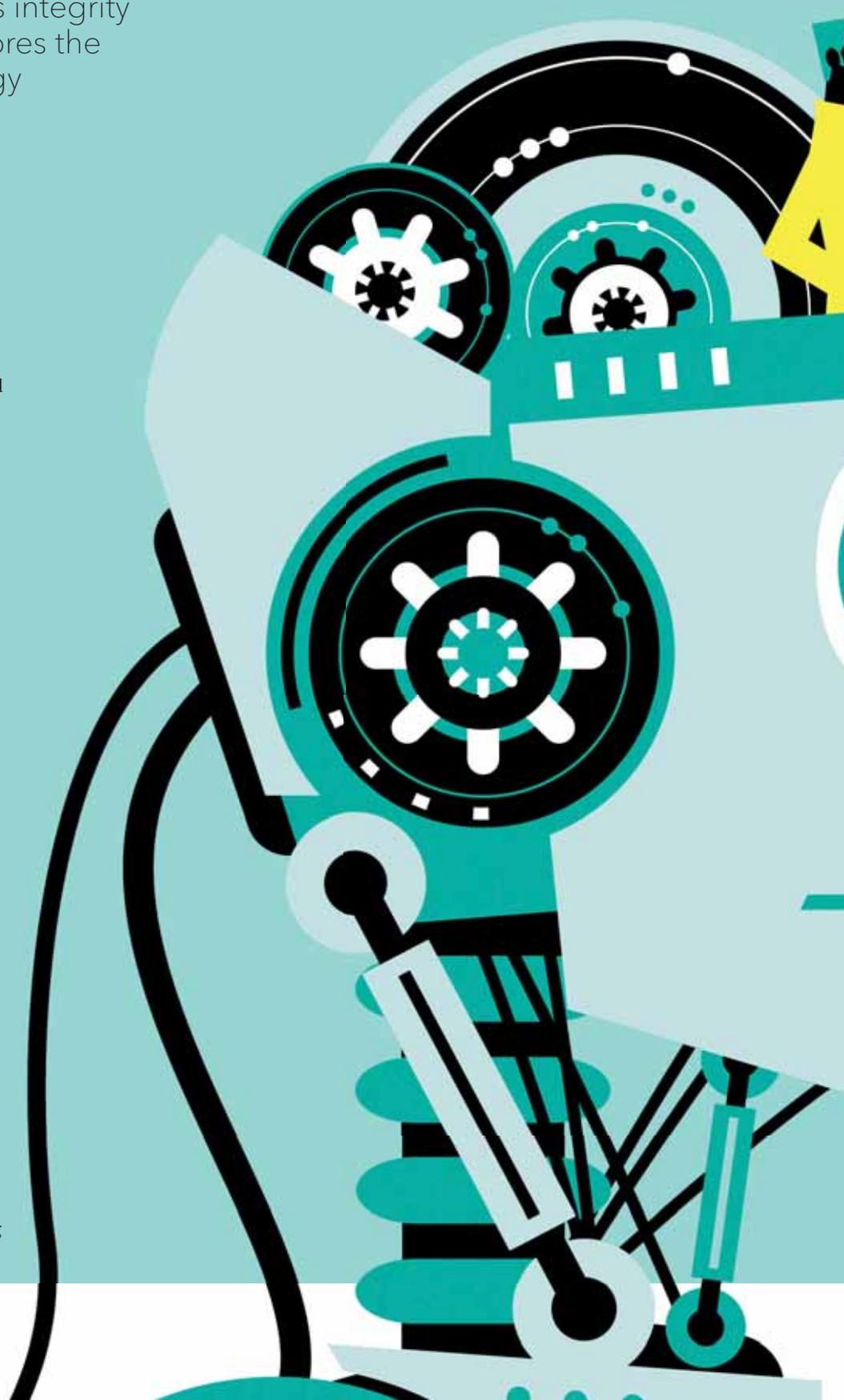
Accountancy is changing. New technology is permeating our daily work, and artificial intelligence (AI) systems are expected to replace or enhance key parts of traditional accountancy roles. But what does this mean for the ethics of the profession?

Members and students of ICAEW must comply with the Fundamental Principles of the Code of Ethics which require us to act with integrity and objectivity; to work competently and diligently; to respect confidentiality and behave professionally. But what if an AI machine becomes the auditor? How can we trust it to observe these ethical principles and what can we do to control its actions?

We need to train AI how to think ethically. So what makes a person ethical? There may be different answers to this question depending on where you are in the world, and the sector you operate in. Humans are imperfect and they have bias, whether conscious or unconscious. If you use data from previous human decisions to train AI, it's fairly likely that you will create a machine with those same biases. If the machine then starts making decisions using the same values, it could reinforce undesirable outcomes in terms of gender, race or disability, among others.

EMOTIONAL CUES

Another ethical concern with letting machines make decisions is whether the decision will be fair. A human making a decision that involves, for example, vulnerable people, will be influenced by their emotions. The human's reasoning won't always be explicitly explained, it will just be a feeling of whether something is right or not. What we might think is



acceptable business practice may vary if the client is suffering from mental health issues. Will a machine identify that an individual is vulnerable, and will it properly take such factors into account?

Humans will be the ones to educate AI, so maybe we need to think of AI as a child, and that we are teaching it right from wrong. If AI learns from every situation it encounters, then perhaps you can create an ethical being. Properly trained AI, that understands and applies ethical principles, and is free from human bias, could potentially become fairer and more consistent in decision-making than a human. The challenge is the complexity of technology underlying AI, and the extra learning we will all need to undertake to interact with and teach AI effectively.

“If you use data from previous human decisions to train AI, it’s fairly likely that you will create a machine with the same biases”

Machines, like humans, make mistakes. But if AI comes out with an unexpected answer, how do we know if it’s wrong? Will the human users feel able to override a machine decision? If we don’t know how AI has reached its conclusion, how can we criticise its output?

There are two issues here. The first is professional scepticism. Just because a machine, albeit one designed to be infallible, has produced the unexpected result, doesn’t mean that as accountants or auditors we should just accept what it gives us. The same critical review should be made as if a human had calculated the result. We also need AI to show its workings. It remains to be seen whether the AI that emerges will provide this rationale, or whether it will work on a ‘black box’ basis. In some organisations, such as the US military, there is a call for all AI systems to be explainable AI or ‘XAI’.

The way that an audit is performed may fundamentally change if you can get a machine to check every transaction and every balance, rather than a selected sample. This is a real opportunity for audits to provide a higher level of comfort on the financial statements.

What about the auditor independence implications of AI? Under the auditing

ethical standards, the audit partner must be independent of their audit clients, and safeguards must be implemented to prevent any threats to independence. One of those threats is familiarity, so audit partners of listed and public interest entities are required to rotate off the audit after five years of acting, to safeguard against any real or perceived lack of independence from the client.

REPLICATION ERROR

So what about AI taking the place of the audit partner? How do ethical standards apply? Can a machine develop a familiarity bias and need to be rotated to preserve independence? That raises the tricky question of how you rotate one intelligent machine for another. If multiple machines have all been trained in the same way it is debatable what you would achieve by swapping one machine for another that thinks identically.

Perhaps the competitive advantage between firms will come down to the quality of their firm-specific AI, and by rotating one audit firm for another, you apply a distinctly different AI system’s thought processes, rather like a different human audit partner. This raises the issue of whether there is one single best way to do something? If so then convergence between the best AI machines should be inevitable, which takes you back to square one again.

In an imperfect world, we can’t prevent all failures. But who is responsible when the AI system goes wrong? It is hard to imagine that an accountant could

justifiably blame AI for the mistakes, and

how far does that go? Would the programmer become liable? It remains to be seen whether the human desire to blame someone would extend to AI, and whether that would be a valid defence. Until AI holds the same legal and professional status as an individual, humans will still be responsible for AI’s error.

New technology and AI present huge opportunities for the accountancy profession but we need to take care with what we teach intelligent machines, and retain responsibility for their actions and the decisions they take on our behalf. Professional scepticism may mean something new in the age of AI, but it will take on even greater importance so that we can navigate the ethical landscape of new technology. ● For more on ethics and new technology visit [icaew.com/ethicsandtech](https://www.icaew.com/ethicsandtech)



Employees are no longer satisfied with workplaces being “wellbeing neutral”. In other words, people are no longer just happy as long as their work is not negatively affecting them. This, says the Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association (CABA), which provides free independent support for ACA students and past and present ICAEW members and their families, is going to become “more significant as millennials and those in generation Z, who are not prepared to sacrifice their physical or mental health on the altar of work, make up more of the workforce.”

As Steve Saville, UK HR director at Mazars explains, mental health accounts for more than 50% of sickness absence in the UK. He says this points to the need to change how we address this problem. And there are other considerations too. “When we think about the diversity and inclusion agenda, it’s all about being your whole self and not having to hide parts of you at work as it’s just exhausting,” Saville says.

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

It’s therefore unsurprising that wellbeing is one of the strategic priorities in financial services. For BDO, wellbeing is a leadership priority. The three pillars to its approach - mental, physical and financial

wellbeing - all underpin the firm’s focus on individuals being their best self at work. “Unless you’re mentally and physically well, then you can’t do that, as they enable you to be the best you can be,” says Wendy Walton, head of global private client services at the firm.

BDO has a variety of ways in which it engages with staff on wellbeing. These include mentoring, flexible work, workplace champions and, most recently, a plan to roll out resilience training, tagged as performance under pressure, to all of its staff. Support is also at the heart of Grant Thornton’s wellness community. Perry Burton, head of London audit and tax at the firm, describes it as a group of people who’ve volunteered to provide support to others should they need it. It offers resources such as tips on wellbeing, yoga sessions, workshops and drop-ins. The firm has also introduced e-learning tools on mental health to ensure its managers are appropriately equipped. “We’ve really spent a lot of time normalising and encouraging discussion around mental health,” Burton says. The firm is set to train its first cohort of 64 mental health first aiders throughout autumn and spring.

At EY, 700 mental health first aiders across the organisation have been trained,

PERFORMANCE OR WELLBEING?

In a white paper published in September last year, CABA said that as many as 42% of respondents agreed with the statement that they felt that their employer values output more than wellbeing. Perhaps more worryingly, 70% said they felt stressed at work more than once a month, while 40% have taken time off due to stress or an unmanageable workload. However, the organisation notes that it is not stress in itself that is the issue, as this can actually be motivating. Rather, a culture of fear or blame lead to people responding negatively to stress.

The research found that 73% of employees said that when wellbeing is poor, they find it hard to concentrate, while 63% are less productive, 54% have more conflicts with colleagues and 42% said they take more sick days. Women felt less able to talk about this at work too, with only 15% saying they felt able to talk to their manager about mental health issues, compared to 20% of men.

SPOTTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN STAFF

Rachel Wesley, mental health therapist, CABA

We cannot eliminate every stress in our daily lives but we can learn to identify triggers and develop strategies to manage mental wellbeing. People in your organisation must recognise individuals suffering with ongoing periods of mental ill health, otherwise they risk the employee reaching a fatigue point where productivity will drop. If the situation continues then the individual could be on the path to a breakdown.

Every person experiencing mental ill health will react differently. However, common signs may include:

- increased sickness levels;
- complaints about sleep quality;
- eating more or less than usual;
- being withdrawn or a change in behaviour, including avoiding chatting with colleagues instead of being usually sociable;
- an inability to concentrate or focus; and
- trying to over-perform, as well as under-performing, over-checking, seeking out more reassurance more than normal.

about 4% of its staff. And a buddy scheme has been promoted, in which individuals returning from a spell of ill health can speak to someone who has maybe suffered similarly in the past. "A lot of it is just about raising awareness of mental health issues and confidence in talking to people about them," Paul Quinlan, head of employee relations at the firm explains.

The firm launched Health EY in 2014. Quinlan says that a lot of what's being provided was already in place. However, as part of this new launch, mental and physical health were given equal weight as the firm was increasingly dealing with mental health issues in the workplace.

The programme is split into two sections, nurture, which aims to provide support, and thrive, which is focused on health promotion activities. The firm runs webinars throughout the year on a variety of wellbeing topics, with half tending to be on topics about physical wellbeing and half about mental health.

"I'd say attendance tends to generally be higher on the mental health topics, so for two webinars a month we will generally have around 150-200 people on each of those webinars," Quinlan explains.

TONE FROM THE TOP

There are still challenges to overcome, even if individuals are trained to spot the signs. "We have tried very hard to help people spot the signs. The challenge is that most people are really good at hiding it. That's the biggest problem," Burton says. "Opening up gets more difficult the more senior you become, because people expect you to be more able to cope."

As is generally true with corporate culture, tone from the top is important. "A number of our executive team have shared their stories relating to mental health widely," Saville says. For World Mental Health day, one of the partners at the firm wrote a blog, shared on LinkedIn, on his own mental health and ways in which he coped.

Jessica Damms, HR director at Kreston Reeves, points to the fact that the partnership at the firm has backed initiatives aimed at supporting staff in regards to wellbeing and mental health "as they see the implementation of this into our working life as a crucial part of our progression as a firm".

The firm is engaging with CABA to provide training for workplace ambassadors, who can autonomously pursue initiatives they think to be beneficial. It allows for flexible working options for people to promote a healthy work-life balance, and an employee assistance programme that provides

telephone support and access to five face-to-face counselling sessions as a means of supporting staff.

"It is crucial to us that our clients receive a great experience and therefore we need to make sure our people are motivated to give their best and are in top health," Damms explains. "If we do not provide the right support, this could result in high absenteeism and presenteeism, performance issues, lack of engagement and in turn this could result in a poor service to our clients."

In fact, support at a senior level has been one of the major reasons behind the success of initiatives at Deloitte. The firm has trained 536 of its partners and directors - one in four of its senior leaders - in mental health first aid. "I think we've been very fortunate here that we've had very senior level buy-in from the beginning when it comes to supporting good mental health," says Tim Ackroyd, health and wellbeing lead at Deloitte. "It can be particularly challenging if you don't have that backing at the top level of the business," he says.

Former partner John Binns, who a decade ago opened up about his own experiences with mental ill health, started one of the firm's flagship programmes. "We have a group of senior leaders, partners and directors, who are available for all of our people to talk to if they have any mental health or resilience concerns," Ackroyd explains. "There are 23 partners and directors specifically now, but 10 years ago John started that with just four individuals."

"Opening up gets more difficult the more senior you become. People expect you to be more able to cope"

These mental health champions, Ackroyd explains, are volunteers who have some sort of personal experience with mental health, the thinking being that if you're going to disclose intimate information on issues such as mental wellbeing, you want to know the person you're speaking to understands what is going on. They have specific training so they're prepared for the different conversations they might have as well as on managing confidentiality. They're not counsellors, but can direct people towards the support structure in place at the firm.

Sally Evans, UK wellbeing lead at PwC,



WELLBEING DIVIDENDS

The Stevenson/Farmer review in October last year found that a poor approach to mental health is costing the UK economy as much as £99bn per year, with costs to employers estimated at around between £33bn and £44bn annually.

“In tackling questions of poor mental health at work, it’s impossible to distinguish financial impact from the overall impact, which is why I think it’s increasingly becoming a board level conversation,” says Jamie Kerr, head of external affairs at the Institute of Directors.

“If employees feel they’re in a workplace where they can talk to senior members of staff about their issues, they feel like they’re listened to and that workplace can give them flexibility to handle and address mental health problems, then that can have an enormously beneficial effect on the sense of loyalty an individual has to a company or the quality of their work, which in turn has a positive financial benefit.”

thinks that any approach needs to involve behavioural change. “We realised very early on that we can create all the resources and all the tools, but you have to get people to want to engage with it,” Evans said.

The firm’s Green Light to Talk campaign was included as part of the 2017 Lord Mayor’s appeal, This is Me, aimed at reducing mental health stigma in the City of London. Evans said that in the first year of the “movement”, which encourages individuals to wear a green ribbon to signify that they’re willing to discuss mental wellbeing, some 12,500 individuals were involved. In Mental Health Week this year, and after involvement with This is Me, some 190,000 people across the UK donned a green ribbon.

Another aspect of This is Me involved those in financial services recording short videos talking about their experiences with mental health, which was embraced at Deloitte, Ackroyd said. Individuals around the firm, from partner to assistant,

used the medium to talk about their own experience with mental health. “We need to keep reiterating that message so that everyone is assured that if they are going to get support and put their hands up, there are no repercussions on their career. That really is important,” he explains.

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Digital technology has a complex part to play in the story of wellbeing in the workplace. “Home and work life have become increasingly blurred for people because of technology,” says Walton. “When I started at BDO, I’d go home at the end of the day and that was that,” Walton says. She recalls a time when if a client wrote, or if something had to be put in writing, then things would take time, whereas now responses are expected far more quickly and often outside of office hours.

At PwC, a lot has been done around the idea of “digital dieting”, Evans says. “In the same way you consume food, and you

think about your intake, you should do the same with technology.”

Many of the firms are finding ways to make technology work for them. They are making use of e-learning tools, webinars and social media to broadcast positive messages and further open the conversation of mental health.

At Mazars, Speakeasy - a network at the firm focused on championing disability as well as wellbeing - recently produced a podcast with members sharing their stories as a way to actively engage a number of staff.

Saville and his team have also been looking into virtual GPs, as he explains, fitting in an appointment around a busy day job can often be a challenge. “So, is there a way that we can provide access to our people to access those services online, wherever they are in the world?” Saville

considers. He says there are providers that will give prescriptions “by going through an online process rather than seeing someone face to face”.

As Evans explains, the numerous challenges she has encountered - such as getting people to prioritise their wellbeing, or the complications of providing support among a geographically dispersed workforce, or people working on site and not being with colleagues - require a multifaceted approach. “You have to have really flexible ways of delivering things, you have to realise that you can’t communicate something once but many times and in lots of different ways.”

PwC has developed an app with a wealth of emergency contacts and information and a toolkit that staff can use as a guide to all manner of wellbeing

resources, among various other projects. It has also worked with its charity partners, the emotional support network Samaritans, on developing an e-learning programme focused on how to engage with someone who needs support. The programme, although initially developed with PwC, is not purely for use by people at the firm and is available on the Samaritans website.

“It allows you to be in a situation where someone is talking to you about their wellbeing,” Evans says. “You get to play different outcomes, so you can elect to respond in different ways to see what happens.” This learning process helps people get over the idea that saying nothing is the best option, which is hugely important, as Evans explains “opening up a conversation is absolutely the bottom line”. ●

ADVICE FOR YOUR TEAM

Rachel Wesley, mental health therapist, CABA

The following tips can help businesses to reduce pressure on those under strain or exhibiting symptoms, while helping minimise and prevent disruption.

Identify the hazards and assess the risks. Work out what may cause excessive pressure. Identifying potential problems gives you time to put measures in place before they become a bigger issue.

Decide who may be at risk. Are some people in more monotonous roles than others? Are some dealing with difficult issues outside work? Take the time to check in informally with your team and make this a normal part of the working week, rather than part of some formal process. Often just knowing that someone has noticed is all people need to feel valued.

Normalise a closed door. Open-plan offices mean that it can be very obvious that a sensitive meeting is being held. This can deter some from requesting time to talk. Try to make it normal to have regular meetings with team members behind closed doors, as this will remove barriers to communication and make the situation less intimidating.

Record the findings. Decide on any action required to eliminate the source of stress. Could you offer flexible working, counselling, or time off to attend medical appointments? Talk to employees and establish what they think would or has helped them resolve the issue.

Review the assessment. Ascertain the effectiveness of the interventions and revise where appropriate. Set department goals and work towards resolving issues step by step. Being proactive is vital in realising and negating problems and will pay off.

Look at your company culture. Creating a culture where employees feel secure enough to talk about mental health concerns is a major breakthrough. To support this, implement a process where employees are part of the agreed support process and involved in proposals.

Managing mental wellbeing requires support from senior management. Looking holistically at the situation and putting achievable steps in place will start the process, and hopefully in the coming months and years employees will no longer worry about speaking out about mental ill health.

CABA provides free independent support for ACA students and past and present ICAEW members and their families. For more information and tips on wellbeing. Visit caba.org.uk





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Ho Chi Minh City: Den Long
tinyurl.com/DenLongRes
Ho Chi Minh City can make for an overwhelming burst of sights and sounds, but quintessential Vietnamese restaurant Den Long offers welcome respite in colourful, highly-Instagrammable surroundings. Each dish is flavoursome, well-priced and served with the utmost hospitality and warmth.
£ Around £10 a person.



19 PLACES TO EAT IN 2019

Rachel England picks her foodie havens around the globe that are well worth a visit



Dubai: Amaseena
tinyurl.com/Amaseena
Outdoor restaurant Amaseena is positively dripping in Arabic romance, from its beachfront location and Bedouin-inspired tents, to its extensive shisha menu and live performances. Sample authentic Arabic cuisine under the dazzling night sky at your leisure, with luxurious buffets featuring dishes such as grilled lobster and lamb chops, as well as traditional favourites like falafel and baba ghanoush.
£££ Buffets from £50 a person, excluding drinks.



Beijing: Mr Shi's Dumplings

tinyurl.com/MrShisDumplings

This unassuming hole-in-the-wall is a hit with locals and tourists alike. Serving what are regarded as some of the tastiest dumplings in Beijing, the staff here are more than happy to help you choose from the extensive menu, but make sure you're hungry - portion sizes are enormous.

£ Portions of 15 dumplings from £2.

Hong Kong: Tim Ho Wan

tinyurl.com/TimHoWanHK

Michelin-starred food on a shoestring budget? Tim Ho Wan shows it can be done. This bare bones Dim Sum canteen has enjoyed runaway success in recent times (it has even opened a shop in New York), but still people flock to the original premises for its renowned dumplings, steamed buns and rice rolls. Prepare to queue.

£ Eat well for around £5 a person.

Jakarta: Plataran Dharmawangsa

tinyurl.com/Plataran

Surrounded by lush greenery, Javanese pavilions and landscaped tropical gardens, Plataran Dharmawangsa is a delight for those looking for an authentic and sumptuous Indonesian dining experience. Come for the atmosphere, but stay for the award-winning food. After all, there's a reason why *Tatler* has consistently named it the Best Indonesian Restaurant in Jakarta.

££ Multi-dish meals cost around £20 a person, excluding drinks.

Kuala Lumpur: Valentine Roti

tinyurl.com/ValentineRoti

Valentine Roti claims to serve the best roti canai in all of Kuala Lumpur and, given the queues it sees every night, it just might be right. This modest-looking eatery serves up the popular Malaysian flatbread with aplomb, and offers a seemingly endless selection of toppings, as well as a range of tasty rice and noodle dishes.

£ Meals cost around £1 a person, excluding drinks.

Shanghai: Ultraviolet

tinyurl.com/UltravioletShanghai

Billed as "the most innovative restaurant in the world", Ultraviolet serves a 22-course menu to just 10 diners a night in a high-tech room that manipulates and blends light, sound, scent, temperature and theatre to create a culinary experience unlike any other on Earth. Book well in advance.

££££ From £450 a person, including drinks.



Shanghai: Oha Eatery

tinyurl.com/OhaEatery

Traditional Chinese flavours are reimagined in a funky fresh way at Oha Eatery, which serves Guizhou-inspired small plates and inventive, artisanal drinks. "Our ingredients and preparations are complex, but our presentation strives for simplicity," explains owner Peppe Jin. "We are always eschewing rigidity and the expected." Case in point: the curiously named but utterly delectable Mouldy Tofu Salad.

££ Small plates around £5 each.

Tokyo: Delifucious

tinyurl.com/Delifucious

Tokyo's hippest neighbourhood, Nakameguro, has some of the best artisanal eateries in the city and Delifucious is no exception. Here, chef Shinya Kudo serves up exquisite seafood burgers that are a far cry from your average affair. The restaurant's dazzling menu boasts a range of gourmet options, including crab cream croquette burgers and shrimp burgers, all made to order using fresh, sushi-quality ingredients.

£ Burgers from £6.

Buenos Aires: Santos Manjares

tinyurl.com/SantosManjares

Buenos Aires is overflowing with steak restaurants, but Santos Manjares sticks out, having gained global recognition for its melt-in-the-mouth meats and sumptuous sides, all served at almost criminally reasonable prices. Reservations aren't always needed, but don't be surprised if you have to queue.

££ Steak dinners around £20 a person.

Marrakech: Naranj

tinyurl.com/NaranjMa

A calm oasis tucked amid thronging Marrakech, Naranj serves Lebanese, Syrian and Israeli dishes with a modern touch and a great deal of care. "We look at our restaurant like our own dining room," says owner Ruba Mawas. "All of our food is made with love and we care about every single guest that visits us." And this traditionally Moroccan-decorated restaurant sees a lot of guests, thanks to its reputation for excellent food and wonderful hospitality.

££ Main meals from £12-£35.



London: Roganic

tinyurl.com/Roganic

Originally launched as a pop-up in 2011, Roganic's newly-permanent home is an urban homage to its Cumbrian sister restaurant L'Enclume - also the location of the Roganic farm, responsible for furnishing the restaurant with the fresh, sustainable ingredients that have helped propel it to Michelin-starred success. "We really bring out the best of the ingredients for our customers, who always feel at home here," says chef patron Simon Roganic. "We're not fussy or stiff - everyone is welcoming because we're so proud of what we're doing."

£££ Tasting menus from £65 a person, excluding drinks.

Tokyo: Tapas Molecular Bar

tinyurl.com/TapasMolecular

Tapas Molecular Bar offers an imaginatively unique dining experience, where just eight guests at a time sample tapas-style portions of Japanese and Western fusion dishes, each born of molecular gastronomy. Expect a range of curious textures and flavours (and a mind-blowing view of Tokyo Bay), and prepare for your understanding of food to be completely turned on its head.

££££ Tasting menu £120 a person, excluding drinks.





Los Angeles: Superfine Pizza

tinyurl.com/SuperfinePizza
 "We've created our very own unique style of pizza," says chef Steve Samson. "It's not traditional Italian, New York or Neapolitan, but we blend attributes from all three styles, all baked in an electric oven imported from Italy." Superfine has achieved almost cult-like status among fans that travel across the city for its market-based ingredients and three-day proved dough, making it a casual take-out spot that's well worth the effort to visit.
££ Slices from £2.50 each, whole pizzas from £16.



Oslo: Den Glade Gris

tinyurl.com/DenGladeGris
 Carnivores finding themselves in Norway's capital city should certainly find time to visit Den Glade Gris - 'The Happy Pig'. The cosy, Scandi-decorated restaurant takes a whole animal approach to its menu, creating delicious pork dishes using meat from nose to tail. The restaurant is also revered by locals for its sumptuous seafood offerings.
££ Main dishes around £25 a person.

New York: Sans

tinyurl.com/SansBK
 Vegan dining is set to be more popular than ever in 2019 and, for those unacquainted with plant-based indulgence, Sans is a perfect place to start. Even the most ardent carnivores will be delighted by the restaurant's meat-free menu, which features dishes such as olive caviar, black plum terrine and porcini risotto, all served up in effortlessly cool Brooklyn surroundings.

££ Main meals from £11, tasting menus from £37, excluding drinks.

Sydney: Friggitoria

tinyurl.com/FriggitoriaFB
 Australia might not be the most obvious destination for amazing Italian street food, but Sydney's Friggitoria has a well-earned reputation for giving the European masters a run for their money. Chef Flavio Tosolini serves up everything from goeey arancini to crumbed calamari late into the night. Everything's bite-sized and served to go, which is just as well as the place is always packed.

££ Prices range from £4-£10 a dish.

Los Angeles: Hippo

tinyurl.com/HippoRestaurant
 A neighbourhood restaurant nestled behind Figueroa's bustling thoroughfare, Hippo offers an intimate but high-ceilinged dining space, with an expansive open-plan kitchen where diners can watch award-winning chef Matt Molina rustle up flavoursome and approachable meals, including gourmet burgers and delectable clam pastas.

££ Main meals in the region of £15-£20 a person.



New York: Little Tong

tinyurl.com/LittleTong
 Neighbourhood favourite Little Tong pays homage to the Chinese province of Yunnan, offering flavourful noodle dishes and small plates showcasing local, seasonal ingredients. "Coming to the States, I've been inspired by the beautiful bounties that come with the seasons in this region," says owner and chef Simone Tong. "This allows me to make food that is inspired by what I know from China using the ingredients that are native to the New York area."
£ Meal for one, around £9.



Getting her just desserts

After spending years in the finance world, a chance discovery of a Japanese dessert not yet popular in the UK led FCA Vivien Wong to set up Little Moons

Why did you set up Little Moons?

I worked in the City of London for four or five years and always knew I wanted to set up my own business. Japanese food popularity was growing. My parents had a bakery producing traditional mochi for 30 years and then my brother and I discovered ice cream mochi in the US.

Why is this dessert different?

It's unlike anything else you've ever eaten - a new texture that's sort of chewy. With western cuisine, we don't really eat things just for texture, more for flavour and taste. The mochi adds a different dimension to ice cream.

How did your chartered accountancy training help?

It's important to have a basic

understanding of financial statements, so it held me in good stead. If you're a good accountant you know how to run a business and how to hire a good salesperson. If you're a good salesperson you may not necessarily understand the mechanics of the accounts.

I've been hiring bright people. A decade ago they would be applying for roles in the City. There has definitely been a shift in people coming to work for small companies, taking that risk and not necessarily following on a corporate path.

What was the transition from financial services like?

It was a steep learning curve. I found working in finance to be quite one-dimensional. When you start your

own business you've got to be mindful of things like marketing, creative elements - Instagram for example - as well as customer service. As an owner you've got to manage a much bigger team on a much wider scale than an audit team. Then you have to think about the culture of your business.

Why do you think that might be?

We offer a very different culture. As much as corporates offer benefits, such as dry cleaners in the office for instance, I don't need one here as we're not working such crazy hours that we can't make it to our normal one. There are now different values for people looking for work.

So you're confident despite Brexit looming?

We are not at all confident about business growth with Brexit looming, but we have signed to move into a new, larger factory. I did seriously consider looking at a site in Holland, but given the pressure to grow we decided to sign up a site in the UK.

A lot of our customers are based in Europe and I am hoping that whatever deal is signed, we will still be able to export to Europe - even if it is with a lesser margin if they put tariffs on. However, I wouldn't say that Brexit is looking good for the economy at all. It puts so much pressure on a lot of small business.

I am part of a business networking group and it is going to affect everyone, so we are trying to make contingencies as best as we can. It's very difficult given the uncertainty when even the government isn't sure of the outcomes of the negotiations.

Did you want to set up any other businesses?

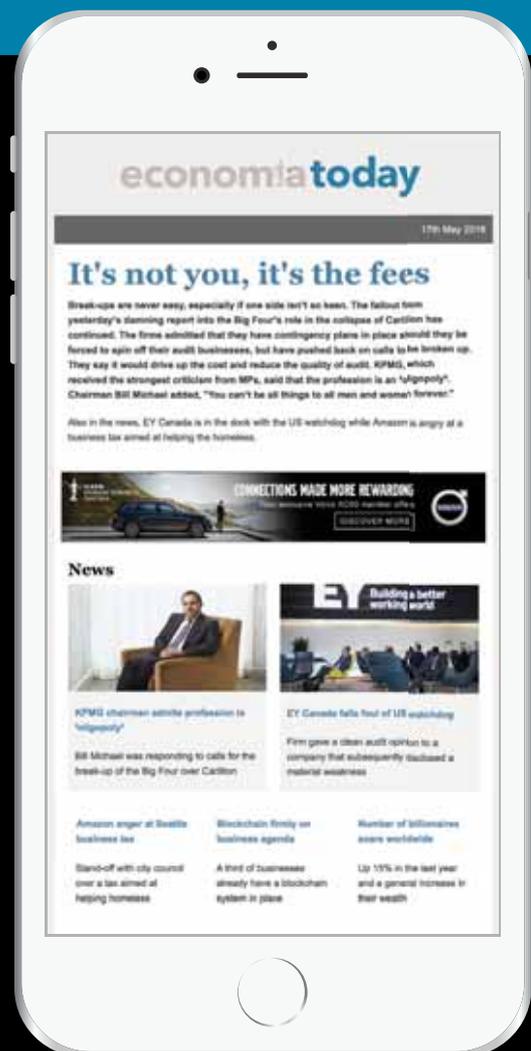
This is taking up 100% of my time. Maybe in a couple of years. I'm always being approached by people to help them with their businesses, to give them ideas, but in terms of me starting another business - no, it's definitely not on the cards. ●

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