

A+ MD scoops the top prize

Simon Deane has won a prestigious award from the South West Region of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).



Photo caption read L-R: Neil Milsom from award sponsor Orange, Simon Deane and Jeremy Vine

Simon's year as President of the South Western Society of Chartered Accountants (SWSCA) culminated in his being named as Best Chartered Accountant All Rounder

at a glittering awards ceremony in Bristol, sponsored by Lloyds TSB Corporate Markets and Michael Page Finance.

The annual awards, which each year spotlight the stars of this thriving sector of the South West's economy, rewarding exceptional financial management, commercial awareness and business acumen, were presented by BBC broadcaster Jeremy Vine, at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum.

Commenting on his award, Simon said: "I feel really humbled by the award. It is great to be recognised by my colleagues and peers and the ceremony was also a reminder that as a profession we are not in isolation. I get a real kick from seeing people develop and go on to become chartered accountants and partners, so winning an award for doing something that I am so passionate about feels fantastic!"

New faces at A+

The assessor and tutor line up has remained unchanged over the last year (they now have a combined experience of delivering AAT training of in excess of 80 years... not all of those attributable to Simon!

The central administrative department has been strengthened with the addition of Petra Nesbitt, Jenna Allen, and Jan Johnson. Some of you will have had dealings with Dawn Humphreys on the various paperwork requirements for funded learners. Dawn is currently on maternity leave having given birth to a baby girl, Olivia on New Year's Day.

Farewell, but not goodbye to David Stephens. He is taking a position with the West Devon Borough Council but will continue to teach evening classes.

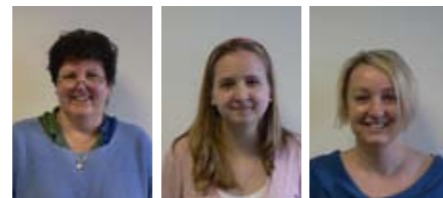


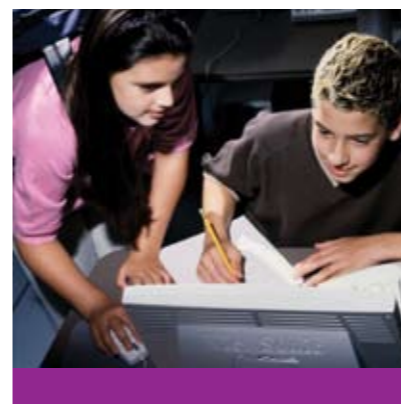
Photo caption read L-R: Petra Nesbitt, Jenna Allen, and Jan Johnson.

Fresh New Look for Accountancy Plus

Welcome to the latest edition. We hope you like our new look corporate identity which we are rolling out across all our materials and which will be reflected on our website too.

The new identity has been just a small part of what has been a busy past 12 months for us. We have achieved a tremendous amount including national and regional recognition for our work reflecting the hard work by everybody here. Whilst independent recognition is nice, we continue to focus on feedback from employers like you and our students so please feed any comments through to us – they are always very welcome. **Simon Deane** Managing Director

New Pack to Gear Students Up for Work Experience



Many employers are put off offering work experience because of the concern that it will take up lots of staff time supporting the student, feeding them work and explaining things to them. It is also not always easy to find them work to undertake at a suitable level – especially without a fair bit of explanation and thereby a lot of lost chargeable time

To this end A+ have just completed developing a Schools Accountancy Work Experience Pack on behalf of the ICAEW. The pack comprises of a series of accounting activities and

questions based on an accounting case study. The exercises are designed to introduce the student to basic accounts preparation and also to specific concepts and terminology used by accountants. This should relieve you from the pressure of taking on a work experience student

Increasing the availability of schools work experience not only benefits the student and the school but also you – as it raises your profile with the school and potential future employees and hopefully improve the number of quality students applying for your vacancies in the future. Schools' work experience normally takes place in Year 10 – i.e. Year 1 of their 2 year GCSE studies.

Already we have had over 20 employers trialling the work experience pack since our mailshot in June 2007. If you would like a copy, **please email us on info@aplustraining.co.uk or telephone Andrew on 01752 256610. it is free of charge.**

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+ BITESIZE PLUS

National Recognition

The quality of our training provision was recognised in the Adult Learning Inspectorate's Annual Report for 2005/06.

We were one of three Plymouth training providers (alongside GHQ Training and Achievement Training) to be highlighted in the Report. The Chief Inspector, David Sherlock commented "I am delighted to be able to name Accountancy Plus (Training) Limited as one of this year's outstanding providers. They have demonstrated an extraordinary to achieving the very highest standards in the quality of training they offer. Learners can be confident that they will receive first-class support to reach their full potential. To be one of the top providers in the country is a tremendous achievement and a great credit to the team at Accountancy Plus (Training) Limited." Since April 2007, the Inspectorate has merged with its schools equivalent OFSTED to form one national inspection body,NAME..... The cycle of four yearly inspection will continue with our next scheduled inspection due in 2009.

Fast-track approach to bookkeeping training

You should recently have received details on our new bookkeeping training product "The Balancing Act".

This combines a comprehensive workbook of traditional paper-based bookkeeping activities with our existing on-line interactive training package, ABC. In our trials it has taken a student just under 3 days to complete but the major benefit is that it can be completed, either partly or fully, before your new recruit joins you, saving you valuable chargeable time and ensuring new staff hit the ground running. For further details please contact us on info@aplustraining.co.uk

If you are based in Cornwall or Devon and are recruiting a 16/17 year old, it may be possible to cover the cost of The Balancing Act course by putting them through a Learning Agreement to take the ABC Bookkeeping Certificate. See details above on LAs. As well as paying for the course, providing both of you a £250 award on achievement, it could provide a useful probationary exercise before progressing to the full AAT qualifications and an Apprenticeship in Accounting – funded by the LSC through WBL (see above).

An Employer's Guide to the Funding Maze!

It was with reluctance that in August 2006 we introduced 'Top Up' fees for those aged 19+ progressing beyond the Foundation Stage of their AAT studies. This was a direct result of being notified of a substantial cut in our workbased learning funding from the Learning + Skills Council (LSC). Although we will suffer a further cut this August of 8%, we do not intend to pass this on to employers in increased fees.

Work Based Learning:

Available to those aged 16 to 24, in employment. Funding fully covers the cost of the course for Apprentices so there is nothing to pay. For Advanced Apprentices and NVQ 4 funding fully covers the course for learners aged 16 to 18 at the start of the course. For Advanced Apprentices and NVQ 4 there is a top up fee to pay of £500 plus VAT for those aged 19-24 as funding does not fully cover the cost of the course.

Train to Gain:

For employed persons 19 and over. Must not hold a level 2 or equivalent qualification (e.g. 5 GCSEs at C grade or above). Funding fully covers the cost of the course so there is nothing to pay.

Learning Agreements:

For employed 16/17 year olds not yet in recognised learning or education. £250 award available to both learner and employer. Funding fully covers the cost of the course so there is nothing to pay.

Funding	Subject	Accountancy	IT	Administration
Work Based Learning		Foundation Stage AAT (NVQ 2) as an Apprenticeship; Intermediate Stage AAT (NVQ 3) as an Advanced Apprenticeship; Technician Stage AAT (NVQ4) as a stand alone NVQ.;	ITQ NVQ 2 within an Apprenticeship	NVQ2 in Administration as an Apprenticeship
Train to Gain		Foundation Stage AAT (NVQ 2) or Intermediate Stage AAT (NVQ 3) as a 'jumper'	BCS User Certificate Parts 1 & 2 ("ECDL+") ITQ NVQ 2	NVQ 2 in Administration or NVQ 3 in Administration as a 'jumper' NVQ 2 in Administration or
Learning Agreements (Devon & Cornwall only)		ABC Bookkeeping Certificate	ECDL Parts 1 & 2 ("ECDL+") BCS User Certificate	Certificate in Administration

The above is only intended as a quick reference guide for professionals promoting employers and their staff. For more information or referral of interested potential learners please email: paul@aplustraining.co.uk

In addition to the above, we have applied to be considered for the LSC funding for those aged over 25 ("25+"). This would ease financial burdens on learners and their employers but as yet we have had no indication as to whether there will be any funding made available.

Funding details correct as at 9 July 2007



Business and Administration NVQ Levels 2 & 3

Not only do we offer Accounting training, A+ Training can also offer an NVQ in Business and Administration, at levels 2 and 3.



This qualification is aimed at anyone who works in an administrative role, within any work setting, from public services to the private sector. This programme, like any NVQ, is broken down into units of which there are a specific number to achieve in order to gain the NVQ certificate. The NVQ at level 2 requires you to complete five units and the level 3 NVQ is six units.

Level 2 is aimed at administrative staff of a junior or inexperienced level or who work in a supervised position. Level 3 is aimed at supervisors or people with a reasonable level of experience in their job role.

How is the course delivered?

The NVQ is delivered by supported individual study coupled with on-the-job training, which means that learners study in their own time and gather evidence from their work place to support what they are learning.

We are now using the eNVQ system, which means that the entire NVQ is conducted via an NVQ website. Learners are allocated their assignments online and then upload their completed work onto their designated student area for assessment.

Learners are provided with substantial one to one tutor support, coupled with telephone and email support.

Funding

As you can see from the funding section in this newsletter, we can access funding for this NVQ via Apprenticeships and Train to Gain, so please contact us if you have any staff who you feel would benefit from gaining a recognized qualification for the job they do!

AAT-ACA Fastrack

Some 50% of students we have trained towards the AAT qualification continue their accountancy studies along one of the chartered pathways. Completing their AAT studies typically gives students exemption from the first level of the professional exams.

With increasing costs of studying at university, the AAT route to chartered accountancy has become ever more appealing. Last summer the Times Educational Supplement published an article reckoning that the financial differential between aspiring to chartered accountancy through the AAT route rather than as a graduate entrant was up to £59,631! The "earn while you learn" route of starting off in an accountancy career appeals to learners fearful of rising third level education costs and to employers it allows them to see how a potential chartered student is progressing

on their AAT before entering into the commitment required to move on to the professional exams.

In each of the last two years, former A+ students have been amongst the prize winners of the ICAEW 'Top Up' papers; Gemma Harbutt and Paul Twydell in 2006, and Lucy Tofts in 2007. Warmest congratulations to these students and continued best wishes for the next series of challenges and maybe they'll be an inspiration to existing students to go on further.

