

# The Swarm Training Programme

Accounts/Finance Assistant

Level 2



The Accounts or Finance Assistant is responsible for assisting the team of accountants with junior accounting duties. These can vary massively depending on the team structure and size of business. An Accounts or Finance assistant's work could include basic bookkeeping activities, working with sales and purchase ledgers, running calculations to ensure that records and payments are correct, recording of cash and data entry.

## The Programme

An Accounts or Finance Assistant can work in almost any sector. Potential employers include corporate businesses, sole traders, partnerships, Public sector, not-for-profit organisations and educational institutions.

An Accounts or Finance Assistant may work in-house for an organisation or they might work for an accountancy firm, bookkeeping practice, Shared Service provider, self-employed or on behalf of several different clients.

**Level:** Level 2

**Duration:** 12-13 months of learning plus up to 12 weeks of End Point Assessment Process.

- Apprentices will need to achieve the AAT Foundation certificate in accounting (Level 2).
- Apprentices without level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment.

### Delivery Model:

- Hybrid of classroom workshops and remote webinars (depending on number of learners).
- One on One monthly mentoring and tutoring sessions to support in application of knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Progress Reviews every 4 months.

Apprenticeship standards are based on occupational standards. An occupational standard is a short and concise document that describes what someone who is competent in the occupation normally does – ‘duties’, and the ‘knowledge, skills and behaviours’ (KSBs) required to carry out these duties competently; along with any qualifications that must be taken and alignment with professional recognition if applicable.

## Knowledge

### General business

- Aware of elements of commercial law that may have an impact when working in accountancy, such as contracts, data protection or Anti Money Laundering.
- Can explain the importance of upholding relevant codes of conduct.
- Can explain different legal entities and organisational structures.
- Aware of the impact of technology on business and its accounting and finance functions.

### Understanding your Organisation

- Understand own role within the context of your organisation.
- Understand transactional processes of accounting and their use within a finance function.
- Understand what makes a business or organisation successful, through either buying or selling products or supplying services to a market.

### Accounting systems and processes

- Understand how accounting systems and processes allows a business to keep track of all types of financial transactions.
- Know a range of routine accounts reports, reports and their use within the finance function.
- Understand the basics of internal control within own organisation.

### Basic Accounting

- Aware of basic accountancy concepts and double entry bookkeeping.
- Understands bookkeeping controls.
- Understand the cost recording system within an organisation.
- Develop an understanding of the differences between Financial and Management Accounting.

### Ethical Standards

- Understands corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethics and sustainability within organisations.
- Understands the importance of the need to keep up-to-date with relevant policies, procedures, regulatory or system changes.

## Skills

### Attention to Detail

- The ability to examine data to identify issues.
- The ability to reconcile data to minimise the chance of errors.
- The ability to plan and review work.
- Recognise and rectifies errors.

### Communication

- Deals effectively with a range of stakeholders using appropriate communication methods to deliver accurate and timely results.
- Avoids jargon and uses the correct technical terms where appropriate.
- Demonstrates good listening and speaking skills to be able to communicate effectively in the right manner.

### Uses Systems and Processes

- Utilises relevant office and accounting software packages to input and manage data accurately.
- Ability to maintain the security of accounting information using passwords and other appropriate security measures.

### Personal Effectiveness

- Ability to organise self, prioritise workload and activity to meet deadlines.
- Actively identifies team workload problems and offers to support peers where appropriate.
- Ability to understand issues beyond own remit.

## Behaviours

### Team Work

- Supports colleagues and collaborates to achieve results.

- Builds working relationships within own team and other parts of the organisation.

- Be aware of their impact on others.

### Personal Development

- Successfully implements changes that are required, as directed.
- Displays an ongoing commitment to learning and self-improvement.
- Seeks feedback and acts on it to improve their performance.

### Professionalism

- Looks to behave professionally by adhering to the organisational code of conduct.
- Has a 'right first time' approach.
- Shows integrity in their approach.
- Demonstrates personal pride in the job through appropriate dress.

### Customer Focus

- Builds and maintains customer satisfaction with the products and services offered by the organisation in line with company policy, regulation and practice.
- Delivers excellent service, identifying and meeting or exceeding customer expectations.

## Qualifications

### Foundation Certificate in Accounting

This qualification will prepare you for junior and entry level accounting roles. It delivers a solid foundation in finance administration - covering areas such as double entry bookkeeping to basic costing principles and using accounting software.

You will learn finance, accountancy, business and communications skills.

## Syllabus

- Bookkeeping Transactions.
- Bookkeeping Controls.
- Elements of Costing.
- Using Accounting Software.
- Work Effectively in Finance.
- Foundation Certificate Synoptic Assessment.
- (The synoptic assessment will ask students to apply knowledge and skills gained across the qualification in an integrated way, within a workplace context. Scenarios will change over time to ensure the validity of the assessment.

## English & Maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and Maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3.

On completion, the apprentice will be able to apply for the appropriate level of professional membership aligned with this apprenticeship, dependent on the qualification chosen.

## Professional Recognition

Professional Body Memberships that are relevant to the options for this apprenticeship are:

IAB – Associate Level Membership

ICB – Associate Level Membership

## Delivery of the Standard

The apprenticeship delivery journey is broken down into two phases:

1. Month 1– 13: On programme training and learning (including completing the embedded qualification any English and Maths requirements.

2. Month 13– 17: Gateway review and End-Point Assessment .

## Phase 1: Month 1–13

This is the phase that consists of all the activity to developing the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours of the Standard.

### Developing the Knowledge

The knowledge training is primarily delivered via classroom workshops & webinars (numbers dependent) or 121 via tuition. The content of this is based on main Knowledge Outcomes that provide a depth of understanding for the skills:

Employer collaboration/involvement is key to supporting some of the above workshops/content as many will need to be bespoke to meet the employer specifics.

### Skills Development and Portfolio Building

Evidence to demonstrate the performance of knowledge, skills and behaviours will be supported via 121 tuition and mentoring with evidence collected via our E portfolio system.

The development of the skills aims will be done throughout the programme and evidence of performance will be gathered to create a showcase portfolio required by the End-Point Assessment.

Every twelve weeks the tutor will conduct a progress review with the learner and line manager to support in keeping the progress on track, identify any issues and plan the next phase of collaborative learning.

## Phase 2: Month 13+

### Gateway

When all learning has been completed and evidence in the portfolio has been gathered, the next process is to conduct the Gateway review. The gateway review is when the learner, employer and provider agree the learners readiness to progress to End-Point Assessment.

## EPA Gateway Requirements:

- Completion of the off-the job learning components of the programme.
- Completion of the Foundation Certificate in Accounting.
- Confirmation from the employer that the apprentice is ready. It is recommended that the training provider is consulted by the employer to inform the decision.
- Apprentices without Level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking end-point assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeships English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 and a British Sign Language qualification is an alternative to English qualifications for those whom this is their primary language.
- Completion of a portfolio of evidence.

## End-Point Assessment

The two EPA assessment methods are:

1. Structured interview (supported by a portfolio of evidence summary).
2. In-tray test.

Both assessment methods will be conducted and graded by an independent EPAO.

The assessment methods can be taken in any order and will need to be passed after a minimum of 12-15 months of on-programme learning (OPL) for the apprentice to be awarded the Apprenticeship certification.

There is no need to pass one component before moving to another.

### Assessment method 1: Structured Interview (supported by the summary of portfolio evidence)

Portfolio of evidence to support interview In preparation for the structured interview, the apprentice will produce a portfolio of evidence that will be signed off by the employer as part of the

gateway requirements.

Although the portfolio does not contribute towards the overall grade, apprentices must submit to the EPAO within two weeks of the gateway a sufficient summary of competence against each knowledge, skill and behaviour assessed in the structured interview at least one month before the scheduled EPA.

The Portfolio must contain a minimum of four pieces of evidence that when cross-referenced, sufficiently demonstrate competence against all requirements.

### Structured Interview

The structured interview must last for 60 minutes.

The independent assessor has the discretion to increase the time of the structured interview by up to 10% to allow the apprentice to complete their last answer.

Further time may be granted for apprentices with appropriate needs, for example where signing services are required.

The structured interview will be conducted as set out here:

The structured interview will focus on the portfolio completed by the apprentice during the on programme phase of the Apprenticeship, and the independent assessor will seek to gain assurance of the apprentice's competency by questioning.

The independent assessor will receive the Portfolio within 2 weeks of the gateway. The Independent Assessor will draw 10 questions from the EPAO's question bank to ask the apprentice.

All 10 questions must be asked.

The independent assessor may ask any number of their own additional follow up questions within the total time permitted for the structured interview to delve deeper into the apprentice's answers if this is necessary to authenticate evidence, experience and competence. The apprentice may refer to their Portfolio during the discussion should they wish to.

## Assessment method 2: In-tray test

The rationale for this assessment method is: The test provides for an in-tray exercise based on a fictitious organisation's scenario, which replicates the typical work an Accounts/Finance Assistant will have to manage in a workplace. By its very nature, the Accounts/Finance Assistant occupation demands accurate and detailed written work, including calculations, and so this assessment method is an appropriate and manageable way of testing occupational competency against the knowledge and skills requirements.

The scenarios may be based on a variety of different organisational structures or operations and success will require an integration of the technical knowledge and skills required for the standard.

## Reviews

Every 12-16 week the tutor will conduct tripartite reviews with the learner and the employer where they can evaluate progress and set the plan for the next period.

## Employer Support:

- Dedicated Senior Account Manager
- Quarterly Cohort Reviews with Senior Account Manager
- Employer Showcase in Swarm media and news
- Access to view Learners progress via our E-portfolio

For more information please don't hesitate to contact us.

**Email:** [enquires@swarmgroup.org.uk](mailto:enquires@swarmgroup.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0800 0868199

## Costs:

Full Apprenticeship Cost Per Learner: £6000  
(Maximum Funding Band)