

Accounting Technician Technical Handbook 2026

Table of Contents

Sponsors	2
WorldSkills UK	2
Sector Overview	3
Career Pathway	3
Competition Cycle	3
Competition Overview	4
Entry Criteria	5
Competition specific rules	5
Pre-competition Activity	5
Digital Badges	6
Entry Stage	6
National Qualifier	6
National Final	7
Judges Top Tips	9

Sponsors



Kaplan Financial

For almost 80 years, we've helped shape the development and careers of finance and accounting professionals. We operate in over 30 countries, with strong links to the US, and have become one of the leading education providers in the world. We've worked with over 3 million individuals and businesses across the globe.

Kaplan Apprenticeships is one of the largest apprenticeship training providers in the UK. We train over 10,000 apprentices every year, and 75 of the FTSE 100 companies use us for training. We have a team of over 200 qualified and expert tutors to deliver top rated courses around the country. We're also top rated by our apprentices – rated 5th out of 300 apprenticeship providers on Rate My Apprenticeship. We offer a large choice of apprenticeships and specialise in Accountancy & Tax, Banking & Financial Services and Data & Technology.

Our Values – what we believe in.

- Act with integrity – we hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in everything we do.
- Grow knowledge – we offer expert resources to help you achieve your academic and career best.
- Empower and support – we give you the tools you need to succeed.
- Create opportunity – we open doors and broaden access to education.
- Drive results together – we're dedicated to helping you achieve your goals – we succeed when you succeed.

ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales)

The ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) is a world-leading professional membership organisation that promotes, develops, and supports chartered accountants and students worldwide.

The ICAEW Chartered Accountant qualification, the ACA, is one of the most advanced learning and professional development programmes available. It is valued around the world in business, practice and the public sector. It equips individuals with the skills and expertise needed for a successful career in business, finance, and accounting.

The ACA covers technical knowledge, professional skills, and practical experience, ensuring that members are well-prepared to handle the complexities of modern financial environments.

ICAEW represents more than 208,000 members and students around the world supporting them with a wide range of resources, continuous professional development opportunities, and a global network of professionals. This network allows members to connect, share knowledge, and access career opportunities worldwide.

If you're considering a career in accounting or finance, the ACA qualification from ICAEW is a great choice to equip you with the skills and recognition needed to excel in the industry.

AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians)

AAT is the Association of Accounting Technicians, the world's leading professional body for accounting technicians. And because the world is changing like never before, we never stand still.

We develop finance qualifications that ensure business can draw upon skilled people, fully equipped to meet its challenges head-on.

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to unleash their career ambition – so we make it happen. We break down barriers, empowering more people with the real world expertise valued by organisations in all sectors.

As part of the AAT community, our nearly 137,000 members and students belong to an inclusive association of accountancy professionals around the world. With access to a network of insights, opportunities and lifetime learning – we keep skills up to date, relevant and ready for business.

WorldSkills UK

WorldSkills UK is an independent charity and a partnership between employers, education and governments. Together, they are raising standards in apprenticeships and technical education to enable more young people to get the best start in work and life.

They are leading the charge to ensure that all young people have equal access to high quality apprenticeships and technical education, by:

- inspiring young people through their careers advice resources, to choose excellence through apprenticeships and technical education as a prestigious career route on their path to reaching their potential, whatever their background.
- developing excellence in young people by testing and assessing their skills and knowledge against their peers through their national and international competitions programmes, improving their confidence and potential.
- innovating to mainstream global excellence to help improve the standard of teaching, training and assessment through international benchmarking to help young people, employers and the UK economy succeed.

They are also part of WorldSkills, a global movement supported by over 80 member countries, which celebrates young people achieving world-class standards in the biennial skills Olympics.

[This link](#) can be used to access more information about WorldSkills UK and the work it undertakes:

Sector Overview

The Professional and Business Services (PBS) sector covers a range of industries which provide specialised support to businesses, including Finance, Audit, Accountancy and Tax.

The sector accounts for almost 11% (£186 billion) of the UK economy's gross value added and 13% (4.6 million) of employment. It is diverse, and many of its sub sectors are knowledge-intensive and highly geographically mobile.

The UK is a major exporter of PBS, providing 27% (£66 billion) of the UK's services exports.

Career Pathway

Pre-Qualification (potential salary £16,000 - £24,000)

Typical Practice Role: Junior Associate

Typical Industry Role: Accounts Assistant

Part-Qualified (potential salary £25,000 - £28,000)

Typical Practice Role: Associate

Typical Industry Role: Accounts Clerk / Admin

Part-Qualified Final Stage Chartered (potential salary £32,000 - £42,000)

Typical Practice Role: Associate (Qualified), Supervisor

Typical Industry Role: Financial Analyst

Chartered (up to 3 years) (potential salary £45,000 - £60,000)

Typical Practice Role: Senior Associate / Manager

Typical Industry Role: Financial Accountant

Chartered (3 - 5 years) (potential salary £55,000 - £90,000)

Typical Practice Role: Senior Manager

Typical Industry Role: Financial Manager

A Leader (5+ years chartered) (potential salary £55,000 - £200,000)

Typical Practice Role: Director / Partner

Typical Industry Role: Head of Finance / Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Competition Cycle

Date	Stage
2nd March 2026 - 27th March 2026	Registration
7th April 2026 - 30th April 2026	Entry Stage
18th June 2026	National Qualifier
9th July 2026	Finalist Announcement
26th October 2026 (TBC)	Development Session
18th November - 20th November 2026	National Finals

Competition Overview

About the Competition

This competition assesses the skills and abilities of competitors entering the field of accounting.

This competition consists of:

- An entry stage, a remote assessment in which you must complete work in your own time and submit this for judging;
- A qualifying heat, which will be remote. You must complete a series of tasks on a specific day;
- A UK national final, taking place in November as part of WorldSkills National Finals.

Core competencies

Competitors taking part in this competition should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- maths skills
- critical thinking
- teamwork
- effective communication
- commercial acumen
- problem solving
- strong IT skills including an understanding of artificial intelligence
- customer service skills.

Qualifications

This competition is mapped out to the following apprenticeship standards:

Level 3 Assistant Accountant

Level 4 Professional Accounting / Tax Technician

Level 7 Accountancy / Taxation Professional (First Year Only)

Assessment Criteria

For this competition the breakdown will help in how you can go from being competent in the skill to excellent and what the judges will be looking for.

Core Competence	Competent	Excellence
Maths skills	Scoring 60-70% in any maths questions	Scoring over 70% in any maths questions
Critical thinking	Evidence of some analysis and questioning	Evidence of consistent analysis and questioning
Teamwork	Evidence of good sharing of responsibilities	Evidence of outstanding collaboration and team work during the preparation for relevant tasks and during delivery in front of the judges
Effective communication	Evidence of clearly presented slides with good use of grammar and visuals, and coherent verbal presentation	Evidence of highly compelling slides with faultless use of grammar and engaging visuals, and seamless and persuasive verbal presentation
Commercial acumen	Evidence of some commercial considerations	Evidence of strong commercial and strategic considerations
Problem solving	Evidence of a problem-solving technique	Evidence of problem-solving technique, well-reasoned rationale for addressing problems and consideration of stakeholders
Strong IT skills including and understanding of artificial intelligence	Good use of PowerPoint to address most of the requirements of the task with some easy to follow slide order and transitions. Also have an understanding of AI and how this can develop and enhance skills.	Captivating use of PowerPoint to address all of the requirements of the task which enhance the overall presentation by competitors
Customer service skills	Some evidence of how to address customer issues	Strong evidence of consideration of impact on the customer of commercial decisions as well as how to address customer issues successfully

Entry Criteria

- This is a team competition - teams of two people.
- There is no limit to the number of competitors permitted to enter this competition per organisation.
- There is no age limit for this competition.
- This competition is intended for those studying, training and / or working in the accounting and finance sector. Competitors must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Be undertaking a Level 3 or 4 apprenticeship, or first year of Level 7 apprenticeship (and **not** having a prior relevant qualification higher than a Level 4); or
 - Be undertaking an equivalent qualification (e.g. HND in Accounting); or
 - Have completed a Level 3 or Level 4 apprenticeship within the past 12 months.

Competition specific rules

- It is the competitor's responsibility to log on/arrive on time to online and live events at each competition stage. Late arrivals may be excluded from the competition.
- Competitors will start and finish tasks as instructed by the judges or competition team.
- Each competing team is expected to use their own laptop at each stage of the competition, including the National Finals. If there is a power stoppage, the competitors must act according to the instructions of the competition organisers.
- Competitors are expected to comply with the host venue rules and regulations.

Pre-competition Activity

Before registering to enter students and apprentices to take part in a WorldSkills UK Competition, it can be helpful to enable them to practice, test and challenge their technical and mental skills by getting involved in the pre-competition activity, available on the Accounting Technician page of the WorldSkills UK website. As well, the following activities could be used to support prospective competitors to get a feel for what will be expected of them in a WorldSkills UK Competition, whilst still in an environment with which they are familiar:

- on and off the job training and work experience
- WorldSkills UK or other externally run competitions
- internal competitions e.g. internal to an employer, specially designed competitions - using WSUK competition briefs
- local competitions e.g. in colleges and training providers.

Digital Badges



As recognition of the participation and achievement of learners who take part in the competition you will be awarded a Digital Badge from WorldSkills UK. This credential has been awarded to those who have participated in our competition-based training programme. In taking part in this programme there has been a commitment to developing technical, employability and personal skills to a high standard using benchmarked assessments, leading to higher skills

development. At each stage of the competition activity there has been personal and professional growth as well as developing skills, knowledge and behaviours in vocational and technical education.

The digital badges are sent via Credly to your email and can be shared on social media platforms and in your email signature. For a short outline of the value of Digital Badges, look at the short video at <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/digital-credentials/> (45 secs).

Entry Stage

The Entry Stage test runs between 7th April - 30th April 2026. The 16 teams scoring the highest marks will be invited to attend the Qualifier Stage.

The Entry Stage test is completed online and made up of 25 multiple choice type questions. Each question carries 4 marks and the test is marked out of 100. It covers a range of relevant topics and is to be completed on your own. The average score of all team members will be taken as the final score for the Entry Stage.

When the entry online test has been completed you will be notified if you have been successful in moving through to the Qualifier Stage.

National Qualifier

The National Qualifier Stage will take place online on Thursday 18th June 2026. The 8 teams scoring the highest marks will be invited to attend the National Finals Stage.

The National Qualifier Stage is completed online. Your team will be allotted a start time and, 5 minutes before, will be issued with a case study and supporting documents. You will have 2 hours to complete 4 tasks and to plan, create and practise a presentation (lasting no less than 5 minutes and no more than 10 minutes).

Your team will then present to a panel of judges and answer any questions they may have from your presentation.

National Final

Stage One

The teams who are successful at the Qualifier Stage will be required to attend an online Development Session running on 26th October 2026 (to be confirmed). Attendance at this session is mandatory.

This Development Session will focus on areas identified as knowledge and skills gaps during the previous stages of the competition.

Teams will also receive the Competition Brief for the National Finals at this session.

Stage Two

And now the exciting bit! The teams successful at the National Qualifier Stage will be invited to attend the Live National Finals. This will be an in-person event in November (17th November 2026 - 20th November 2026).

The Live Finals will follow this format:

Tuesday 17th November 2026

- Arrive at your hotel and get an early night!

Wednesday 18th November 2026 – Day One

- The day will start with a short skills session (lasting an hour) to get you mentally limbered up and raring to go! You don't need to prepare anything for this and it's not marked;
- Your team will then participate in a business challenge over the course of the day. This will involve various tasks, including preparing a presentation which you will be asked to deliver on the morning of the following day. This must be completed and submitted by the time advised on the day, typically 5.00pm.

Thursday 19th November 2026 – Day Two

- Presentation day - you'll be asked to deliver your presentation (20 minutes) and all team members must take a turn presenting.
- When you're not presenting, you'll be completing a mini case study - this will also count towards your overall mark.

Friday 20th November 2026 – Day Three (Evening Only)

- Enhancement Activity and Medal Ceremony

The Accounting Technician competition provides an opportunity for trainee accountants to demonstrate the fundamental technical skills required to both be successful in level 4 exams as well as being able to carry out necessary duties at work.

Judges will also be looking for skills expected of a successful accounting technician such as time management, planning and problem solving skills, working under pressure, communication skills, attitude and behaviour.

The competition will be judged by a panel from across Kaplan's accounting product and commercial teams, who, having worked in practice/industry previously, are experts in both the technical and practical side of the tasks set. The judges' decisions will be independently moderated and quality assured before results are confirmed. The judges will be briefed on assessment procedures prior to the competition.

Judges are looking for technical competency but are also briefed to look for excellence amongst competitors. Judges will therefore look for your employability skills such as:

- critical analysis – make sound, ethical business decisions by collating, analysing and interpreting
- communication – communicate complex business information in an easy to understand way
- team work – knowing when to operate as a team member or a team leader is vital.
- adaptability – work flexibly and shift approach based on changing circumstances.
- commercial acumen – think creatively about problems to identify solutions and give organisations the competitive edge
- planning and organising – develop a structured plan and use time effectively.

Your competition work will be marked according to the following breakdown of criteria, and in accordance with the general and specific competition rules:

Aspect	Maximum Marks
Presentation	80
Mini Case Study	20
Total Marks	100

Judges Top Tips

- **Preparation and practice:**
To be a successful competitor you need to be confident, calm and self-assured when competing. Prepare by practising your presentation skills and getting to know your technology to ensure you get the result you want without any surprises.
- **Time management:**
Learn to manage your time effectively when completing tasks by working smart not fast! The tasks have allocated set times, so practice working to time and under pressure to perfect your timing. If you run out of time in the competition you will lose marks.
- **Planning:**
Make your own plans for how to complete each task, work methodically and even write it down to help you prepare.
- **Organisation:**
Make sure you are organised, make sure all stages of a task are completed.
- **Understanding:**
Read the task brief thoroughly and make sure you understand what you need to do.
Do not be afraid to ask questions, remember there is only one silly question... the one you don't ask!
- **Don't worry:**
If a part of a task hasn't gone as well as you might have wanted, don't worry or dwell on it, just draw a line under that and get on with the next task. Always focus on the marks you can gain, not what you might have lost.
- **Enjoy:**
To get to the WorldSkills UK national qualifiers or the WorldSkills UK live national finals is in itself a massive achievement that you should be extremely proud of! Make the most of the whole WorldSkills UK/Kaplan Financial competition process and enjoy it!