

What can I do with a degree in Accounting?

Accounting.



What is Accounting?

Accounting is a multifaceted discipline dedicated to the responsible management of resources and transparent reporting to stakeholders.

Accounting professionals ensure data is accurate and reliable, aiding organisations and workers with making decisions amid economic, political, technical, environmental, and social challenges.

Technology has freed up accounting professionals to focus on in-depth data analysis and business advisory to support organisations from start-ups to large organisations to achieve their purpose and be sustainable. Accounting insights are essential for all areas of business from HR, research and development, marketing, finance, to supply chain management.

It is a myth that Accounting requires advanced maths skills. Social skills are most important, and by studying specific degree courses, graduates can gain provisional membership with professional accounting bodies.

Learn more

It is important to do some research when planning for your future career. Speak with, ask questions of, and follow relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies, thought leaders and industry professionals.

This will help you learn about career options, work environments, education and training requirements, and salary information.

Examples of professional bodies

- Chartered Accountants of Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ)
www.charteredaccountantsanz.com
- CPA Australia www.cpaaustralia.com.au
- ACCA www.accaglobal.com
- CIMA www.cimaglobal.com
- Ngā Kaitataū Māori o Aotearoa National Māori Accountants Network
www.nkmoa.co.nz

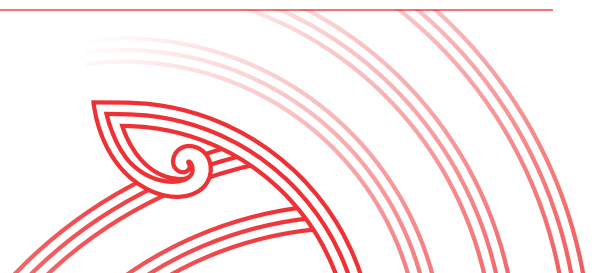
Career and study information

Some study pathways and degrees have a recommended school background, and some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional experience.

Gather information from:

- Accounting study details
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/accounting
- Job profiles on career websites like
www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.

This resource is part of a set of brochures focused on subject majors; many can also be studied as minors.





What skills can graduates gain?

Through studying a degree in Accounting, graduates develop a valuable set of skills transferable to a range of careers. These skills can include:

- High-level technical accounting skills
- Technological skills including data analytics and use of AI
- Problem solving, critical judgement, and ethical decision-making
- Advanced communication, presentation and relationship building
- Analytical and strategic thinking
- Attention to detail; the ability to be methodical and accurate
- Planning and organisation
- Cultural awareness and ethical behaviour
- Teamwork, resilience and adaptability
- Numerical sense; quantitative and qualitative thinking.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, client/customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness, teamwork and initiative.

With technology, globalisation, and other drivers changing society, skills such as resilience, problem solving, and adaptability are important.

Skills that are likely to grow in importance include analytical and creative thinking, systems thinking and technological literacy.*

*World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

How can these skills be developed?

- Some skills are gained through studying
- Extra-curricular activities can help, such as getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities, whether it is undertaking work experience, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group.

Where have graduates been employed?

Accounting is an essential part of doing business within all types of organisations from airlines to movie studios, and farms to management consultancies.

UC graduates have been employed in:

- Chartered accountancy firms and management consultants e.g. PwC, EY, BDO, KPMG, Deloitte, Grant Thornton, Brophy Knight, Paul Duggan & Associates, Ashton Wheelans
- Parliamentary auditors e.g. Audit New Zealand | Mana Arotake Aotearoa
- Government bodies e.g. Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand, Stats NZ, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Inland Revenue, RNZAF Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury
- Banking and financial services e.g. ANZ, BNZ, Standard Chartered, Westpac, Lloyds Banking Group, Imperium Capital Group
- Investment firms e.g. Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan, Aviva Investors, Global Infrastructure Partners
- Business enterprise e.g. In power, construction, IT, retail, oil and gas, music, manufacturing, insurance, tourism and more.
- Social and not-for profit organisations e.g. NZ Rugby Union, World Vision.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Graduates with this degree are employed in a range of jobs and typically go on to train and qualify as chartered or certified accountants – see some job examples below.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and some jobs may require further study, training or experience. It is recommended to start with the section 'How can I gain a sense of career direction?'

Accountant, assistant / associate / graduate trainee accountant

- Reviews and analyses the performance of businesses, governments and other entities
- Provides financial advice to managers, entrepreneurs, business clients and governmental bodies
- Manages cash flow and oversees accounts payable, receivable, and payroll

Auditor, assistant / associate / graduate auditor

- Evaluates reliability of internal controls and accuracy and reliability of financial statements and sustainability reports
- Assesses risks to the business
- Checks the legality of funding use

Financial accountant and controller

- Prepares financial reports and statements
- Advises investors and interested parties
- Oversees financial, strategic and operational accounting in an organisation

Investment accountant

- Analyses market trends
- Advises on shares, lending, mergers, takeovers

Tax accountant / consultant

- Provides advice about tax obligations
- Determines tax liabilities and allowances
- Ensures tax laws are complied with

Commercial manager

- Examines revenue, costs and profitability to identify issues and opportunities
- Assesses financial details to inform decisions

Management accountant / consultant

- Evaluates the performance of organisations and identifies ways to improve
- Evaluates capital expenditure and other short- and long-term decisions
- Helps develop strategies, budgets and policies

Business and financial analyst / consultant

- Generates, analyses, reports and applies financial and other information to organisations, projects, contracts etc.
- Models and analyses economic/business trends to inform decisions and protect interests

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Specialist Accountant roles in start-ups, ESG, digital accounting, forensics, counterterrorism, crypto, and international accounting
- Internal auditor, Business consultant/advisor, Assurance associate, Finance manager/assistant, Finance officer/advisor, Foreign exchange dealer, Forensic accountant, Payroll co-ordinator, Pricing analyst, Trust officer.

Further study options

Postgraduate study for professional membership and certification is done while working under the guidance of a qualified chartered or certified accountant.

UC offers honours, master's and doctoral programmes for Accounting graduates, and an MBA for those with work experience.

Further study may facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability.

It is important to determine which, if any, further study options align with future career aspirations.

For further UC study options visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study

How can I gain a sense of career direction?

Understanding yourself and others is important to gain a sense of direction. This grows with experience; therefore, trying new things and reflecting on an ongoing basis is important.

Career planning checklist

Discover and reflect on:

- Your values, interests, strengths, abilities, and aspirations
- Your connection to whānau, people, and places
- Lifestyle preferences and location
- The skills you want to gain, use, or enhance

Engage in a variety of experiences to learn about:

- How you want to contribute to society, the environment, and global challenges
- The tasks, responsibilities and work environments you prefer
- Your work values, priorities and interests

Learn more and gather career and study information (refer to page one of this resource)

- Speak with people working in careers that interest you; check the realities of a job/career
- Gather information from various sources

Identify your next steps

- Talking to a career consultant can help you to identify your next steps. Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers



What have other students and graduates done?

Explore career stories of students' university experiences and UC alumni who make a difference globally in varied ways.

Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories



William

Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting, minor in Information Systems

Why did you choose to study Accounting?

Both my parents are involved in business and have management and accounting backgrounds. I was encouraged by them to take up accounting which is a very versatile degree and opens up my options to different career pathways.

How have your studies helped you to build practical, work-ready skills?

I enjoy the many group projects that are incorporated into the syllabus. It gives me a chance to meet new people and at the same time work in a team. It enables the development of soft skills and promotes application of technical skills and further boosts understanding of theoretical knowledge.

What do you most enjoy about your studies?

I personally enjoy how the lecturers and staff take part in club activities and show support to both the international and local students. It's not often you get to see your lecturers up and about dancing and joking around!

As an international student, life at UC and New Zealand has been an eye-opening experience for me. There is actually a wide range of activities to do here both on campus and off campus.

What advice do you have for future students?

Don't be afraid to ask. The lecturers and support staff are more than happy and willing to help a student in need.

What else should I know? Where can I seek help?

The value of experiences

Learn what experiences graduates attribute to helping them transition into work:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers/graduate-destinations

Effective job search strategies

- Speaking with employers is key to finding opportunities; not all jobs are advertised.
- Developing an online presence is useful as employers can approach you online.
- Learning about recruitment patterns and where to find opportunities is important.

Need careers advice?

Career guidance services are available for intending and current students, and recent graduates. Contact:

Te Rōpū Rapuara | Careers

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

Need study advice?

Student Advisors help you with any questions you have about starting, planning and changing your studies. Visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/study-support-info/study-support

• If you are considering UC contact:

The Future Students team

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz

• If you are a current UC student contact:

Kaitoko | First Year Student Advisors

T: +64 3 369 0409

E: firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz

Te Kura Umanga | UC Business School

T: +64 3 369 3888

E: studybusiness@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/business

