



YOUR JOURNEY AHEAD

Newly Qualified Accountants

HAYS Working for your tomorrow

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations, you've just passed your professional accountancy exams! Now that you're a newly qualified accountant, it's time to capitalise on your incredible achievement and begin planning the next steps in your career.

As you embark on this new journey, consider the exciting possibilities that lie ahead. From supporting key decision-making to having involvement in major transformation projects, your technical expertise is what prospective employers will be looking for.

There are several things you'll need to consider, from your own marketability and aspirations to the long-term possibilities that different career paths might open for you.

Regardless of the pace and shape of the economy, one thing remains certain: **your contribution as a qualified finance professional has never been so highly valued.**

“At this stage in your career, having achieved newly qualified status, you possess the building blocks to these highly sought-after competencies.”

We're here to set you up for success. The CEOs, CFOs, partners, and heads of HR who we partner with all tell us that their priority is to identify finance professionals who can apply their technical expertise, business awareness and communication skills to:

- Support strategic decision-making
- Reinforce growth and profitability
- Identify new revenue streams
- Drive efficiencies
- Implement major transformations
- Assess and mitigate risk

At this stage in your career, having achieved newly qualified status, you possess the building blocks to these highly sought-after competencies. That said, to arrive at the decisions that are best for your career – those which will deliver both immediate and lasting benefits – it's crucial to equip yourself with accurate, up-to-date market intelligence.

YOUR KEY CONTACTS

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HOW WE CAN HELP

At Hays, we are invested in supporting you throughout your career, from your first job as a newly qualified accountant and during your journey ahead. We're here to support you, and in this guide we discuss the opportunities available to you, providing answers to some of these questions and so much more...

How would the work I'd carry out in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and medium-sized businesses (MSBs) contrast with those I could expect in large companies and multinationals?

What are my chances of using my qualification to work abroad? How will that make me more marketable to employers when I return?

What are the benefits of considering an internal auditing role rather than a position within finance?

What can public sector or not-for-profit organisations offer me? How can I turn those opportunities to my advantage?

Is switching from professional services into commerce and industry as soon as possible the best way to achieve my objectives, or should I be thinking of staying and specialising?

A LITTLE ABOUT US...

We help **2 newly qualified accountants** into great new career roles **every working day** in the UK & Ireland

Over 5,000 great permanent career opportunities were registered with us for qualified accountants last year

Our network of over **250 finance recruitment experts** help finance professionals find a potential new opportunity every 10 minutes



WHAT COULD **YOUR NEXT ROLE** BE...



Here is an overview of the varied roles within finance and the key responsibilities. It will give you an idea of what to expect from each type of job opportunity.

ACCOUNTING

- Accounting provides a clear career path and ample opportunities for advancement
- The accounting industry is essential for almost all business entities to function
- Accountants can explore a diverse client base
- The consistent need for accounting services ensures job stability
- Experienced accountants can branch out and open their own accounting firms or consultancy businesses

CORPORATE FINANCE

- As a corporate finance professional, you will get to truly understand how a business operates. You'll be a part of a team who secure funding, manage capital, and execute takeovers
- Working in corporate finance places you at the heart of business operations. You actively contribute to the commercial success of a company
- Corporate finance professionals engage in drafting proposals, preparing financial projections, coordinating teams, and advising on system enhancements, making for a dynamic and interesting area

CORPORATE RECOVERY & INSOLVENCY

- Corporate recovery helps companies to avoid bankruptcy and liquidation
- By implementing a recovery strategy, companies can enhance their financial position, operational efficiency, and competitive advantage
- Having a strong recovery plan instils confidence in investors, partners, and customers

EXTERNAL AUDIT

- Use your qualification to advise clients across a wide range of sectors and industries
- Specialise in client sectors (e.g. financial services or public sector) to further build your technical and client facing skills
- Make your career advancement to partner, becoming a business owner, and enjoy the autonomy to set your own strategic direction while receiving great financial rewards
- A team focused career in which you establish strong working relationships with highly competent colleagues across all financial disciplines

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING/REPORTING

- Prepare and present financial statements and management information and report results to external customers
- Understand and provide support on a number of complex financial control subjects
- Manage stakeholder relationships with other parts of the business and advise on any financial control queries

FINANCIAL PLANNING & ANALYSIS (FP&A)

- Analytical support on an array of business, strategic and technical issues, including specific areas of profit and loss, balance sheet and cash flow
- Market analysis, looking at the firm's performance in contrast to competitors and market performance
- Financial modelling and involvement in other analytical projects
- Business partnering with key stakeholders

FORENSIC ACCOUNTING

- Forensic accountants are in demand due to their specialised skills. As financial crimes increase, so too does the need for experts who can investigate and prevent fraud
- By uncovering financial fraud, forensic accountants present in a court of law. They help to protect a business against fraudulent activities
- Forensic accounting assists in business valuation and resolving disputes. They are required to present complex financial information clearly and concisely

INTERNAL AUDIT

- Conduct financial and operational audits from planning to completion stage, creating audit reports to highlight key findings and recommend solutions
- Add value and implement change by working with senior stakeholders across the business
- Travel to international offices to understand the company's strategy and working practices



WHAT COULD **YOUR NEXT ROLE** BE...

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

- Prepare budgets and forecasts to report to senior management, looking at the previous year's financials to make informed and accurate plans and forecasts for the coming year
- Prepare variance analysis and commentary, looking at what was forecasted and budgeted for (cost and/or revenue) and reporting on any differences
- Cost analysis and/or revenue accounting to ascertain expenses reporting and business performance analysis

PRODUCT CONTROL

- Produce the daily profit and loss in relation to financial products (including equities, commodities, foreign exchange, credit, and rates)
- Perform profit and loss analysis, spotting trends and variances occurring in the trades
- Prepare commentaries on the performance of the P&L and trading activities in the bank, comparing it to the market and competitors
- Run valuation controls and price testing of the trade, supporting front office to ensure trades are of fair value

REGULATORY REPORTING

- Analyse and produce accurate regulatory information to meet external reporting requirements and report to senior management within both the bank and wider group
- Sensitivity analysis, stakeholder management, monitoring of regulatory policy changes and communication with senior management
- Monitor the risk, capital, and liquidity positions of the firm

TAX

- Advise clients on tax legislation, ensuring tax is paid in the most efficient way
- Keep up-to-date with changing tax laws and complicated legislation to be sure businesses benefit from advantages and exemptions
- As seniority increases, taxation professionals have opportunities to move into more advisory and value add positions

TREASURY

- Assist treasury teams with bank administration, data analysis, cash forecasting or undertaking a technical treasury reporting role
- At senior level, financial and risk management, global supply chain and pricing
- Broad roles covering liquidity, funding, and investor relations

“There are several things you’ll need to consider, from your own marketability and aspirations to the long-term possibilities that different career paths might open for you.”



WHICH **INDUSTRIES** COULD YOU WORK IN...

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector in the United Kingdom refers to a significant portion of the economy that operates independently of government control and consists of businesses and organisations that are owned and operated either by individuals or private entities. It acts as an engine of growth; creating jobs, increasing trade and providing goods and services to both individuals and businesses.

Private businesses contribute to the overall development of the economy by introducing new products, technologies, and solutions. While their primary focus is profit, their innovations often benefit the entire population, including the public sector, as private companies generate tax revenue, which funds essential public services like health and education.

The private sector plays a crucial role in the UK's economic landscape, driving innovation, employment, and financial prosperity. It is also central in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable practices.

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Diverse opportunities: the private sector encompasses a wide range of industries, from technology to retail and manufacturing and many more. As an accountant, you'll have the opportunity to work in various sectors, allowing you to gain diverse experience.

Structured career progression: there are clear career paths and opportunities for advancement and to broaden your skill set.

Exposure to business operations: you'll gain insights into how companies operate, make financial decisions, and manage their resources, with this understanding contributing to your professional growth.

Skills development: you'll develop skills in data analysis, communication, negotiation, strategic-thinking and problem-solving and many more — all valuable for career advancement.

Innovation and adaptability: private companies are often at the forefront of innovation. As an accountant, you'll be exposed to evolving technologies, software, and financial tools.

PUBLIC SECTOR & NOT-FOR-PROFIT

Finance professionals continue to enjoy key roles, influencing decisions that impact on service delivery and social objective strategies, regardless of the economic climate or resources available.

First-class resources: cut your teeth on state-of-the-art systems and technologies.

Exciting project work: with finite life cycles, you can see the fruits of your labour while moving on to the next challenge.

An influential voice: have your say on strategies that determine how substantial budgets should be invested. You'll provide financial information that influences policy making at the highest level, helping to ensure the best use of public money.

Society dividend: enjoy knowing that the work you're carrying out will contribute, directly or indirectly, to the lives of wider society. Working in the public sector allows you to directly benefit a range of communities and good causes; whether it's improving educational services, healthcare, or infrastructure, your work matters.

Broad career options: there are many diverse career paths available. You could work within the finance team of a school, hospital, or city council, managing day-to-day financial activities or alternatively, you might analyse financial trends, support policy creation, or work in government departments.

Comprehensive development: take advantage of an initiative-taking, supportive approach to training and learning, with opportunities to develop transferable skills. Public sector employers often invest in their employees' professional development, meaning you may have opportunities for training, certifications, and skill enhancement.

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WHICH **INDUSTRIES** COULD YOU WORK IN...

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Competition for work in investment and retail banks, smaller boutique banks, asset management companies, insurers and life companies remains high, and is a popular choice for newly qualified professionals.

Lucrative remuneration: banks and financial institutions continue to pay above-average basic salaries, along with relatively high bonuses, mortgage allowances, share schemes and pensions.

Generous non-financial benefits: to help employees achieve their desired work-life balance, many city employers go the extra mile, providing gym memberships, health and wellbeing support and encouraging participation in charity or community activities.

Global mobility: multinational banks recognise that overseas secondments or relocations are key retention tools, especially as financial centres such as New York, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Dubai, or Sydney might be appealing options for transferees.

Locations beyond London: while roles are, by definition, largely based in London's Square Mile and Canary Wharf, there are opportunities outside London, such as in Edinburgh, Leeds, or Manchester. Should banking and financial services appeal, you also have regional options to consider.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ACCOUNTING & CONSULTING FIRMS

Working in professional services, you can expect constant career progression, excellent global mobility to transfer abroad, and the ability to use your knowledge in accountancy and finance to both influence and help clients. You'll work with other high-quality professionals, with the potential to become a partner and business owner.

Business development skills: develop valuable client-facing experience and exposure to commercial opportunities for cross selling and new business.

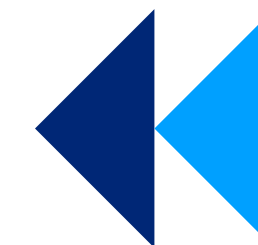
Continual professional education: gain experience that ensures your technical ability is up to date and at the forefront of new reporting and regulatory requirements.

Continuous professional network: your contacts will always be growing through diverse client work and new projects. Often underestimated, a deep professional network can be stimulating and sustain your long-term career.

Challenge and variety: a professional services career will give you unrivalled exposure to interesting and demanding client scenarios, accelerating the maturity of your professional experience.

Structured career paths: future promotion opportunities can often be projected, allowing you to plan your career, future earnings and personal goals.

Informed choices: to stay within professional services, even for the short term, gives you the opportunity to make a more informed decision about the direction of your career in the longer term.



YOUR CAREER WORKING IN A **FINANCE FUNCTION**

LARGE CORPORATES & ORGANISATIONS

A career in finance in a large corporate organisation offers a diverse and exciting landscape. The sheer size and complexity of these organisations means that there is always a need for financial expertise, and there is a wide range of exciting roles for accountants to explore.

In a large corporate organisation within a specific industry, like technology, healthcare, or construction, you'll gain insights into how different sectors operate and can even build expertise in a specific industry sector, which can help with career advancement in the future.

You should expect to face challenges, which will include managing and navigating complex financial structures, constant changes in regulatory compliance, and continuous technological advancement at great pace. The rewards include competitive salaries, benefits, and the chance to influence critical business decisions.

A career in a large corporate organisation can offer structured career growth over time, and the opportunity to work in a dynamic environment where you can combine your financial expertise with the opportunity for strategic impact.

JOB TYPES

You will find various entry level paths you can explore to begin your finance career in large corporates and organisations. Typically, career entry level roles for newly qualified accountants will include financial accountant, management accountant, group accountant and various roles within financial reporting. As a financial or management accountant you can progress to senior roles like finance manager, financial controller, finance director and chief financial officer.

You can also specialise in areas such as mergers and acquisitions if you work for a highly acquisitive firm, or build expertise in corporate tax alongside your finance skills, for example.

Beyond traditional accounting roles, large corporates offer opportunities in operations, commercial management, and a successful career in finance can even lead to a CEO position.

CAREER BENEFITS

Structured career paths: you'll be able to plot the steps required to move up the career ladder. Sometimes advancement may be slower than in an SME due to the hierarchy and competition.

Corporate resources: larger corporations can provide established processes, and access to resources, including training, mentorship, and advanced technology tools.

Brand and reputation: you may be drawn to the opportunity to work for a well-known corporate brand, and this can enhance your CV and professional reputation as you advance your career.

Opportunity to specialise: if you like to really focus on a particular element of finance, whether that's financial planning and analysis, taxation, or the development of sustainability reporting, you will be more likely to gain this opportunity in a large corporate. Many changes in regulation and financial reporting impact the larger corporates first, placing you at the forefront of adopting the latest financial standards.



YOUR CAREER WORKING IN A **FINANCE FUNCTION**

SMES & STARTUPS

A career as an accountant in a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) can offer a unique set of experiences, and that is partly because in SMEs, accountants usually wear multiple hats. You certainly would not be limited to just one aspect of finance, and that diversity of role content enables you to gain a great holistic view of a business.

SMEs also have flatter hierarchies, which means you'll work closely with business owners and managers and be more involved in some business operations that extend beyond your finance world, including sales and marketing, for example. You really will witness firsthand how decisions impact business growth.

There are many different types of ownership models for an SME, so it is important to explore these when thinking about your career – for example, sole traders, partnerships, limited liability partnerships (LLP's), co-operatives and social enterprises. Each ownership model has its advantages and things to consider when it comes to making a choice whether to join one.

Equally important is to consider whether you would like to join a startup or scale up organisation; newly established companies driven by innovative ideas or products and with an aim to disrupt industries and grow rapidly. Startups often operate with an agile, enterprising spirit, and a focus on solving specific problems or meeting market needs.

An established SME, on the other hand, is likely to have been operating for a substantial period. They have a stable customer base, established products or services, and a proven history of success, and their focus is on maintaining and growing existing operations.

Joining a startup offers excitement, risk, and rapid growth potential, while an established SME provides stability, specialisation, and a proven record of doing business. Therefore, consider your personal preferences, risk tolerance, and long-term goals when choosing the right path for your accounting career in an SME or a startup organisation.

A career in finance in an SME or startup will certainly offer the chance to work in a very hands-on way, joining a close-knit team with the need to look beyond finance, supporting and influencing many areas of the business. SMEs and startups can face resource constraints, so you'll certainly need to be adaptable and find creative solutions.

JOB TYPES

Entry level job roles can often sound very similar to those in the corporate world, but they will also vary on job title and job content depending on the size and scale of the SME. You could still expect to join as a financial or management accountant, but you may be the only person who fulfils that role in the SME compared to being in a large team in a corporate who all do similar work but for different business divisions, so the ability to work independently is important.

The typical career path would see a financial or management accountant progress to finance manager, head of finance, financial controller, finance director and CFO in a similar hierarchy to a corporate. It is the content of the job description that may look quite different, taking into consideration that you will be involved in the broader operations in addition to finance.

CAREER BENEFITS

Collaborative environment: SMEs often have a less formal and more collaborative work atmosphere. You'll likely interact closely with colleagues, managers, and even the company owner.

Develop a broader skill set: in an SME you will wear multiple hats, and this can lead to faster development of a broader skill set. It's likely you will manage a wider range of aspects of accounting, finance, and business operations, including HR, technology, insurances and company secretarial at times.

Entrepreneurial spirit: SMEs encourage innovation and creativity, and often provide freedom to make important decisions. If you're entrepreneurially minded, you can influence the company's growth and direction.

Faster career advancement: in a growing SME, you can advance quickly and as the company expands, new roles and responsibilities may emerge.

YOUR CAREER IN **SPECIALIST FINANCE**

There are specialist areas within the finance function, and due to their nature, there is a prestige attached both internally and externally.

In these positions you will work at the heart of an organisation, providing valuable support to all key functions. At a senior level, your key stakeholders will be, group finance directors and PLC boards, senior leadership teams, and audit committees. Additional key competencies for success include a high attention to detail and technical excellence, confidence, commercial awareness, and the ability to gain the trust of those leading figures. There are a range of specialist careers in finance, all of which require different skills and passions. We have listed these below with their key benefits.

INTERNAL AUDIT & RISK

Internal auditors function as proactive, consultative business partners, reducing risk, adding commercial value, and contributing to the ongoing success of a business.

If you have external audit experience, you can transfer those skills to internal audit, showcasing your abilities and building credibility.

Unlike external audit, internal audit focuses on continuous improvements and controls, gaining recognition for adding value. You typically report to an independent audit committee. Some internal auditors move into risk management, advising on potential risks and creating contingency plans to mitigate threats. Internal audit in a corporate organisation is also a well-trodden path to joining a core finance team in the future.

PRODUCT CONTROL

A career in product control involves ensuring the quality, reliability, and value of the products that a company sells. Product controllers collaborate with various stakeholders to monitor and verify the financial performance and valuation of the products. They also prepare and analyse data and reports to provide insights and recommendations to improve business efficiency and reduce costs.

These are competitive positions in fast-paced environments, which requires strong communication skills, problem solving and an agile mindset. Product controllers work within the financial services sector.

TAX IN-HOUSE

In industry, in-house tax professionals who make their mark in mainstream tax compliance or reporting can look forward to challenging, stimulating work at the heart of corporate tax strategy. You are likely to work closely with heads of taxation or finance directors, so hiring criteria alike other areas of specialist finance, requires confidence, commercial awareness, and the ability to gain the trust of those leading figures.

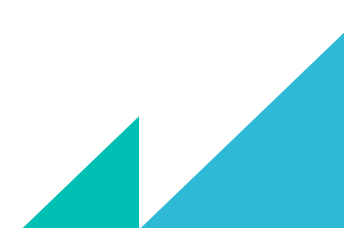
Increasingly, in-house roles offer international remits, with opportunities to learn about managing tax in different jurisdictions. Specific sector experience could be a real asset should you return to client-facing responsibilities.

TREASURY

Working at a senior level in treasury, you will progress to be responsible for, financial and risk management, liquidity management, funding, insurance, investor relations, global supply chain and pricing.

Within industry, depending on the size of company, in your first move you may be wholly responsible for the treasury function (SMEs), or within larger companies, your first move into treasury might be to assist the treasury team with bank administration, data analysis, cash forecasting or undertaking a technical treasury reporting role.

The benefit of treasury is that you can work in large corporates and still be working in a small team, where you will work closely with the senior management who will help develop your skills. The profession also offers a wide variety of consultancy type roles within the Big 4 and smaller advisory firms, where you will get exposure to some of the largest companies in the UK, working with the financial directors and CFOs of ever-changing businesses.



BENEFITS OF YOUR CAREER IN SPECIALIST FINANCE

Each of the aforementioned specialist areas comes with its own benefits:

INTERNAL AUDIT & RISK

You will get exposure to the entire business:

not many roles offer you such transparency and understanding of the entire business. You will work in partnership with senior figures and gain an insight into every area of your organisation, seeing the impact of your recommendations and decisions.

There are unique travel opportunities: roles on offer within internal audit usually offer the chance for some international travel, and you're likely to cover multiple international regions.

Internal audit is an excellent route into the main finance business: having had all-round exposure to the business, internal audit is a natural way into mainstream finance or operational roles. Many businesses judge the success of the internal audit function by how many team members rotate into the wider business. Two years is the average amount of time before a move.

The rewards are generous: salaries are above the average for finance positions. You can expect to receive a bonus on top of this too, typically based on company and personal performance.

Professional development: you'll also have a range of upskilling possibilities, including the opportunity to gain globally recognised qualifications from the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors.

PRODUCT CONTROL

Influence product quality: ensure there is reliability of product, provide insights and recommendations to your stakeholders, leading to improved efficiencies and cost reduction.

Skill set advancement: develop your analytical, problem solving and communication skills which can be transferred into other areas of finance.

Financial rewards: earn a competitive salary package in addition to a lucrative bonus if a high performer.

In demand skill set: a career in product control offers ample career advancement and job security as your skill set grows.

TAX IN-HOUSE

Develop stakeholder management skills: liaise with senior finance managers and business leaders.

Become an expert in tax-efficient reporting: gain the opportunity to see how activity aimed at tax-efficient reporting, investment and capital expenditure applies in a commercial environment, and against the context of wider corporate objectives.

Focus on achieving your employer's tax objectives: but without pressure to generate fees or account for time.

Personal impact: see the impact of your tax work within the overall financial performance of a business.

Professional development: benefit from continued career growth, with the opportunity to gain a Chartered Tax Advisor (CTA) qualification.

TREASURY

Business development: you'll have the chance to work with key stakeholders of the business and network with a wide range of professionals.

Challenge and variety: gain opportunities to work across the business in broad roles covering liquidity, funding, risk, and investor relations.

Continual professional development: being involved in a wide range of business activities will put you in touch with senior management, who will work to develop your skills. You could also gain internationally recognised qualifications through the Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT).

Close-knit teamwork: conventionally, small teams in treasury give you the chance to form close ties with other professionals and learn from their experience.

YOUR CAREER IN **ACCOUNTING & CONSULTING FIRMS**

The appeal of a continued career within professional services rests on the industries in which your clients operate, and the type of projects in which you are supporting them.

Whether you're a technical specialist who enjoys delving into the granular detail, or an aspiring rainmaker who gets a buzz from client acquisition or revenue generation, fee earning positions exist across the spectrum.

For many newly qualified accountants, a move within professional services tends to be into a larger top 20 firm from a quality independent. This is seen as both a sensible and career-strengthening move, with exposure to complex listed and international clients and larger teams, providing constant progression and development of strong internal and external customer networks.

Some individuals stay within the profession throughout their career due to progression and scope, while others have a longer-term vision of moving into commerce, financial services or the public sector. Constant and specialist exposure to a relevant client base will develop your skill set; you will have both the technical knowledge and personal contacts to move into an internal finance function in your preferred sector.

In addition to large firms, there are many progressive and exciting quality independent firms who offer candidates a more varied position and the ability to act as a business advisor to their customers. For candidates with focus and ambition, there is also a route to becoming a business owner.

AUDIT & ASSURANCE

External audit provides the opportunity to develop a variety of skills, such as problem-solving, communication, project management and external networking.

A secure career as auditing is a legal requirement, but also a high-profile one, and audit quality is at the centre of many regulatory conversations. You can expect the interesting challenge of navigating an evolving technical landscape combined with strong customer communication and influencing skills.

Internal audit and risk positions tend to be more consultancy based, co-sourcing with larger corporates and advising on both financial and non-financial risk for clients. You'll be involved in the creation of an audit report while recommending changes.

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ACCOUNTING & OUTSOURCING

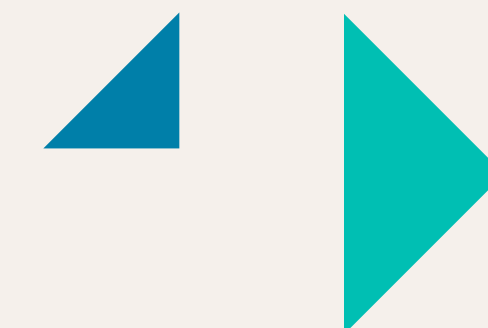
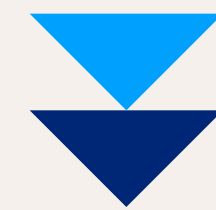
Accounting and outsourcing speaks for itself. You are working with clients who have outsourced their finance function, and you are part of the team responsible for its running. These positions are usually varied and range from financial accounting, management accounting, planning, and forecasting.

Clients tend to be business owners who welcome advice, or finance directors in large international businesses who have recently set up in the UK.

TAXATION

Tax professionals help businesses and individuals commercially whilst also supporting them to comply with tax requirements in the UK, and at times, internationally.

There is variety and creative thinking in tax, whether you enjoy the technical rigour and routine of compliance or are motivated by advising clients and working in a more advisory capacity. There is also the opportunity to specialise in corporate, VAT or personal tax and other niches; acting as an expert is always in demand.



YOUR CAREER IN ACCOUNTING & CONSULTING FIRMS

ADVISORY

Corporate finance is a popular and competitive career, in which you are working with clients to finance their creation, growth or acquisition of other businesses. You'll be part of a team creating client proposals, attending pitches, preparing strategic business plans and financial projections.

Transaction services is a part of corporate finance and a common transition from audit. When working on a merger or acquisition, the transaction services team advise on the transactional value of the business. They help buyers assess the financial risk of deals through financial modelling, market research and risk analysis. You'll also confirm financial results and business trends to potential buyers.

Forensic accountants use their expertise in finance to investigate fraud and other financial misrepresentation. While competitive, there are opportunities for newly qualified accountants who trained in audit to move into an advisory firm as a forensic accountant. Your work will include analysing financial information to support lawyers with many cases going to a court of law. This includes areas such as personal fraud, and the funding of illegal activities, engaging with insurance companies and other clients to resolve related disputes.

Corporate recovery is varied and interesting, working with clients to achieve financial stability in a financially distressed business. This can include asset liquidation, divestment, product elimination, layoffs, and operational efficiency improvements.

CAREER BENEFITS

Many accountants who are reading this guide will have qualified within professional services. We believe this is a time to reflect and set your career plan for the journey ahead. We would suggest you take a breath, and don't jump into a new position without reflecting and setting a career vision.

Low risk, high quality: a move into a larger accounting firm will strengthen your career, creating further career opportunities both internally and externally.

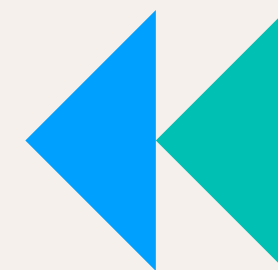
Business development skills: develop valuable client-facing experience and exposure to commercial opportunities for cross selling and new business.

Continual professional education: ensure your technical ability is up to date by being at the forefront of new reporting and regulatory requirements.

Challenge and variety: a professional services career will give you unrivalled exposure to interesting and demanding client scenarios, accelerating the maturity of your professional experience.

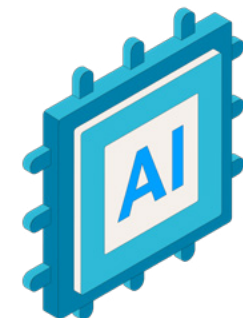
Structured career paths: future promotion opportunities can often be projected, allowing you to plan your career, future earnings and achieve personal goals.

“We believe this is a time to reflect and set your career plan for the journey ahead.”



THE FUTURE OF CAREERS IN FINANCE

The accounting and finance landscape in the UK is evolving rapidly, driven by changing business requirements and global trends, and the fact that we are working at a pace of change that has never been seen before, with a responsibility in business to do more to care for the people and planet around us.



Accounting and Finance Evolution

The evolving roles we see in accounting and finance reflect the need for expertise in areas like sustainability reporting, data analytics, artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, risk, and compliance. As businesses face global challenges, finance professionals will play a crucial role in shaping a resilient and responsible economy, doing jobs that did not exist just a few years ago.



Carbon and Sustainability Accountants

Organisations are recruiting for carbon accountants to measure, report and help manage their carbon emissions and environmental impact. This is in response to the business need to navigate complex environmental regulations, reduce carbon footprint, and contribute responsibly to a better, greener, and sustainable future. Sustainability accountants or controllers are newly created roles that assess the impact of business practices on people, planet and profits and help to take both environmental and social factors into consideration when making financial business decisions.



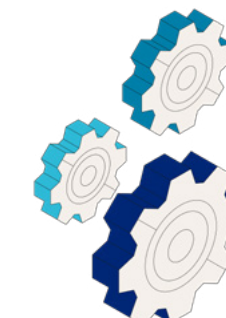
ESG and Management Accountants

Some management accountant roles are also now more focused on considering social and environmental factors alongside financial metrics. These roles are a great way to combine your personal values with your career goals and help to assess the impact of business decisions on sustainability, with a much longer view into the future than before.



Digital Finance Transformation

Outside of sustainability, there is a greater requirement for data analysts and digital transformation specialists to analyse financial data, leverage technology and automate processes to enhance financial reporting and drive better business insight. Digitalisation, cloud-based systems, artificial intelligence, and greater automation means career choices exist in this area to manage financial and business information efficiently.



Business Analyst Demand

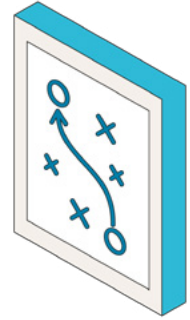
Business analysts would not normally be considered as a new role; however, they do continue to evolve. These roles help to bridge finance and business operations, and there is a growing demand that reaches beyond the large corporates and into SME's and startups, along with the public and not-for-profit sectors too. The analysis of data to help inform strategic decisions, optimise costs and assist growth or development is vital, as every type or size of organisation strives to be more agile in the current climate.



Regulatory and Compliance Experts

The role of regulatory and compliance specialists is in constant motion; these are professionals who stay abreast of changing regulations, such as tax laws, financial reporting standards and anti-money laundering rules. There is such change and regulatory complexity that experts are required who can ensure compliance, helping an organisation to mitigate risk and to maintain ethical standards.

THE **FUTURE OF CAREERS** IN FINANCE: THE JOURNEY AHEAD



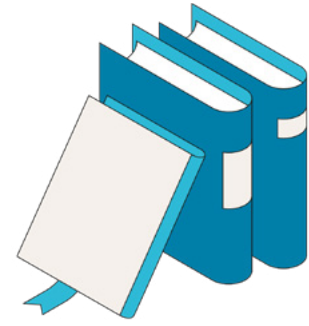
Diverse Career Paths

The traditional career path for accountants is evolving, and you'll have a wider range of different and exciting career options to explore in the future. Roles such as outsourcing director, finance business partner, sustainability and carbon accountant and data analyst are emerging and will only continue to develop over the coming years, as will the evolving skills required by organisations.



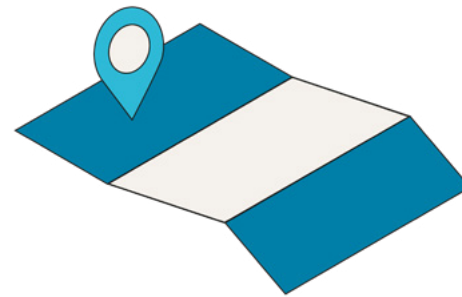
Developing Digital Skills

Many businesses are automating and streamlining their finance functions and therefore there is an increased focus on individuals with digital operations and data analytics experience, meaning it's important to futureproof your skills for the careers of tomorrow. Working in one of these evolving roles will enable you to build your digital skills.



Adaptability and Lifelong Learning

As an accountant, you must continuously stay updated on industry trends and changes. This can be regulatory, technology changes, or more recently, sustainability reporting changes. These evolving roles require you to be agile and adaptable and organisations are hiring now for future capability. Embracing this and a lifelong learning mindset is essential for career success.

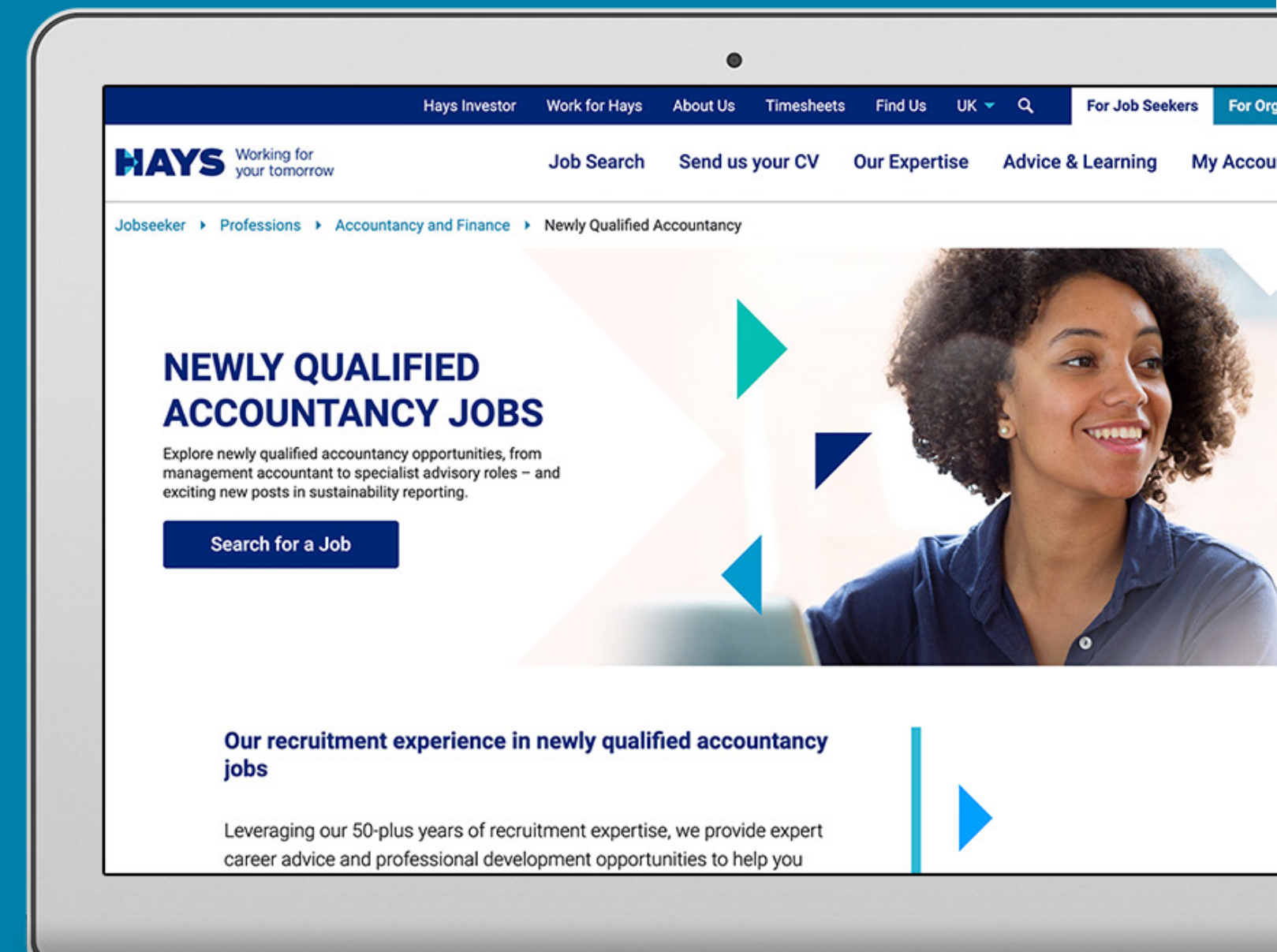


Future-proofing your Career Choice

Accountants remain in demand, and it is a dependable career choice; after all, financial expertise is essential for businesses to survive and to grow. Whether you choose to work in startups, scale ups, large corporations, professional services, or the public sector and not-for-profit, your skills – both existing and developing – are extremely important and valuable. These evolving roles will help you stay agile, embrace technological change, and continuously evolve your skill set, positioning you for a successful, brilliant career in finance.

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YOUR **INTERNATIONAL** CAREER PROSPECTS

Qualifications awarded by UK & Ireland accounting bodies are recognised and respected globally by employers large and small, both in industry and professional services.

Those who use their UK & Ireland accounting qualification as a passport to overseas opportunities typically report a positive impact, not just on their careers, but also their lifestyle, cultural awareness, and personal development. Relocation requires careful thought, preparation, and commitment, but an overwhelming majority of finance professionals who move internationally say they have never regretted it.

A common move if you opt for relocation is to use your current skill set to help answer a demand in an international location. The most common being those with external audit skills, but other finance skills can be in demand. There are some locations in which you are likely to qualify for the working holiday visa, giving you the option to undertake contract positions, travel and get to experience the culture in between assignments. The most common location is Australia, but your skills will be required across a range of other exciting global destinations.

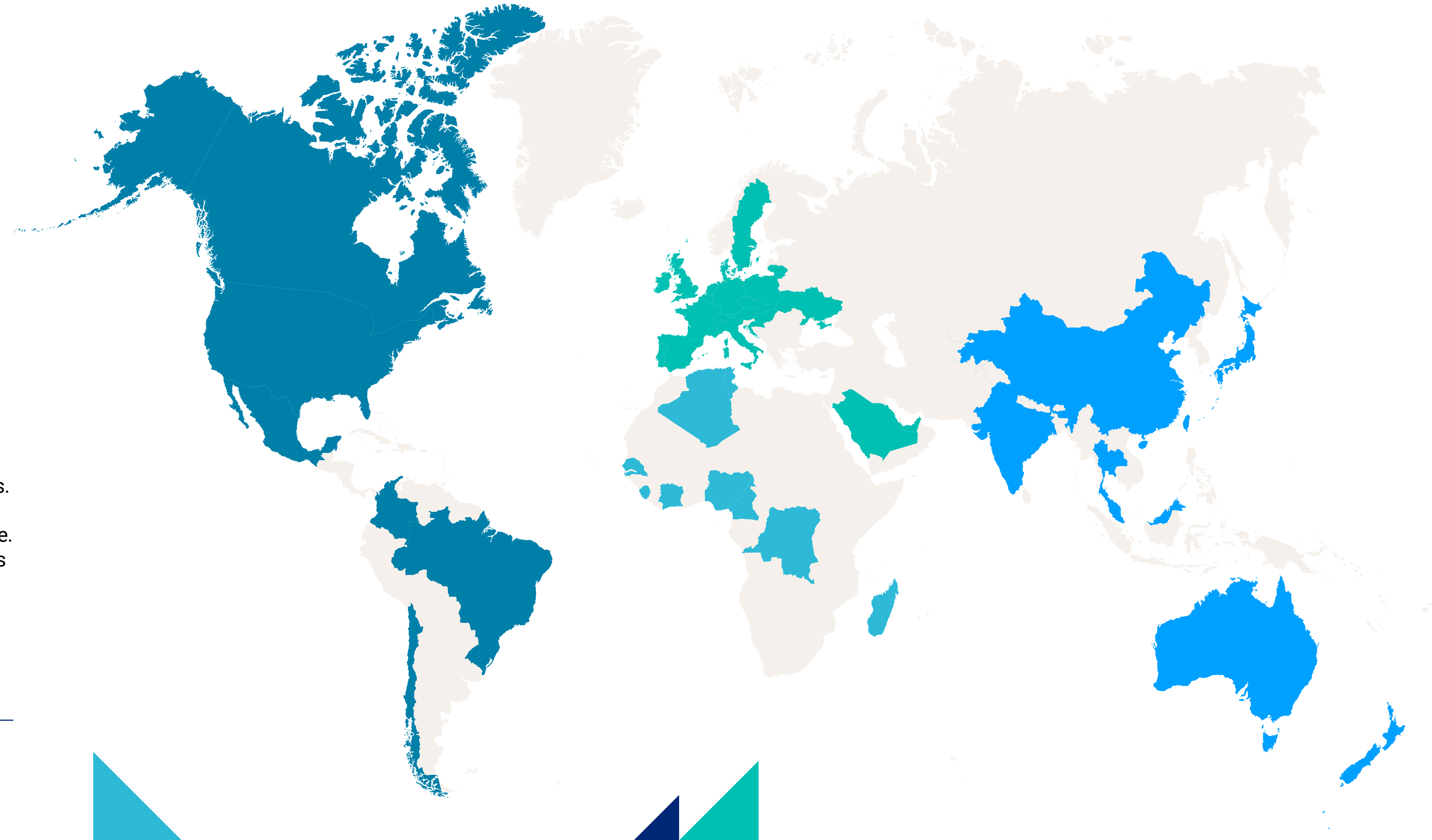
Working for a global business or firm in the UK can also be interesting and fulfilling. As global firms operate across borders, they offer employees exposure to diverse markets, cultures, and business practices. This broadens your perspective and enhances your understanding of global finance. It also allows you to connect with professionals worldwide. Networking with colleagues, clients, and industry experts can open doors to new opportunities and collaborations.

Working on international projects involves navigating intricate financial landscapes. You'll tackle complex challenges while developing your problem-solving skills. Being associated with a global firm or business also adds further credibility to your career.

Hays are a global business with offices around the world if you wanted to expand your international reach. Find the [offices on our website](#) ▶

For opportunities on moving from the UK to Australia or New Zealand speak to:

Rachel Barnetson | +44 (0) 203 465 0158 | rachel.barnetson@hays.com



GET IN TOUCH

Hays can offer valuable support for building your finance career – whatever direction you choose to take. We are a leading finance recruiter with a strong national and international presence, partnering with many top employers.

Finance networks and insights: Hays provides access to extensive finance networks, market insights, and upskilling opportunities

Exclusive job openings: we'll connect you with new and exclusive job opportunities in the finance sector

In demand soft skills: discover the essential soft skills valued in finance and how you can develop them

Career planning: benefit from our long-term career planning, helping to both set a vision and then guide your career to this goal

Wherever you want to work in the UKI, we can help you. We have over 250 consultants spread across the UKI who can advise you on your journey ahead.

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