

# What can I do with a degree in Accounting?

# Accounting.



## Career planning: what do I need to know?

Knowledge of yourself is important for career decision making. Start by looking at your personal goals, abilities, values and interests to explore study and career options that are relevant to you. Some of these may change over time, so it is important to self-reflect and evaluate your career on an ongoing basis.

### What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness and teamwork. With technology and globalisation changing the nature of society, skills such as resilience, problem solving and adaptability are valuable at work as well as in life.

### How can I develop these skills?

- Some skills are developed through your degree

- Extra-curricular activities can help, for example getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities. Whether it is undertaking an internship, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group – these activities will enhance your employability.

### What else should I know?

The career options in this brochure are examples only and the list is not exhaustive. Some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional work experience. Some pathways and degrees have a recommended school background. Find more subject details at

📄 [www.canterbury.ac.nz/subjects/accounting](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/subjects/accounting)

If this brochure does not answer your questions, talking to an expert such as a career consultant can help you to identify the next steps in your career decision making journey.

📄 [www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)

## What is Accounting?

The study of Accounting covers a range of practices and theories to do with strategy, resources, financial control, performance, governance and accountability in many different contexts, providing a solid foundation for a rewarding and successful career.

The subject covers everything from assurance to financial reporting, and social and environmental accounting to taxation.

Accountants are experts in financial and other information used to evaluate activities of people and organisations. They provide expert insight to individuals and groups such as managers, owners, investors, consumers, employees, politicians, the tax authorities and the public.

Alongside this, accountants play the role of auditors to verify the accuracy and reliability of financial information, assess risk and ensure taxation laws and rules are adhered to.



## AT A GLANCE

**\$140k**

the average income for a fully qualified accountant is \$140,000\*

**4%**

increase in the number of accountants, auditors and company secretaries expected by 2020\*

### Useful links

Te Rōpū Rapuara UC Careers  
[www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)  
 Careers New Zealand  
[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

\* 2017 MBIE Occupational Outlook  
 \*\* Note: specific courses must be included in your degree. Speak to a Business Student Advisor.

## What skills have UC graduates gained?

Through their Accounting degree, graduates develop a valuable set of transferable skills that includes:

- Oral and written communication skills
- Planning and coordination
- Interpretive, analytical, and logical thinking
- Professional judgement and problem solving
- Ethical decision-making
- High-level technical accounting skills
- Technological skills
- Cultural awareness and ethical behaviour
- Numerical confidence and quantitative thinking.

Opportunities to apply your learning beyond campus are available through work-integrated learning (eg, internships) and international study tours. These experiences deepen your skillset, working knowledge, and employability.

## Where have UC graduates been employed?

Accounting is synonymous with being a professional accountant; a major role associated with all sorts of organisations from airlines to movie studios, farms to management consultancies – there are even accounting jobs at Scott Base in Antarctica!

UC graduates have been employed in:

- Chartered accountancy firms and management consultants eg, KPMG, PwC, Deloitte, EY, Grant Thornton, Crichton Horne & Associates, Brophy Knight Ltd, Paul Duggan & Associates, BDO, Staples Rodway, Marriotts, Ashton Wheelans, Crowe Horwath
- Parliamentary auditors eg, Audit New Zealand
- Government bodies eg, Ministry of Health, Statistics NZ, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Inland Revenue Department, Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, RNZAF, Canterbury District Health Board
- Banking and financial services eg, ANZ, BNZ, Standard Chartered Bank, Westpac, Lloyds Banking Group, Imperium Capital Group
- Investment firms eg, Goldman Sachs, Global Wealth and Investment Management, J.P. Morgan, Aviva Investors, Global Infrastructure Partners
- Business enterprise eg, In power, construction, IT, retail, oil and gas, music, manufacturing, insurance, tourism and more.

As an Accounting graduate you will be able to work globally, be it in Adelaide, Frankfurt, Montreal, Rio, Tokyo or Zhengzhou.

## What jobs and activities do graduates do?

Graduates with this degree usually go on to train and qualify as chartered or certified accountants. This puts them in line for a wide range of career opportunities. See some examples below.

*Note: Some of the jobs listed may require further study. See 'Professional bodies' and 'Further study' sections on this page.*

### Accountant, assistant accountant, associate accountant, 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

### Financial accountant and controller

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

### Tax accountant / consultant

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

### 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

### Management / business consultant

- Researches, evaluates, and develops solutions to business problems
- Advises on systems design and/or structuring of transactions

### Investment accountant

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

### Analyst, business / 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

### 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

### Internal auditor

- Evaluates efficiency and effectiveness of organisational units
- Advises management of the strength and reliability of internal controls
- Reports to the board of directors

### Commercial manager

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

### Entrepreneur and self employment

Entrepreneurship and innovation are an increasing part of the working landscape. Through generating a business idea, or getting involved in a start-up/business venture, you have the potential to create a work opportunity

that aligns with your knowledge, skills, values and risk profile. To get started on how to establish, run and grow a new business, go to Te Pokapū Rakahinonga, Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Canterbury [www.canterbury.ac.nz/uceEntrepreneurship/getting\\_started.shtml](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/uceEntrepreneurship/getting_started.shtml)

## What professional bodies can people link to?

### Pathway to chartered or certified accountancy

Most Accounting major students aspire to become chartered or certified accountants. The Bachelor of Commerce Accounting major is a pathway to external qualifications.\*\*

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

There are equivalent bodies in most other countries. Having a professional presence on social media networks such as [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and Facebook can help you to keep up to date with important industry developments and trends, networking opportunities, events and job vacancies. Following relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies and thought leaders is a great way to gain a deeper awareness of the industries that interest you. Social media presents an opportunity to build and enhance networks as well as to display your involvement in projects and any academic successes.

## Why do further study and what are my options?

For many Accounting graduates study will be done while working under the guidance of a qualified chartered or certified accountant.

Postgraduate study can facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate and advanced research capability. UC offers an MBA for those with work experience, as well as honours, master's and doctoral programmes for Accounting graduates. Advanced study can lead to a career in tertiary teaching and research. For qualification listings visit

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/courses)



## Nisha



Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Information Systems  
Forensic Accountant, SV Partners, Brisbane, Australia  
Owner, DSQUARED – DanceDezireets

### Career-wise, what opportunities have you had?

As a Graduate Analyst in the Assurance and Advisory division at Deloitte I was involved in external audits, which encompassed working in teams of two to six people for a client. My responsibilities included reporting and documenting auditing findings to my seniors and communicating with the client and my team.

My latest role as a Forensic Accountant with SV Partners has a significant investigative component, as well as a strong legal aspect. We specialise mainly in the investigation of insolvent firms that have entered liquidation, or individuals who have been declared bankrupt. We investigate any fraudulent transactions that took place prior.

### What are the perks of your work?

Within accounting there are many opportunities to travel, meet people from a diverse range of backgrounds and interact with them. My role as a Graduate Analyst involved a fair amount of travelling to various parts of Queensland and Australia, which provided widespread experience and gave me an opportunity to explore various parts of the country.

### Any highlights of your time at UC?

I was chosen for the 'New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants Executive Insight Programme', which involved visiting a host organisation and meeting face-to-face with

senior executives of the firm for three days. The organisation I visited was KPMG in Christchurch. This gave me an opportunity to ask questions, which enhanced my understanding of accounting firms while I was still at university.

### What advice do you have for new Accounting students?

Consider what you want from your career – Accounting is an ever-expanding and growing field. There are numerous opportunities within this industry from audit to tax, risk, consulting, forensics and so on – it all depends on maximising your potential. If you enjoy analytical thinking or have a more strategic direction in your thoughts, Accounting covers everything!

### Read more online

Read more stories about our students' university experiences online. UC alumni make a difference in varied ways around the globe. To find out where graduates are now visit [www.canterbury.ac.nz/getstarted/whyuc/student-profiles](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/getstarted/whyuc/student-profiles)

*The information in this brochure was correct at the time of print but is subject to change.*

## More information

### UC students seeking study advice.

Department of Accounting and Information Systems

The Department is made up of enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff with a wide range of international experience. Their offices are located in the Business and Law Building. Often staff are busy conducting research, which they build into their teaching and tutoring, and presenting at seminars and conferences. Come and speak to a Business degree advisor if you are interested in taking up Accounting courses.

T: +64 3 369 3888

E: [studybusiness@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:studybusiness@canterbury.ac.nz)

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/subjects/accounting/](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/subjects/accounting/)

### Anyone seeking careers advice.

Te Rōpū Rapuara | UC Careers

UC offers intending and current students and recent graduates a wide range of services, including individual career guidance, seminars, career resources and student and graduate employment opportunities.

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: [careers@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:careers@canterbury.ac.nz)

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers)

### Prospective students seeking study advice.

Te Rōpū Takawaenga | Student Liaison

The liaison team provide advice to future students who are starting their degree for the first time. They can assist with information on degrees, scholarships, accommodation, and other aspects of university life. We have offices in Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington.

Ōtautahi | Christchurch

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: [liaison@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:liaison@canterbury.ac.nz)

Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland

T: 0800 UCAUCK

E: [auckland@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:auckland@canterbury.ac.nz)

Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: [wellington@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:wellington@canterbury.ac.nz)

[www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/liaison)

