

## Alternative ownership structures guidance

The operating models of ACCA firms are changing, with a move away from traditional ownership models to alternative ownership structures. New models include non-partner funding such as private equity investors and Employee Ownership Trusts (EOTs). Despite significant external investment from a third party, the day-to-day operations of the firm are usually still controlled by suitably qualified individuals.

In order to accommodate these new and emerging ownership models and allow eligible firms to continue to use the 'Chartered Certified Accountants' designation, ACCA has implemented a framework for the use of practice descriptions. The requirements are set out in regulations 16 and 17 of Section B4 (Descriptions of Professional Accountants and Firms and the Names of Practising Firms) of the [Code of Ethics and Conduct](#) and are effective from 15 December 2023.

Under these requirements, a firm that does not meet the strict ownership or board control criteria set out in Regulation 15 to describe itself as a firm of "Chartered Certified Accountants", "Certified Accountants" or "an ACCA practice", may make an application (and pay the applicable fee) to ACCA for the use of such practice descriptions.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate to ACCA that day-to-day control of the firm continues to rest with suitably qualified principals. In particular, the firm must satisfy the following conditions:

- a the firm's affairs are managed by a board of directors, committee or other management body where a majority of that body are ACCA members and other persons having, in the opinion of ACCA, an appropriate qualification, and
- b the firm has in place board instructions to cover voting rights on specified matters where a majority of ACCA members and other persons having, in the opinion of ACCA, an appropriate qualification would be necessary, and
- c the firm has in place arrangements to prevent non-qualified individuals exercising undue influence on the firm's regulatory obligations and day-to-day operations, and
- d the non-qualified individuals give an undertaking to comply with the requirements of the ACCA Rulebook insofar as the provisions therein apply to them, and
- e any other requirements which ACCA may impose on the applicant firm.

The [Application to register as an ACCA firm](#) form will need to be submitted together with an annual fee of £500. The registration must be renewed on an annual basis before 31 December.

Separate forms are available for the UK and Ireland.

Please contact [authorisation@accaglobal.com](mailto:authorisation@accaglobal.com) if you require further information.