

Accounting's Future: Topline Report

How accounting must adapt to
thrive in 2025

Ground-breaking research delivers authoritative insight

The world is changing fast and with it, finance. To keep ACCA at the profession's forefront, we conducted ground-breaking research into accounting's future.

Over two years, we talked to 2,000+ C-suite executives globally and 300+ leading academics, policymakers, regulators and experts.

Their combined wisdom provided authoritative insights summarised in this Topline Report.

Our research benefitted from an unrivalled source of professional insight – the **ACCA network:**

200,000+
Members

101 offices in
57 countries

261 strategic
partnerships
globally



Think Ahead

Identifying drivers of change

The accountancy profession will evolve significantly in the years to 2025.

Many factors will influence that evolution, but our research identified four key drivers of change:



**Advances
in digital technology**



**Increased regulation
+ stronger guidance**



**Higher expectations
of business value**



**Continued
globalisation**

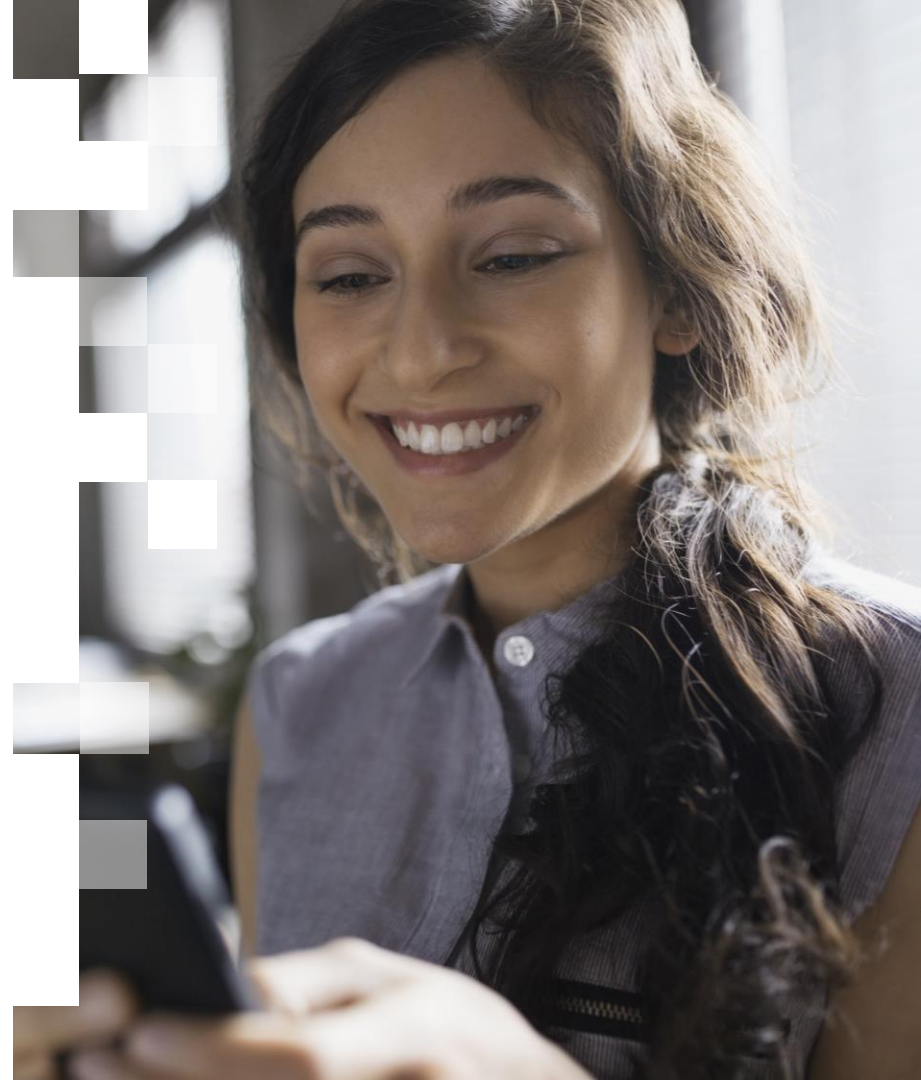
Drivers of change

Regulation and governance

Increasing regulation and the need for stronger governance will affect all accountants - from chief financial officers (CFOs) and senior audit partners through to accounts assistants and audit trainees.

Most professional accountants will also be affected by the growing profile of tax, including demands for greater tax transparency and more government action on tax and information sharing.

52% of respondents were most certain about changes to global governance as having the highest impact *after 2025*.



Drivers of change

Advances in digital technology

Technology will continue transforming the profession, letting accountants focus more on value-added activity.

Accountants will need to understand, and often be expert in, new models for business, funding, payments and blockchain applications.

They will also need more skills with analytics and the social media tools business will use for collaboration, disclosure, presentation and stakeholder engagement.

55% of respondents expect the development of intelligent automated accounting systems to have the greatest impact over the next 3 to 10 years.



Drivers of change

Higher expectations of business value

Tomorrow's accountants will face more requests for information and ad hoc reporting from ever-more stakeholders. Accountants will be expected to look beyond the numbers.

They will need to collaborate more inside and outside the business; help organisations achieve short and longer-term goals; think more strategically and be more involved in decision-making.

They will be expected to make professional judgements while maintaining high standards of integrity, independence and scepticism.

I'm looking for finance professionals who can predict the future, not describe history.



Drivers of change

Continued globalisation

Tomorrow's accountants will manage differences in business practices, roles and regulations across geographies. As well as technical knowledge, skills and ethics, they will need strong interpersonal behaviours and qualities.

As harmonisation of business standards increases, language and cultural skills and being effective in diverse teams will rival technical knowledge.

81% of respondents expected greater harmonisation of global accounting and business standards to have the greatest impact over the next 3 to 10 years.

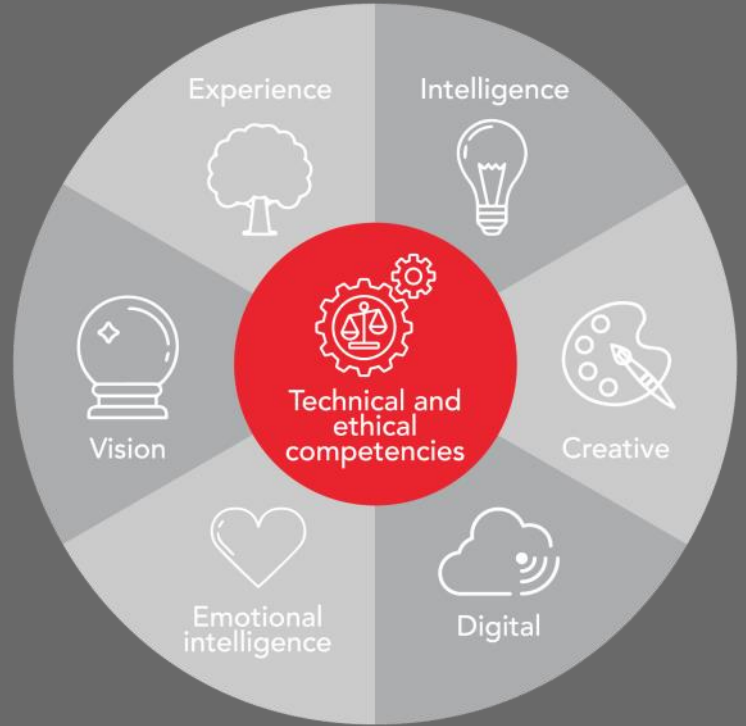




The skills the future will demand

Our research also identified seven technical, ethical and interpersonal competencies or ‘quotients’ that tomorrow’s finance professionals will need – qualities that are at the core of the evolved ACCA Qualification.

The optimal mix of individual quotients will vary across specialisms, roles, organisations, industries and geographies, and it will evolve in response to change.





Professional Quotients - defined



Technical skills and ethics (TEQ):

The ability to perform consistently well while maintaining the highest standards of integrity, independence and scepticism.



Intelligence (IQ):

The ability to acquire and use knowledge: thinking, reasoning and solving problems.



Creative (CQ):

The ability to use existing knowledge in new situations, to make connections, explore potential outcomes, and generate new ideas.



Digital (DQ):

The awareness and application of existing and emerging digital technologies, capabilities, practices and strategies.



Professional Quotients - defined



Emotional intelligence (EQ):

The ability to identify personal emotions and those of others, apply them to tasks, and regulate and manage them.



Vision (VQ):

The ability to predict future trends by extrapolating existing trends and facts, and to fill gaps by thinking innovatively.



Experience (XQ):

The ability and skills to understand customer expectations, meet desired outcomes and create value.

Now we've seen the future, we're preparing for it

Our research has guided an evolved ACCA Qualification that meets the changing needs of businesses and employers while maintaining the rigour ACCA is so respected for.

The professional level is redesigned, there is an innovative case study and an updated Ethics and Professional Skills module.

The evolved ACCA Qualification will ensure that ACCA professionals continue to be valued and sought-after worldwide.



Drivers of change

Looking to the future. Leading the way.

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**Accountants shouldn't sit and wait.
They should lead the change.**



Where to find out more...

See how we're looking to the future, leading the way.

Working together, members, employers and partners around the world are helping to shape the profession and keep ACCA at the forefront of tomorrow's challenges.

- Find out more at accaglobal.com/tomorrow
- Join our community of advocates who, formally and informally, promote and publicly support ACCA around the world.
accaglobal.com/advocacy
- Share this presentation with colleagues, and suggest they visit our website for more on how ACCA is looking to the future, and leading the way accaglobal.com/tomorrow

