

Grooming accountants

The Institute is now inviting members to become workshop facilitators for the CPA qualification programme. The job of a facilitator is not always easy, but it definitely yields some interesting insights. *A Plus* spoke to Jason Wong, a workshop facilitator on the financial management and financial reporting modules.



A+ Why did you become a workshop facilitator?

Wong I wanted to contribute to the development of the profession. As a management accountant in a publicly listed company, I decided it was important to strengthen the profession and the status of accountants. I wanted my fellow accountants to have a more positive view of their role and to be more assertive in the workplace.

A+ Can you briefly describe how you act as facilitator?

Wong I describe it as life influencing life. I use discussion questions as a platform for conversations about the nature of accountancy. I also find opportunities to share my experience in the industry. There is a certain amount of exchange of information, back and forth, that takes place. In my first workshop, one of the candidates was actually four years senior to me. He is now a colleague.

A+ What's the most challenging part of the job for you?

Wong Working at a full time job combined with the additional hours of preparation. The initial estimate for preparation time was 60 hours per module. However, the preparation part is getting easier. Having gone through a number of workshops, my own preparation time is decreasing as I get more familiar with the material.

A+ And what's the most rewarding part?

Wong It has expanded my own horizons. I meet candidates with different backgrounds and I can learn a lot. It's a great way to keep myself up to date on the latest developments and standards. For example, with Hong Kong's continuing alignment with international standards, I find that I might be reviewing something with a student that is relatively new to me as well.

Student tips for workshops

► From **Lau Tin Mei** and **Mang Nga Wun**, associates at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Lau Tin Mei: Making good use of the workshops is surely a way to success. While helping us monitor our study progress, the workshops also provide us with opportunities to raise questions and to learn more about difficult concepts. The workshop facilitators are all nice and helpful. I have learned a lot from them.

Mang Nga Wun: To better prepare for the workshops, it is important to study the materials and finish all the workshop questions beforehand. Be open and active in the workshops and you will perform well.

Education section

A+ What advice do you have for students?

Wong Workshops are a great way to prepare for module exams, but students need to be realistic in their time budgeting. Allow sufficient time for preparation and don't over-enrol for modules.

A+ What benefits do students get from workshops?

Wong Primarily, it's the face-to-face interaction rather than just being tested on specific knowledge. It's a chance for students to consider why questions are answered in a certain way and it's also an opportunity for students to elaborate and clarify their own point of view. It all makes learning more fun. For instance, I often use role-playing games, such as make believe boardroom meetings or negotiations, to illustrate certain points. These types of things are valuable later in a student's career.



▶ Jason Wong

Workshop facilitators lead discussions in four workshops for each module. Facilitators are also charged with assessing candidates' performances. In addition to having at least two years' membership with the Institute, facilitators should hold or have recently held a responsible position and have a working knowledge in the subject matter.

For Institute members interested in becoming a facilitator and for general enquiries, contact Bob Cheng at 2287 7081

CPA qualification programme debuts in China

▶ The Institute announced in early December that its world-class CPA qualification programme is now available through the Beijing National Accounting Institute (BNAI). The aim of the collaboration is to help meet the huge demand for professional accountants trained to international standards in China. The Institute's outgoing president, Edward K.F. Chow, officiated at a press conference to announce the agreement in Beijing on 7 December. Chow stressed the need for more qualified accountants to handle China's rapid growth and noted the unique position of the Institute to assist.

The move follows increased cooperation between mainland China and Hong Kong in the mutual exemption of students in the sitting of examination papers. Such exemption agreements already cover financial management and auditing. BNAI president Chen Xiao Yue was on hand at the press conference and noted that the Institute's work in China would have the full support of the BNAI.

The deadline for application for the first courses in Beijing is 6 January 2006. The first courses at the BNAI are set to take place in February.

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