

# Trainee accountant: Information about the role

Sayer Vincent is an award-winning firm of Chartered Accountants with a clear focus on charities and social enterprises. We aim to help social purpose organisations become more effective and want them to be able to deliver more for their beneficiaries. Our reputation is built on an established track record of delivering value for our clients and providing a personal service.

We are an ethical firm that bases all its decisions and the way it operates on the fundamental principle that people are more important than money. Our goals are to deliver excellent services, and to treat clients and staff well.

We are looking for individuals seeking to become Chartered Accountants who are committed to completing training for the internationally recognised ACA qualification. The 3-year training programme, which includes studying towards professional exams and relevant work experience, will commence in early September 2019 or with the option of a deferred start in early 2020. You will have the opportunity to work alongside our expert staff and gain an understanding of the key issues faced by the not-for-profit / social purpose sector whilst making a real contribution with our clients. Since we take on a group of trainee accountants every year, you will be a part of a supportive group of fellow trainees with different levels of knowledge and experience.

You can find out more about [our people](#) and [working at Sayer Vincent](#) as a trainee on our website. In addition, you can [read about some of our SV 'alumni'](#) who have gone on into different roles in the social purpose sector after training with us (our trainees also go into industry/other practices, or decide to stay with us on qualification).

## The trainee accountant role

During your training you will primarily be involved with audit work with our clients, alongside a limited amount of tax compliance work and accounts preparation. You

will work with more experienced trainees, and alongside qualified accountants, audit managers and partners, to gain the practical experience you need. You will have the opportunity to develop a broad knowledge of the social purpose sector through access to a wide range of client organisations. The role is very much client-facing and you will need to employ excellent communication skills to build strong relationships with our clients to support delivery of your work.

We do not use a heavily standardised audit approach; we prefer to tailor what we do to client needs, while gathering enough evidence to give our audit opinion. We do this to ensure that we can offer an audit process that adds value as well as meeting reporting requirements. This means that you will be encouraged to think and use your judgment about the audit tests that are appropriate for different clients and different environments. You will become more skilled at doing this throughout your training.

For every audit assignment we ensure that there is a team planning meeting before the work starts. You will be part of these meetings, giving you the opportunity to learn more about the client, to see how more experienced staff approach each audit project, and to put forward your views on the audit approach.

You will be booked for work out with clients at their offices throughout the UK (though many are based in London, the South East and the Midlands) and you will also spend time working at our London office, and at college (our ACA provider is First Intuition and training takes place [in Central London](#)). While out at client offices you will be liaising with different contacts at the client and gathering the evidence that we need to reach our audit opinion – curiosity and investigative skills are essential. When you are working in our office you may be finalising audit work or preparing for future projects, alongside learning from your colleagues. For the remainder of your time you will be training for your qualification and spending time preparing for your exams. You will have access to study leave, but it will also be necessary to spend significant time outside of working time studying in order to gain your qualification.

As you move through your training, gradually you will become the ‘expert’ and you will be coaching, training and supervising less experienced trainees out at clients.

You will have a principal manager to support you during your training. They will appraise you and assess your progress with your professional skills, practical work experience and studies. They will also want to hear from you about your career aspirations and any learning needs in addition to your accountancy training.

Our induction approach is that you go out to clients as soon as possible and you will be asked to take on practical tasks so that you can learn actively and see that you are making a contribution to our work and the impact this has with clients. Your training with First Intuition will also start towards the beginning of your time with us – you will study bookkeeping first of all (so please don't worry if you don't have any knowledge or background in accounting) and then the first ACA exams you sit will be at the Certificate level of the qualification.

We have a friendly team of staff and you will have the opportunity to get to know everyone – we look forward to welcoming you.

## Method of application

To apply for the role of trainee accountant, you need to complete our application form electronically and email it to: [jobs@sayervincent.co.uk](mailto:jobs@sayervincent.co.uk). The application form is provided as a pdf document which you can download, save, type onto, re-save and submit by email as an attachment. It is downloadable from our website. Only applications made using our application form and submitted by email will usually be accepted. Please **ensure that you do save your completed form** before attaching it and emailing it.

Please use Adobe Acrobat Reader to complete your application form – this is available free online if you do not already have it installed. Where already installed, you should upgrade your version to the most up to date version in advance of completing the form (otherwise you may have problems saving the information you input).

If you have any problems applying via this method due to any disability, please email [jobs@sayervincent.co.uk](mailto:jobs@sayervincent.co.uk) to discuss an alternative method of application, or alternatively call 020 7841 6360 and ask to speak to the HR manager.

Our closing date for applications is **Sunday 17 March**. Any applications received after this deadline will not be eligible for review.

## Recruitment timescales

Due to the volume of applications we receive, unfortunately we are unable to contact each applicant personally. We will generally contact shortlisted candidates one week prior to our selection day.

Our selection day will be held at our office at Invicta House, 108–114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL on **Monday 1 April**. Candidates will be required to attend for most of the day. If you are not able to attend on the scheduled selection day, we will be unable to take your application forward even if you have been shortlisted.

After our selection day, we will notify candidates who have attended of the outcomes as soon as possible. If you are offered a role we will issue a written offer letter and take up your references. If you are not offered a role, you will be offered verbal feedback on your performance in the selection process.

## What we're looking for

In your application, we ask you to put forward information about your academic qualifications, your work experience (both paid and unpaid) and any extracurricular activities while studying. We also ask you for examples from your experience in a number of specific areas. Further information about the role requirements can be found below:

- You can only enter into a training agreement with Sayer Vincent if you have a British university degree at class 2:2 or above (or equivalent), or alternatively have passed AAT finals (Professional Diploma, level 4). We welcome and encourage applicants from all degree disciplines.
- If you have a 2:2 degree, you must meet our requirements at both GCSE and A-level as set out below. If you have a 2:1 degree (or above) or have passed AAT finals (Professional Diploma, level 4), you must meet either our GCSE or A-level requirements. Our requirements below degree level are as follows:

- Pre 2017 UCAS tariff: 300 UCAS points (or equivalent) at A-level. New UCAS tariff: 120 UCAS points. We only include a candidate's top three A-levels and we do not include General Studies when assessing UCAS points.
- At least five GCSEs or O-levels (or equivalent) at grades A or B (9 to 5 under the revised GCSE grade structure), and including Maths and English
- If you have gained qualifications outside the UK, you may be asked to provide equivalency information. We will notify you if this is required and it will be your responsibility to apply for this information and pay any fees due. You can find out more at: <http://ecctis.co.uk/naric/>
- In addition to our academic requirements, we are looking for candidates who have:
  - An interest in audit work and commitment to obtaining the ACA qualification
  - A strong commitment to the not-for-profit/social purpose sector
  - Excellent communication skills
  - Ability to work independently and as part of a team
  - Ability to work and study concurrently
  - The desire to work flexibly to get the job done
  - Ability to build strong, positive working relationships with colleagues and clients
  - Ability to assimilate and use large amounts of information quickly
  - Ability to gain technical knowledge and share knowledge and concepts with others to enhance their learning
  - Numeracy skills
- You must be available to start work in London in early September 2019, or with a deferred start in early 2020; alternative start dates are not possible
- The majority of our work takes place at our clients' offices, rather than our own, so you will need to be prepared to commute to various locations while working with our clients. If you are appointed you must be prepared to stay away from home, with accommodation being provided. You may sometimes have back-to-back weeks away for different clients since we have to balance client requirements with staff availability.
- Trainees work hard and have time budgets to keep to on all work. We have a very busy audit season between May and August each year so there is often

additional time pressure during these months. In this role you must be willing to work very flexibly throughout the year to meet client needs – when you work extra hours, you accrue time that you can take back at a later date, which can be especially helpful around exam periods.

- Combining the ACA training with gaining work experience is very demanding and requires commitment. The level of commitment required means it is not usually appropriate for anyone who is undertaking any other training course or study at the same time. The ACA qualification takes three years to complete, so you must be prepared to commit to this role for a minimum of three years.
- Sayer Vincent is committed to providing high quality services to our clients and we wish to recruit individuals who are committed to completing the training. If you do not pass your exams by the second attempt, we may terminate your training agreement and your employment. Our aim is to support you to pass your exams at the first attempt and this is expected in the vast majority of cases. You must be willing to take on a combination of work, travel, study and exams flexibly throughout your traineeship.

### Some pointers on completing your application

- It is vital that you complete the application form as fully as possible. We cannot make any assumptions about your experience, knowledge, skills or abilities. We will make decisions about whether you meet our academic requirements and about shortlisting based solely on the content of your application form.
- It is also essential that you stick to the word limits where these are defined within the application form. Word limits are set so that we give every candidate an equal chance to explain their experiences to us. Information given beyond the prescribed word limits may be disregarded.
- You will want to leave enough time to be able to check through your application before submitting it
- Make sure you retain a copy of what you have submitted so that you have it for future reference, alongside a copy of this information document
- Please ensure that you do **save your completed form** before attaching it and emailing it to us.

## Summary of terms and conditions

Holiday	20 days per year plus statutory days. Additional time off may be accrued through working overtime when this is required, and trainees are encouraged to use this time off, especially when they are studying for their exams.
Study leave	This varies year to year during your time as a trainee, but we provide study leave for you to attend ACA courses, revision courses and exams associated with your first sitting of each exam.
Study costs	Sayer Vincent will pay for course fees, all study texts, examination fees (first attempts only), and subscriptions to student societies.
Training agreement	A training agreement of three years' duration will be provided. During the period of this training agreement you gain the practical work experience that is required to qualify as ACA, alongside your studies.
Hours of work	<p>We are contracted to work 35 hours per week. Office hours are generally 9/9.30am to 5/5.30pm, but client commitments permitting, you may be able to work flexibly around this. We all need to fit in with client requirements and mirror their working hours as far as practicable when working on client sites.</p> <p>We all complete electronic timesheets, so if you work overtime this will be recorded and you can access time off in lieu when this fits in around client work.</p> <p>You will definitely need to work extra hours during some assignments, and this is more likely during the summer each year (May to August). It is also very likely that you will work extra hours when you are staying away from home for assignments.</p>
Appraisals and	After the probationary period, appraisals are normally every six months while you are a trainee. All ACA students are required to keep online records of their development with ICAEW on an on-

development tracking	going basis and these records must be updated regularly. You will also meet with your principal manager regularly outside of the appraisal process.
Salary	Salary increases, other than any related to our standard pay award, are based on performance and ability compared against an agreed salary scale and expected progression for trainees. Salaries are reviewed every six months and, subject to performance and ability, our expectation is that your salary will increase every 6 months while you are a trainee.
Pension	We have a group personal pension scheme into which you can contractually enrol via salary sacrifice, or you will be automatically enrolled according to legislative requirements.
Start date	Early September 2019, or deferred start in early 2020.

## Further information

You can find out more about training for the ACA qualification and being an accountant at [www.icaew.com](http://www.icaew.com).

If you have any questions about the recruitment and selection process, please email [jobs@sayervincent.co.uk](mailto:jobs@sayervincent.co.uk).

*Thank you for your interest in Sayer Vincent – we look forward to receiving your application.*