

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."

— ENDS —

For media enquiries please contact media@aat.org.uk

Notes to editors

* [Skills England: Occupations in demand 2024](#)

Case Studies available: Let us know if you would like to speak directly to one of our case studies, detailed below:

- AAT course leader at Sheffield College, Dean Quartermarine, who has first-hand experience on the impact AI is having on the profession as well as the impressions for future students. He says:

"AI is not here to replace accountants; it's here to empower us. AI can handle repetitive tasks like data entry, freeing us to focus on delivering critical insights and driving informed decision-making. Accountants are strategic business partners and at Sheffield College, I encourage my students to embrace AI tools to realise this. While some students express concerns about AI, there is certainly momentum in using it as a powerful addition to their toolkit, paving the way for a more impactful role in the future of accounting."

- Laraine, a 40-year-old finance coordinator from Aberdeen, transitioned from retail and engineering to an accounting career through AAT's Level 4 apprenticeship. Now studying applied data analytics at the University of Highlands and Islands and currently in her third finance role, she says it has been transformed by AI:

"AI has transformed my work as a finance coordinator, making payment processing faster and freeing me up to engage more with clients and explain finance to non-finance teams. It's not something to fear - it's a tool that enhances our efficiency, and as accountants, we need to adapt and embrace this evolution to focus on strategy and growth."

Images: Claire Bennison, AAT Executive Director of Customer, Partnerships and Innovation and infographic showing key survey data.

About AAT:

- The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) is the voice of the accounting technicians and bookkeepers in the UK. The charity was formed in 1980 with the purpose of raising professional standards and expanding access to quality accountancy education and skills training.
- AAT is made up of more than 120,000 people passionate about accountancy – either working in our professions or studying towards AAT's Ofqual-certified qualifications, including more than 6,000 apprentices in the UK.
- AAT members grow local communities: powering more than 840,000 UK small businesses and local authorities with the practical accounting skills and valuable financial insights they need to invest and grow.

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