

**INFORMATION FOR
ACCA STUDENTS
COMING TO THE UK**

**ACCA UK
ORIENTATION
GUIDE**

A large, stylized white arrow with a thick black outline, pointing to the right. The arrow is positioned to the right of the main text, with its tail overlapping the right edge of the white rounded rectangle.



WELCOME

to *ACCA UK*. We are one of ACCA's largest national offices with over 80 staff working with UK-based students, affiliates and members, as well as a wide range of other stakeholders including tuition providers and employers.

The UK is a diverse, vibrant place to live, study and work and is rich in history and culture. We wish you a fantastic experience whilst you are here and look forward to supporting you throughout your international ACCA career.

Wyn Mears, Director, ACCA UK

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
COMING TO THE UK CHECKLIST	6
ENTERING THE UK	7
LIVING IN THE UK	8
ACCA TUITION	9
UK EMPLOYMENT MARKET	11
ACCA UK SERVICES	16
LEAVING THE UK CHECKLIST	18
RECOMMENDED READING AND FURTHER INFORMATION	19



Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. ACCA accepts no liability for inconvenience or loss caused by the publication of any out of date or inaccurate information, April 2008.

INTRODUCTION

There are over 75,000 ACCA students and affiliates and nearly 55,000 ACCA members currently in the UK. ACCA has statutory recognition and is the fastest growing professional accountancy body in the country.

We work with a large network of learning providers who offer ACCA tuition through a variety of methods in locations all over the UK. Many British ACCA students work full-time and study on a part-time basis. However full-time tuition is possible and there is a large international student community.

ACCA members and students work in organisations of all sizes, in all sectors of employment from private companies to government departments. Nearly 6,000 UK employers are approved by ACCA.

ACCA UK is engaged in a number of initiatives to support students and members in the UK, as well as working closely with both business and government. We offer sector-specific magazines and a range of events nationwide. We also operate ACCA offices for Wales and Scotland that work specifically with and for members and students in those countries.

Information specifically for students and members in the UK can be found on the UK website – www.accaglobal.com/uk

If you have any queries concerning ACCA, please contact our global customer service centre:

ACCA Connect
2 Central Quay
89 Hydepark Street
Glasgow G3 8BW
Tel: +44 (0)141 582 2000
Fax: +44 (0)141 582 2222
Email: students@accaglobal.com



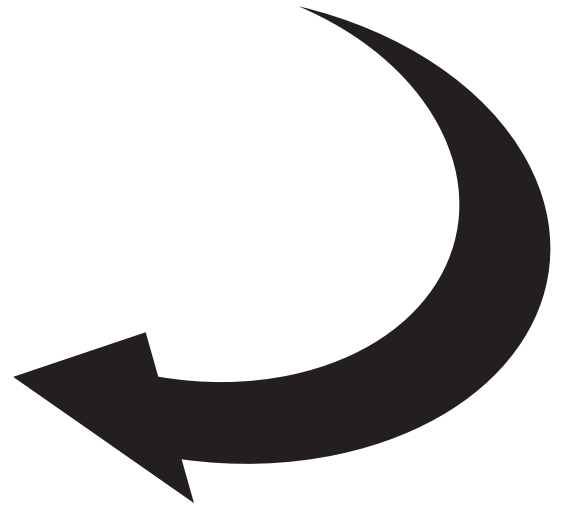
COMING TO THE UK CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE:

- research visa/work permit requirements and ensure you have any necessary visas or permits to enter the UK
- research information about living in the UK – in particular banking, accommodation, transport, language and other essential information
- research tuition options and find a learning provider
- research the UK job market – if applicable and possible, secure a job before you leave. (ACCA does not place students or members into employment. It is the responsibility of the individual student or member to find appropriate work).

WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

- notify ACCA of your change of address (and employment details if applicable) via *ACCA Connect* or *myACCA* on the website
- set up all essential living necessities – bank account etc
- research places to visit, cultural differences, possible activities – make the most of your UK experience
- find work or work experience (if applicable)
- consider opportunities to improve your skills / gain additional qualifications
- be aware of *ACCA UK* activities, publications, societies and events.



ENTERING THE UK

STUDYING IN THE UK

Before travelling to the UK, you need to know whether you require a student visa and, if so, how to apply for one. For more information visit www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk

Below is a suggested list of things you should consider when planning to study in the UK:

- if you are not yet an ACCA student, ensure you register with ACCA directly (your learning provider can't do this for you)
- complete an enrolment form for your chosen ACCA learning provider (see page 9). Enrolment forms should be available to download on their website. In order to satisfy current student visa requirements you need to complete 15 hours per week of formal tuition
- receive your acceptance pack from your learning provider. The pack should contain relevant information about fees and entering the UK on a student visa
- to apply for a student visa, you must have a valid passport and meet the British immigration requirements. Once you receive your acceptance letter from your learning provider, you should request an interview for application for a student visa with the local British Embassy or British High Commission. You must also have evidence of sufficient funds to pay your fees and living costs. At your interview you will have to demonstrate that you have sufficient command of the English language
- arrange your accommodation. The authorities may not grant you a student visa without written confirmation of proof of address whilst you are studying in the UK
- make your arrangements for travel to the UK. Please ensure that you have your learning provider's acceptance letter with you. UK immigration may require confirmation of this when you arrive in the UK.

ACCA UK is not involved in any aspect of administering or issuing Student Visas. This is managed by the Home Office Border & Immigration Agency.

For further information and guidance on UK visa requirements and application procedures please visit

www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk

WORKING IN THE UK

The Home Office Border & Immigration Agency website has clear information about the various routes open to non-UK nationals who want to work in the UK.

The UK Government wishes to manage legal migration in the interests of the UK economy, and there are opportunities for people with different types and levels of skills. However, in some instances, it is not you but your employer who has to obtain the correct work permit for you.

ACCA UK is aware that some students find it very difficult to find employers willing or able to obtain work permits for them for training purposes. The UK job market is very competitive and employers can often easily source candidates for training positions from EU (European Union) states who do not require work permits. Many ACCA students who require work permits utilise the hours they are permitted to work on a student visa and then return to their home countries on completion of UK studies to obtain the remaining relevant work experience required for ACCA membership. If they wish to return to the UK to work, many will do this post membership.

ACCA does not place students or members into employment. It is the responsibility of the individual student or member to find appropriate work.

For full information on UK work permits please visit

www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk



LIVING IN THE UK

OVERVIEW

Arriving and settling in a foreign country can be challenging and it may take time to adapt to your new environment. However, whilst living in the UK you will come across many opportunities for new experiences and many organisations to help support you.

Education UK, part of the British Council, has produced a comprehensive guide to arriving and living in the UK. It includes information on arranging visas and accommodation, working in the UK, financial and legal matters, culture, food and health care.

To access this guide on the internet go to www.educationuk.org/downloads/study_live_uk.pdf

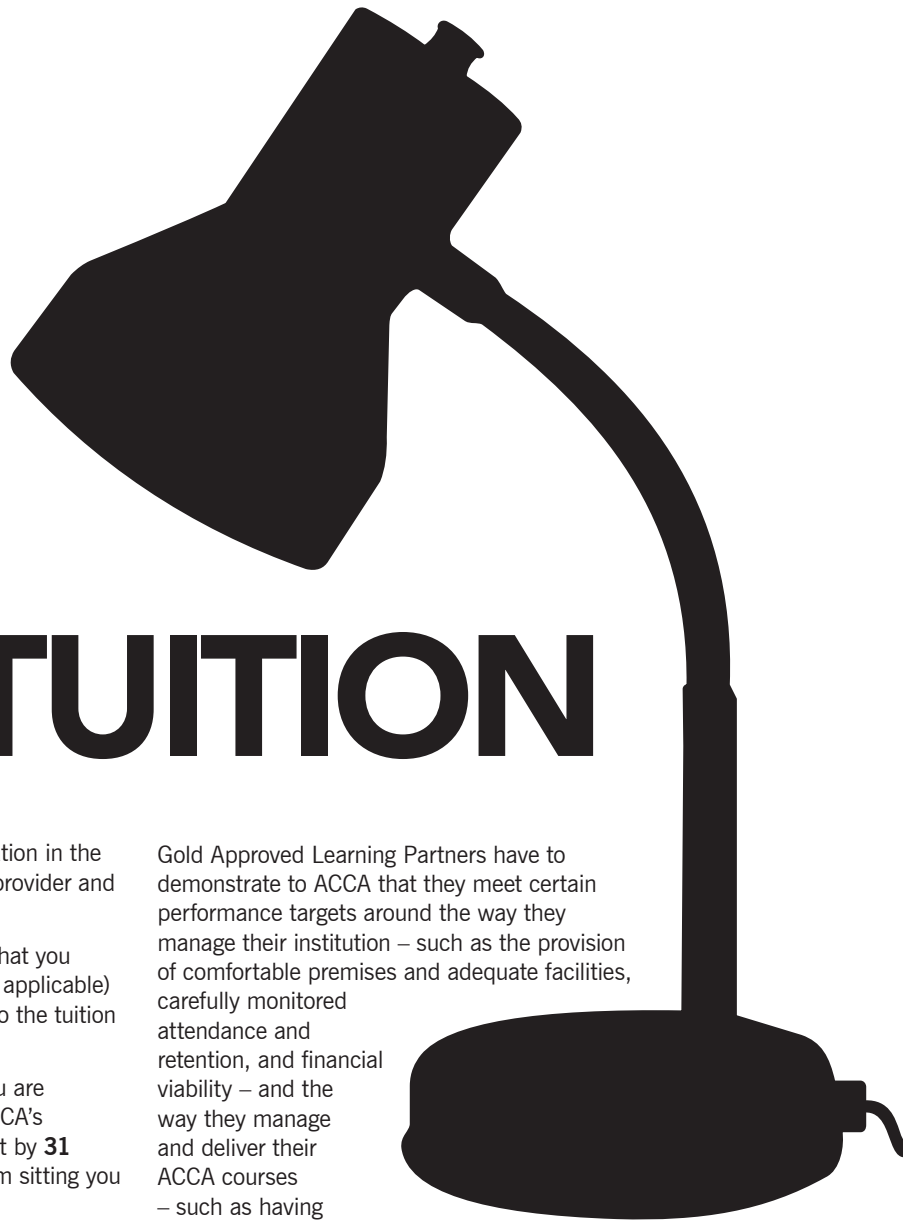
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

For many students, one of the advantages of studying in the UK is the opportunity to improve their English in an English-speaking country. As well as many opportunities to practice English in everyday situations, many students also like to take additional English language classes.

ACCA has partnered Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) – part of the world-renowned University of Cambridge.

Together, our organisations have developed Cambridge ICFE (International Certificate in Financial English). Cambridge ICFE is an ideal qualification for anyone thinking of, or already pursuing, a career in accountancy or finance. By focussing on accounting and finance vocabulary and practical business situations, it will help you to participate in meetings and discussions of a financial nature and to express opinions clearly. It will also help with understanding financial documents including statements, journal articles, letters, reports and proposals – helping you to improve your performance in the classroom and in exams. Studying for Cambridge ICFE will help you improve your language skills and enable you to use them in a wide range of accounting and financial contexts. For more information, including a list of tuition providers and exams centres, visit www.financialenglish.org

Not yet ready to take Cambridge ICFE? Then why not take Cambridge ESOL BEC (Business English Certificate) Preliminary? It's an ideal qualification if you want to improve your business English language skills and demonstrate your commitment to a career in finance. For more information visit www.cambridgeesol.org



ACCA TUITION

If you are planning to study towards the ACCA Qualification in the UK then you must ensure that you enrol with a tuition provider and obtain the correct visas.

Before you enrol with a tuition provider it is important that you register as a student with ACCA. This will mean that (if applicable) you have the correct exemption information to pass onto the tuition provider to ensure you study towards the right papers.

You will not be able to enter for ACCA exams unless you are a registered ACCA student. If you intend to enter for ACCA's June exam sitting you must register as an ACCA student by **31 December**. If you intend to enter for the December exam sitting you must register as an ACCA student by **15 August**.

It is your responsibility to enter for exams with ACCA. As a registered student, if you intend to sit exams, the exam entry deadlines are **15 April** for June Exams and **15 October** for December Exams.

UK TUITION PROVIDERS

It is important that you make the right decisions when preparing for your exams. ACCA courses are taught by nearly 200 tuition providers throughout the UK, so it can be difficult to select the one that is right for you.

ACCA strongly recommends that you opt for a provider that is registered under ACCA's Approved Learning Partners scheme, as you can be sure that they:

- are monitored by ACCA
- meet the minimum quality criteria
- receive up-to-date information regarding ACCA
- will be subject to an investigation in the event of any student complaints.

Gold Approved Learning Partners have to demonstrate to ACCA that they meet certain performance targets around the way they manage their institution – such as the provision of comfortable premises and adequate facilities, carefully monitored attendance and retention, and financial viability – and the way they manage and deliver their ACCA courses – such as having a knowledgeable and experienced teaching team, a structured teaching programme and providing students with advice on study options and tutorial support.

Platinum Approved Learning Partners, in addition to meeting the Gold performance targets, have to provide evidence of continual improvement and innovation, and must consistently meet exam results targets, set by meeting or exceeding ACCA's worldwide pass rates.

You can access an up-to-date list of UK Learning Partners on the ACCA website:

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/tuition/search_tuition

Costs for tuition vary depending on the method of study and individual learning provider. Payment for tuition takes place directly between you and your learning provider. ACCA only controls costs and payment for sitting exams.



ACCA TUITION CONTINUED

VARIANT PAPERS (LAW AND TAX)

To support the international breadth of ACCA's membership, we offer students the opportunity to take law and tax papers that reflect the law and tax systems of several countries. However please note that if you are studying ACCA papers for law or tax in the UK, it is highly unlikely that UK tuition providers will offer courses for these papers in anything other than the UK variant. While it is permissible to sit any available law or tax variant exam in the UK, you will need to consider how you will study for a non-UK law or tax variant paper.

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING PAPERS

You have the choice of answering exam papers in accordance with either UK accounting standards or international accounting standards. It is possible to find tuition for either type in the UK. However, you are advised to consider the country in which you are planning to work when you decide which accounting standards to undertake. UK standards will not be applicable in most countries outside the UK.

EXAM CENTRES

We have 45 exam centres located throughout the UK. Most major UK cities will have at least one exam centre. To see where exam centres are located, please visit our website:

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/exams/centres

UK EMPLOYMENT MARKET*



ACCOUNTANCY MARKET OVERVIEW

Currently the UK employment market remains buoyant and there is a constant demand for experienced or qualified finance professionals. However market fluctuations can affect demand for accountants and we advise you research current conditions before leaving for the UK. Recruitment consultants can often be a useful source of current market information.

The UK tax year runs from 6 April to 5 April. The temporary employment contract market is especially buoyant leading up to the end of the financial year and also at half year time. The permanent market is boosted by new budgets in the new financial year, and the Christmas period is traditionally slower.

Many international students arrive in the UK and wish to work in London. However there are many exciting opportunities with some of the larger companies based outside London as well as in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

London can be an extremely competitive and fast-paced market with over 100 of Europe's 500 largest companies based here. By living in a smaller town in the UK you can experience a different pace of life. Rates of pay tend to be lower outside London, however, they are still competitive and combine with a lower cost of living.

For more information on rates of pay please visit:
www.accaglobal.com/students/training_careers/support/salariesurveys

* This section has been produced with the assistance of professional recruitment specialists Martin Ward Anderson - www.martinwardanderson.com. We would like to thank them for their support.

UK EMPLOYMENT MARKET

CONTINUED

CURRENT TRENDS

Corporate sector

Currently there is great demand for the following types of finance professionals: internal auditors, part and newly-qualified accountants, project systems accountants, business/financial analysts, financial controllers and finance directors across both temporary and permanent recruitment sectors. In addition, large employers are looking for specific skill sets including IFRS, UK GAAP, consolidations, non-finance liaison, process and controls, staff management, management accounting and financial accounting.

Banking and Financial Services

Traditionally, the peak season within the financial services temporary sector tends to be during the holiday period of June, July and August as well as end of year for holiday cover. The peak season for management accountants is quarter three when employers are putting together their budgets for the following year.

For permanent roles within financial services there has been a consistently high demand due to the shortage of qualified accountants. However, it should be acknowledged that the impact of the recent credit crunch may affect this demand in the future.

Practice sector

The practice sector remains buoyant, with the bigger accounting firms experiencing good growth in 2007. There are good opportunities, especially in audit, tax and advisory services. There is a good pipeline of UK-based talent for these firms, however, resulting in a very competitive job market. Therefore demonstrating relevant experience and business skills is important.

The UK also has an active 'small and medium practice' sector. These firms generally deal with smaller clients, often people who own their own businesses. The work done at these firms is wide-ranging and often provides good breadth of experience. Remember to include consideration of these employers in your job search.

Public and not-for-profit sector

There are challenges in recruiting accounting professionals in this sector as job requirements can be complex. This, coupled with the political and legal framework of the sector, sometimes requires specialist knowledge and capabilities. However, there are increased opportunities as this sector continues in its effort to professionalise the finance function and recruit people who are studying for a professional accountancy qualification.

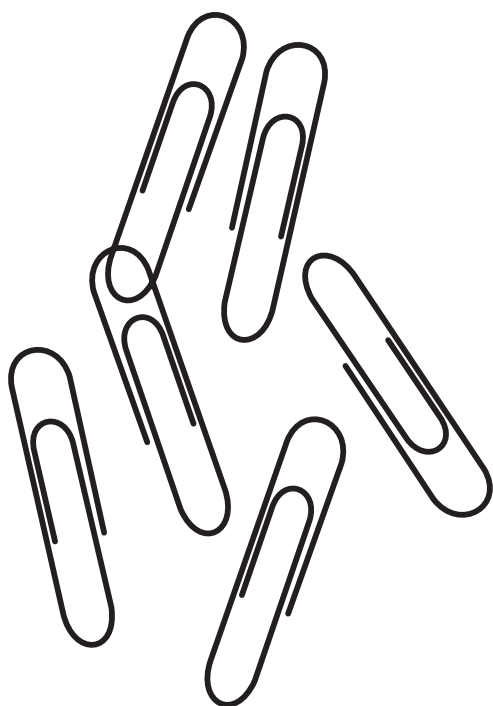
The trend for accounting professionals with commercial skills moving into the public and not-for-profit sector is expected to continue, as organisations in this sector become more commercial in their approach. This along with the expected implementation of IFRS in central government means that ACCAs will be marketable in this sector. In the NHS, recruitment activity is due to increase with demand from those NHS trusts seeking to obtain Foundation Trust status. Commercial finance and accounting skills will be highly in demand.

FINDING A JOB IN THE UK

Types of vacancy

Jobs in the UK are offered on either a temporary or permanent basis. A temporary contract is for a pre-defined amount of time (eg six months), after which the employment will end. A permanent contract is where employment is ongoing until either the employer or employee choose to end the contract.

Both permanent and temporary jobs will be offered on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time usually means you will be expected to work a five day week (Monday to Friday). Usual business hours are 9am – 5.30pm. A part-time job means that you will be working a pre-defined amount of this time (often two or three days a week).



Where to find vacancies

There are a variety of different methods you can use to find accounting vacancies in the UK. Many of these can even be done from your home country before you arrive.



- recruitment consultants

Many recruitment agencies specialise in accounting and finance positions. Some of these agencies will allow candidates to register once they have a confirmed UK arrival date and have secured an appropriate visa. A recruitment consultant will register your details, match you with available vacancies and put you forward to employers. They are also very good sources of information on current recruitment trends and demand for accountants in the UK
- newspapers/trade press

Many local and national newspapers will have a jobs section which may include accounting and finance vacancies. Some will have specific days that these vacancies appear. Research the local newspaper in the region of the UK you are going to live and investigate what type of vacancies are advertised. Often these vacancies are also replicated on their website. Accountancy publications such as PASS and PQ magazines may also contain job vacancy information
- job websites

General job hunting websites such as totaljobs.com and monster.com can have a good selection of accountancy vacancies
- contacts and networking

Never underestimate the power of personal recommendation. Do you, or your contacts, know anyone working in accountancy in the UK who may be able to recommend you for a position or help to look for vacancies?

UK EMPLOYMENT MARKET

CONTINUED

How to apply

This can vary between employers. Some, often large, organisations have a mandatory application form which must be completed. Other organisations, and often recruitment consultants, will want you to supply a resumé/curriculum vitae (CV).

- application forms

Often these have standardised sections for you to enter details of your education and previous work experience. They also nearly always include a section that asks you to detail why you are suited to the role. This section is your opportunity to sell your skills and attitude to the organisation and convince them to invite you to interview. Take care to ensure you have included information on all areas identified in the person specification and/or job role.

- CVs

There is no definitive way to write a successful CV. However Martin Ward Anderson recommend the following:

- ensure your CV is a maximum of three pages. It must be clear and concise and in chronological order. Try to use bullet points as opposed to long paragraphs
- research the employer that you are targeting and adapt your CV to highlight the skills and experience most relevant to this particular role and employer UK

- employers may not be familiar with your previous employers so it can be useful to provide a brief company description
- summarise your technical expertise, putting your strongest skill set first
- highlight any project-based work you have undertaken and ensure any gaps are clarified e.g. travelling, relocating etc. Highlight achievements and areas where you have added value, rather than simply offering a list of your previous responsibilities
- within financial services, if you have experience then indicate this clearly on your CV (especially product knowledge).
- references

UK employers will always want evidence of references, usually contact details of a previous employer that they can contact independently. However you could also arrange written references before you come to the UK and carry them with you. Contact good past employers and mentors and ask if it is possible for them to give you a written reference to use in the UK. Speak to any referees that you have listed on your CV, let them know your upcoming plans and ask if they mind being contacted. Make sure you have all their current contact details – including an email address.



What are the major obstacles an international candidate faces?

- international candidates always face an issue with UK technical experience. Whilst this is difficult to overcome it can be helped by clearly clarifying previous technical experience gained at home so that correlations can be made by a UK employer
- be realistic about salary expectations and be prepared to be flexible
- communicate effectively in interviews, providing in-depth answers and demonstrating commercial awareness
- before attending any interview make sure you research the market, and before approaching a recruitment consultancy, research the sectors that are of particular interest to you – even specific employers you may like to work for
- highlight your individual unique selling points. You must make sure you can demonstrate that you are as committed to the role as any UK candidate
- If you are looking to become a finance director in the future then you must ensure that you gain a good mix of management accounting, financial accounting and staff management skills.

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

Although expectations can differ between employers, in general UK employers will expect good levels of the following skills:

- proficient English language ability and an awareness of British business culture
- commercial awareness – both general and specific to the markets in which the employer operates
- communication – both written and verbal
- team working
- independent thinking and use of initiative
- numerical ability
- problem-solving.

The majority of employers will also expect a significant amount of relevant work experience. As the majority of British ACCA students work and study at the same time, many UK employers will expect your previous work experience to match the amount of time you have been studying ACCA (even if you were not doing both at the same time).

Employment contracts and leaving a job

If employed on a permanent employment contract it is usual that:

- you will receive a fixed number of annual leave (holiday) days each year. Usually this is no less than 20 days per year that can be arranged in advance with your line manager. In addition to this you will usually be given all public (bank) holidays (eight per year)
- you will be required to work a pre-defined notice period once you decide to leave your employer. Most employers will require between one and three month's notice. It is usual to submit notice of your intention to leave your employer in writing to your line manager.

Many other employment policies exist – some mandatory and set by the Government (eg sick leave and maternity leave etc) and some specific to individual employers (access to private healthcare, childcare facilities, flexible working etc). Often you can find further information on an employer's website.

ACCA UK SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

ACCA UK is one of ACCA's largest national offices with over 80 staff working with and supporting UK-based ACCA students, affiliates and members. We operate from offices in London, York, Glasgow and Birmingham. Additionally we have separate national offices for Wales and Scotland – ACCA Wales based in Cardiff and ACCA Scotland based in Edinburgh. Our colleagues in ACCA Ireland support students in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

UK PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

The ACCA UK website [accaglobal.com/uk](http://www.accaglobal.com/uk) contains information directly relevant to students, affiliates and members in the UK. It contains information from all ACCA UK departments and advises on the latest UK events, research, resources and hot topics.

Websites also exist for ACCA Wales at wales.accaglobal.com, and ACCA Scotland at scotland.accaglobal.com and contain information for students, affiliates and members living and working in these countries.

Several UK employment sector-specific publications are also produced:

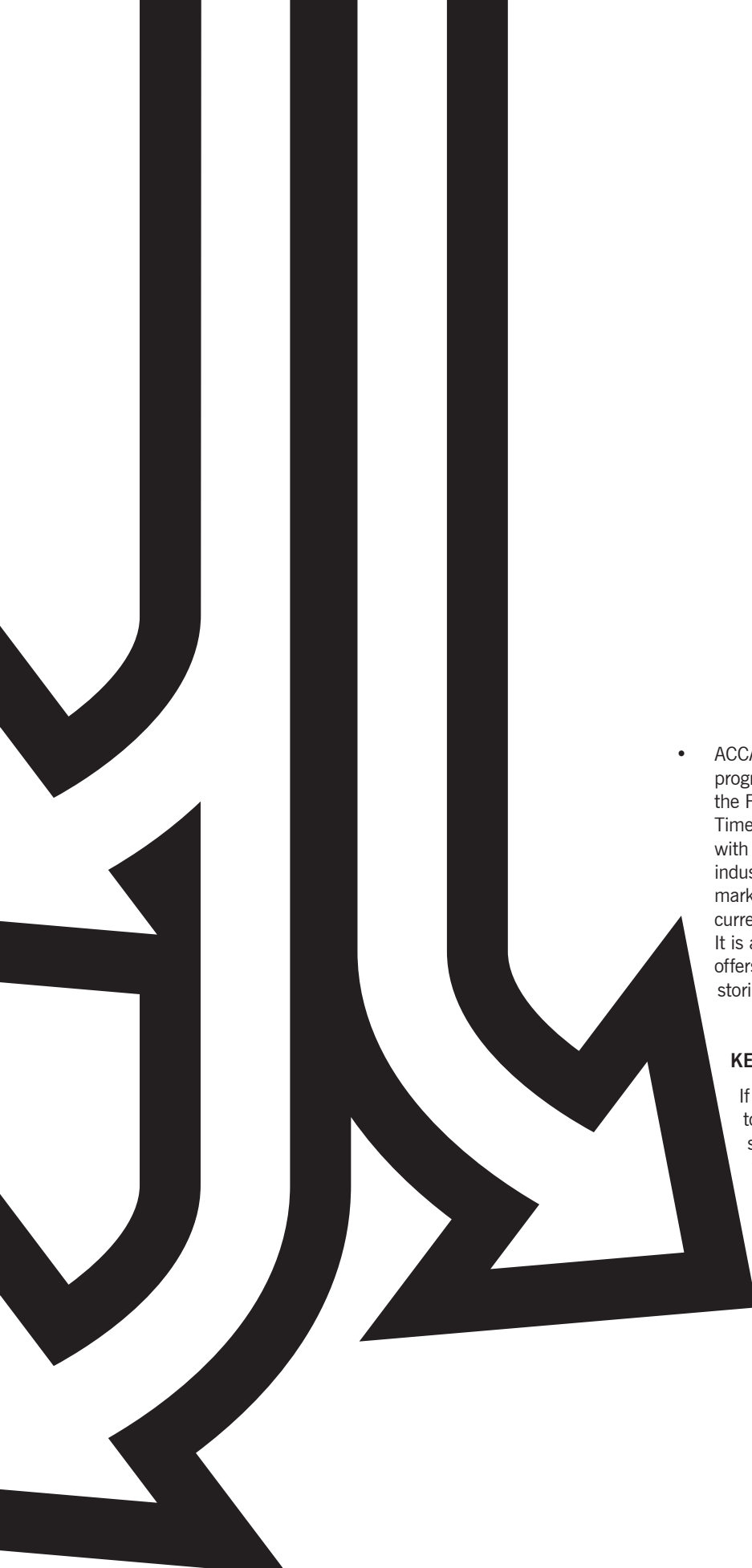
- *Public Eye* – public sector magazine
- *Corporate Sector Review* – corporate sector magazine
- *In Practice* – practice sector magazine
- *Financial Services Review* – financial services sector magazine
- *Health Service Review* – health sector magazine

These are distributed directly to ACCA members working in these sectors in the UK. However it is also possible to download them from the UK website www.accaglobal.com/members/publications/sector_magazines/

UK STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND EVENTS

In addition to global resources such as *student accountant* magazine and resources found on the student section of www.accaglobal.com, we provide a number of UK-specific services:

- for students who are planning to sit exams, we put together a listing of study support events taking place from the end of February to the end of April (for June exams) and from the end of September to the end of October (for December exams). All the events are available from Approved Learning Partner (ALP) Tuition Providers across the UK and include topics such as study skills, memory techniques and exam techniques and events specific to certain ACCA papers and subject areas. We also provide details of revision courses run by Approved Learning Providers for each examination sitting.
- details of Learning Provider open days can be found on the ACCA UK website
- ACCA UK holds a twice-yearly series of presentations on ACCA's Practical Experience Requirement (PER) which focus on how to record experience and claim performance objectives on the Trainee Development Matrix (TDM)
- ACCA UK and NUS (National Union of Students) have been working together so that ACCA students can apply for the NUS Associate Card, which gives cardholders access to products and services from a variety of companies. The NUS represents nearly five million students across the UK, providing excellent benefits and helpful research and information. The NUS website offers students a range of facilities, including up-to-the-minute information on NUS campaigns, education news, and advice on issues relating to housing, education and health care.

- 
- ACCA students can benefit from the Financial Times Education programme, saving you up to 65% off a subscription to both the Financial Times newspaper and FT.com. The Financial Times is a useful resource for ACCA students, providing you with a broad-based, in-depth knowledge of business and industry. It covers global investing and international capital market activity in full, and provides an exhaustive summary of currencies worldwide, commodities and world stock markets. It is also the leading newspaper for UK company news and offers definitive coverage of the world's biggest corporate stories.

KEEP IN CONTACT

If you move to the UK it is crucial that you remember to update your address details through the *myACCA* section of the website. Once we know you are in the UK, we will automatically notify you of UK-related events, publications and initiatives.



LEAVING THE UK CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- get contact details and references from your UK employer or tuition provider (or introductions to others in your home country if possible) – contacts can often create opportunities for you
- research the best way of using your UK experience to your advantage in your destination country (eg language skills, work experience, qualification, contacts etc).

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN YOUR HOME / NEXT DESTINATION COUNTRY:

- notify ACCA of your change of address (and employer details if applicable) via *ACCA Connect* or *myACCA* on www.accaglobal.com
- contact your local ACCA office or visit their website to ensure you are up to date with all local ACCA information and services. Details of local offices can be found at www.accaglobal.com





RECOMMENDED READING AND FURTHER INFORMATION

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS AND LINKS

The British Council

www.britishcouncil.org

Home Office Border & Immigration Agency

www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

UK Council for International Student Affairs
(UKCISA)

www.ukcosa.org.uk

Visit Britain

www.visitbritain.com

ACCA WEB LINKS

ACCA UK website

accaglobal.com/uk

ACCA Scotland website

scotland.accaglobal.com

ACCA Wales website

wales.accaglobal.com

Learning Provider database

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/tuition/search_tuition

Exam centre database

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/exams/centres

ACCA Potential - a free electronic newsletter for prospective students that provides information and advice about a career in finance and accountancy

www.accaglobal.com/join/why_acca/potential

JOB SEARCH LINKS

Many useful UK job websites and recruitment agencies are available, a selection of these are shown below:

Job vacancy websites

www.monster.co.uk

www.totaljobs.co.uk

Recruitment agencies

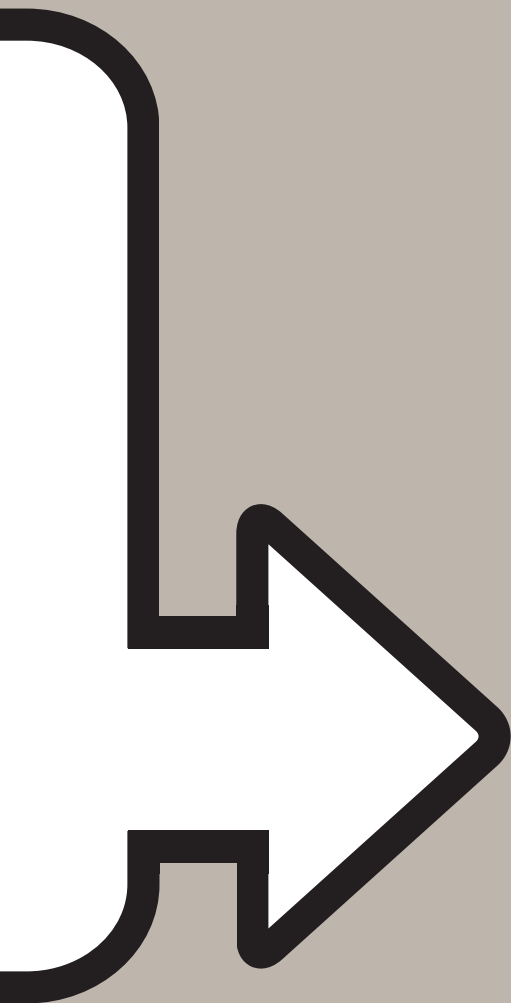
www.hays.com

www.martinwardanderson.com

www.michaelpage.co.uk

www.roberthalf.co.uk

www.robertwalters.co.uk



ACCA CONNECT

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