

A LEVEL ACCOUNTING



WHAT IS ACCOUNTING?

Accounting is a highly practical course that aims to teach you the numerical techniques used by businesses to keep track of their finances, aid decision making and help judge performance, whilst considering some of the internal and external factors that might impact on these issues.

WHY CHOOSE ACCOUNTING

Whatever your chosen career you will come across Accounts, whether you decide to run your own business, work for an organisation large or small or pursue a career in Accounting. Accounts form the backbone of any business and without effective accounting, businesses are unable to function and may therefore run the risk of failure.

This Accounting qualification will enable you to acquire a good level of confidence with accounting documents and an understanding of what the figures tell a business which you will find valuable in the future, whether that be managing your personal finances, running a business or as an employee wanting a pay rise. The course gives a general overview of the subject, which has helped many students decide whether they wish to train as professional accountants in the future.

WHO WILL ACCOUNTING SUIT?

Accounting will suit students who have good numerical skills and enjoy problem solving. Questions can take 25-35 minutes to complete, it is often possible to tell if they are correct immediately and if there is a problem. Successful students will be those that want to look for their mistakes to correct them straight away.

Literacy skills are important as approximately 35% of the exam will be written questions with a combination of short answer and extended responses required. It would not be possible to achieve a high grade without success in this area.

Accounting is a challenging subject, with a lot of new concepts to learn and high grade boundaries. Whilst it is not an easy option, for the right students, it can be very rewarding, with a higher than average number of students choosing to continue their studies in this area.



WHAT DOES ACCOUNTING COVER?

The course aims to give students a broad taste of the work of accountants and covers both financial and management aspects. In the first year you will study areas such as the role of the accountant, the preparation of financial statements and the concepts followed in their preparation, different methods of costing, budgeting and the evaluation of financial information. In addition in the second year you would also look at topics such as the financial requirements the different types of business ownership, investment appraisal, the presentation of published financial information and the impact of ethical considerations.

HOW IS IT TAUGHT?

Much of your time will be in the classroom, Accounting is a very practical subject so having been taught the concepts you will spend time both inside and out of lessons practicing the techniques, applying them to different situations and interpreting / evaluating your results. There will be regular tests to help both you and your teacher track your progress and extensive use is made of past paper questions.

We also try to get involved with professional Accounting bodies. In the past we have visited Price Waterhouse Coopers at their office in Birmingham, to investigate the careers available to students through their higher apprenticeship scheme, Degree programmes, and graduate opportunities. We regularly take teams to the ICAEW - BASE competition. This is a national competition where students are given a problem solving case study where they need to use their Accounting and Business skills to suggest a justified course of action and present this to a panel of judges made up of accounting professionals. Our team was second in the regional finals in 2016/17 where they competed against over 120 students from schools across the region

We also organise for organisations to come into college to discuss career / training opportunities with students and provide an insight into what it might be like working as an accountant.

Skills developed during the course

The skills that you gain in this accounting course will be useful whatever your chosen career. Studying Accounting should enable you to:

- Develop your numeracy, communication, application, presentation, analysis and evaluation skills.
- Gain an appreciation of the effects of economic, legal, ethical, social, environmental and technological influences on accounting and business decisions.
- Improve your capacity for methodical, logical and critical thought.

WHAT DO I NEED TO START THE COURSE

You do not need to have studied any particular GCSE to start the Accounting course but an interest in numbers and their practical application would be good. You will need to have achieved a grade 6 or higher in Maths and grade 4 or higher in English language and have 5 GCSE grade 5s or above in other subjects. The course aims to lay the foundations that will help in whatever direction you wish to go, whether it be further study in higher education or a career in any area.

Accounting will combine well with any subject, but goes particularly well with Business, Economics or Maths, although this is not a requirement.

Some of the events that are organised are free others may incur a small charge of up to £15.

HOW IS THE COURSE STRUCTURED

There is no course work, all assessment is by two exams at the end of the two year course, and the exams are as follows.

- Paper 1 – three hours long, worth 50% of the A Level and contains three sections of compulsory questions
 - Section A has 10 multi-choice questions and short answer questions, worth a total of 30 marks.
 - Section B has two structured questions each worth 20 marks (40 marks in total for this section).
 - Section C has two extended writing questions each worth 25 marks (50 marks in total for this section).
- Paper 2 – three hours long, worth 50% of the A Level and contains three sections of compulsory questions
 - Section A has 10 multi-choice questions and short answer questions, worth a total of 30 marks.
 - Section B has two structured questions each worth 20 marks (40 marks in total for this section).
 - Section C has two extended writing questions each worth 25 marks (50 marks in total for this section).

PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

A number of students have decided to continue with Accounting, Finance or a Business –related degree at University: others have gone straight into work where they have the opportunity to gain further Accounting qualifications. Remember whatever you decide to do, whatever career you choose, having an understanding of Accounting will help you to make both work-related and personal decisions.

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