

Two in five people would consider a career change to accountancy if administrative tasks were carried out by AI

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- New data reinforces AI tools have the potential to enhance the accountancy profession.
- 78% of people surveyed said that they are interested in upskilling due to the rise of AI at work, increasing to 89% for those aged 25–34.
- AI is overwhelmingly regarded as an enabler, with 64% believing AI tools will enhance the accounting profession.

AAT has released new research which dispels fears artificial intelligence (AI) could replace accountancy roles across the profession.

The data shows that automating ‘mundane’ tasks could broaden the appeal of the profession, with two in five people stating they would consider a change of career to accountancy if they could use AI to replace routine tasks.

Four in five accountants already in the profession agree that automation will make their jobs easier, freeing them up from administrative burdens (78%) and enabling them to support businesses with strategic advice and problem-solving (80%). Two in four professionals who currently work, or have previously worked, in accountancy (42%) say AI tools have been genuinely useful in their roles. Among 25–34-year-olds this figure climbs to 55%.

The results also show AI is overwhelmingly regarded as an enabler, despite public perception fears. 64% believe AI tools will enhance efficiency and accuracy in the accounting profession.

63% of respondents agree that AI would free up finance professionals to concentrate on high-impact activities that truly matter to them. For instance, instead of spending time fulfilling data entry or reconciling accounts, accountants could leverage AI to automate these processes, allowing more time for strategic problem-solving, such as identifying cost-saving opportunities or optimising cash flow for businesses. It was also found that AI can enable accountants to offer more tailored advice to clients, such as crafting bespoke tax strategies or guiding small businesses through growth challenges or opportunities.

Claire Bennison, AAT Executive Director of Customer, Partnerships and Innovation said: “There’s a persistent narrative that AI is here to replace accountants, but it actually has the potential to empower them. With the right skills and support, AI can be an enabler of success, building a more dynamic, inclusive, and tech-enabled finance profession that is truly future-ready.”

Talent shortage

Amid a growing talent shortage - with Skills England identifying ‘Accounting and Finance Technicians’ as one of the 10 most critically in-demand occupations in 2024* - one in five accountants who have left the profession say they would return if automation could remove the more administrative aspects of the job.

AI is seen as a valuable tool by the majority of professionals and has the potential to both attract and retain talent for employers. We can future proof the profession by lowering barriers to access to enable the right training. **says Bennison.**

Developing necessary skills

In the wider population, four fifths of people surveyed said that they are interested in upskilling due to the rise of AI at work (78%), with learning to use AI and machine learning tools (32%) coming second only to budgeting (35%) in people’s priorities for workplace training. Among younger professionals, this intent is even higher: 40% of those aged 25–34 want to develop skills in AI and machine learning.

Seventy-one percent 71% believe that individuals using AI tools must be appropriately trained, with AAT’s qualifications already evolving to meet this demand. These modern pathways aim not just to fill a skills gap, but to shape a future-ready workforce that can lead in an AI-enhanced economy.

“A properly trained, AI-savvy workforce isn’t just good for business - it’s essential,” **says Bennison.** “The

accounting field is advancing rapidly and our mission is to support people adopt and adapt to AI through practical, accessible programmes. We will be working with the government to ensure there is the right levels of investment to enable accessible training programmes so we can bridge the skills shortage and develop an inclusive, and technology-empowered finance profession.”

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