

# Training ACA students with Chartered Accountants Ireland

## CASE STUDY



**CHARTERED  
ACCOUNTANTS  
IRELAND**



### About

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) carries out the statutory audits of the financial statements for all public sector bodies in Northern Ireland. This includes all central government, health and local government, in total some 108 audits are carried out each year for bodies spending in excess of £25.7 billion. In addition the NIAO publishes public reports some of which are examined by the NI Assembly through the Public Accounts Committee as well as good practice reports which aim to support the public sector in areas of good governance and better accountability. Our vision is to inspire confidence in public services through our work, and our ultimate mission is to ensure public money is spent properly.



### The student training programme

Our students come through the training programme via the **ACA Training Contract pathway**. Whilst students will be placed within a team, they will often work across teams to ensure they receive the required experience and knowledge necessary for their development. We ensure our students are out at client premises as quickly as possible from the start of their contracts as we consider the communication skills working with a wide variety of clients is a key part of their training. As our students develop with experience and confidence, they are given more responsibility and we never fail to be impressed at how quickly they establish themselves and thrive in the office.

Our students are now more than 20% of our total staff and they make a valuable contribution to our work and also the overall vibe of our office.

### Choosing Chartered

Our office has always trained students in house and about 5 years ago we decided to review our training provider and we considered all the main accountancy bodies before deciding on Chartered Accountants Ireland.

The decision to move to the ACA offering was mainly due to the impressive support network for our students which we consider to be very important.

Since commencing training with Chartered Accountants Ireland our students have been very successful in the exams and indeed our first 2 cohorts of FAE students successfully passed. We also had a student place in the **Top 10 for CAP 1 results**. These achievements are extremely momentous for them and for our office.

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### The training setup process

We were ably assisted in starting and registering as a recognised training organisation by Chartered Accountants Ireland. Since commencement we have learned a lot and have adapted our processes accordingly. Within our organisation we have a dedicated Learning and Development Officer who deals directly with the students and liaises with Chartered Accountants Ireland.

### Benefits of training ACA's

A key benefit we have seen has been that much of the training is outside the working week and therefore, as an audit body, we have our students here for five days a week. We have also been very supportive of the Public Sector elective at FAE exam level which our students are studying - this is clearly highly relevant to our work and the environment we audit. This demonstrates Chartered Accountants Ireland recognition of the high number and increasing number of members now working in the Public Sector.

We would highly recommend Chartered Accountants Ireland as a training provider. We are immensely proud of the success to date of our students and how Chartered Accountants Ireland has supported them in that success!

### Talent recruitment

Our main source of students has been through external recruitment which we carry out ourselves. We liaise with the two Universities in NI, attend recruitment fairs and we advertise through the usual media. We normally start recruitment in the Autumn for role commencement in either April or September of the following year.

**Our graduates come from all sorts of degree subjects. There are accountancy and finance graduates, but also graduates from subjects as varied as languages, music, sports studies, law and teaching. Our focus is on the person and their skills. Do they have an inquisitive nature? Can they analyse problems and identify solutions? Are they a team player? Are they a good communicator? It's that diverse, rich set of skills and competencies that we, as an office, are ultimately looking for.**

More recently we have commenced the employment of Higher Level Apprentices who study to become Accounting Technicians with Chartered Accountants Ireland sister body Accounting Technicians Ireland - we hope they will apply to our ACA training programme in due course too. That's been very successful for us. In fact, one of our recent apprentices, Aaron Hawthorne, was named Public Sector Apprentice of the Year earlier this year by the Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA), which obviously made us very proud.

We have always seen the merits of training our own students and many have remained with us rising to senior levels within our organisation.

To find out more, contact our Client Relationship Team today

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Chartered Accountants are Ireland's leading business professionals, recognised around the world as experts in finance, accountancy, audit and tax. They are trusted business advisors. Today, Chartered Accountants provide essential strategic guidance across all sectors.

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