

A world-class education system: The Advanced British Standard consultation

A public consultation issued by The Department for Education

Comments from ACCA to The Department for Education

20 March 2024

REF: TECH-CDR-2108

About ACCA:

ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) is the global professional body for professional accountants.

We're a thriving global community of **247,000** members and **526,000** future members based in **181** countries and regions, who work across a wide range of sectors and industries. In the UK we have over 98,000 members working up and down the country, across all sectors. We uphold the highest professional and ethical values.

We offer everyone everywhere the opportunity to experience a rewarding career in Accountancy, finance, and management. Our qualifications and learning opportunities develop strategic business leaders, forward-thinking professionals with the financial, business, and digital expertise essential for the creation of sustainable organisations and flourishing societies.

Since 1904, being a force for public good has been embedded in our purpose. We believe that Accountancy is a cornerstone profession of society and is vital in helping economies, organisations, and individuals to grow and prosper. It does this by creating robust trusted financial and business management, combating corruption, ensuring organisations are managed ethically, driving sustainability, and providing rewarding career opportunities.

And through our cutting-edge research, we lead the profession by answering today's questions and preparing for the future. We're a not-for-profit organisation. Find out more at accaglobal.com

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Advanced British Standard presents an opportunity to ensure the 16-19 education system is world leading and that every young person, regardless of their socio-economic background, location, or circumstances can reach their potential and gain both the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a major global economy.

We support the government's ambition to ensure that the Advanced British Standard has a clear offer for all students. Improving levels of awareness around the broad range of entry routes to a fulfilling career in the Accountancy profession is one of our core priorities; this includes work being undertaken across schools and education institutions in the UK and worldwide. We would welcome the opportunity to feed into the development of the ABS and engage in future consultation, at this stage we are pleased to share some general observations.

- Improving levels of awareness around the broad range of entry routes to a fulfilling career in the Accountancy profession is one of our core priorities; this includes work being undertaken across schools and education institutions in the UK and worldwide.
- The accessibility of clear and effective progression pathways for all learners will be key to the success of the Advanced British Standard. Consistent feedback from employers and learning providers in our network highlight that 16–19-year-old recruits often lack basic skills needed to progress onto more technical study. In order for employers to support learners through their development journey, greater transparency around the learning outcomes is required.
- Professional accountants are at the heart of the sustainable organisation of the future. They play a key role in helping organisations create, protect, and report sustainable value. Our published research on professional accountants at the heart of sustainable organisations¹ examines the crucial role of accountants in supporting the entire economy and the importance of building a future skills pipeline to support all organisations regardless of industry or size.
- While many employers face difficulty recruiting people with the necessary skills at school leaver age; there can often also be challenges with retention at this level. For this reason, feedback from employers within ACCA's network that are looking to bring

¹ <https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/professional-insights/pro-accountants-the-future/pro-accountants-heart-sustainable-orgs.html>

on 'workplace ready' talent, indicates more consistent levels of interest for learners at level 4-7. The Advanced British Standard presents an opportunity to embed enhanced the workplace ready skills for learners and to act as a runway for further study and lifelong learning.

- Improving social mobility and inclusion must be at the heart of the design of the Advanced British Standard to ensure a fairer and more equitable future for those moving through 16–19 education. The accountancy profession has made significant progress towards diversity and inclusion, attracting a broader spectrum of talent at all levels, including individuals from various ethnic, gender, and culturally diverse backgrounds. Since 2018, the vast majority of accountancy bodies have increased their percentage of female members worldwide. ACCA continues to have the highest percentage of female members of all the accountancy bodies, as detailed in the FRC Key Facts and Trends in the Accountancy Profession publication.
- UK qualifications are a route for demonstrating soft power across the globe. ACCA has a global network reaching 181 countries and regions offering UK-issued qualifications. The global reach of UK professional bodies, like ACCA, raises international recognition of UK excellence when it comes to professional education and qualifications. ACCA liaises with government on the role of soft power through the UK Soft Power Group, the Group's recent report² highlights key priorities for the future of UK soft power.

We hope these comments and observations are useful and we look forward to future engagement and consultation surrounding the Advanced British Standard.

² <https://bfpg.co.uk/2023/06/the-future-of-soft-power/>