

Graduate Trainee – Information Pack

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Welcome from Ann-Marie Harkin, Director Audit Services



Ann Marie Harkin, Executive Director

Croeso/Welcome

Do you have passion, energy and commitment to improve the lives of the citizens of Wales then a career training as a chartered accountant at Audit Wales, the public sector watchdog for Wales may be what you are looking for! We are currently looking for graduates to join our North Wales team.

You will follow a four-year fixed-term graduate training programme to train to become a chartered accountant following the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). You will work with our teams across Wales, to deliver a variety of audit services and help scrutinise and improve public services.

Who we're looking for

Regardless of degree discipline, we are looking for individuals with a very good academic background who are committed to improving public services and see themselves as the future leaders within the public sector in Wales.

If you have an impressive academic record with a minimum of:

- An upper second-class degree in any discipline, except where you have achieved higher level academic qualification
- Good academic results at A level
- Good GCSEs, including grade B in Maths and grade C English

If you are naturally inquisitive, enjoy teamwork, have an interest in public services and want to train as an accountant then our graduate role is the one for you.

Whilst we're looking for individuals with a very good academic record, we will also be considering what else the applicant has to offer – be it personal or professional achievements. We are genuinely interested in who you are, your strengths and your potential.

Further information about the skills and abilities required for the role can be found in our job description.

Study package

We provide full financial support for your training to gain membership with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). This support includes – membership subscription, tuition/revision, study material, examination entry and travel expenses where applicable.

Network of support

In addition to the support of your peers, you will be allocated:

- a line manager who will not only provide you with general support and guidance but will act as your professional studies counsellor who will have a critical role to play in developing and supporting you throughout your professional studies;
- a buddy to help ease you into your new role as well as providing on-going informal support, introducing you to a social network and being a starting point for general queries; and
- you will get support, encouragement and opportunities to grow. You will join people who are as enthusiastic about your development as you are and who are just as keen to see you do well.

Your role

Our trainees work with a number of teams across the audit services team as well as other business areas such as our Finance team. You will gain knowledge and experience in the different technical aspects of our audit work, for example the external audit at a number of different clients from across the public sector, grants certification work, data analytics, governance and value for money work.

You will also learn how to establish and maintain good working relationships both internally and externally. You will do this alongside studying for your accountancy qualification and being supported in a full learning and development programme, which culminates in achieving an ILM level 3 award.

Public bodies are spread far and wide across Wales. Pre COVID pandemic our staff travelled across Wales to these public bodies. Since March 2020, like so many, we have worked remotely with staff predominately working from home. Our trainees are now slowly returning to our offices, for approximately 1-2 days per week. We think this is important as it allows trainees to start to network and socialise with both their supervisors, peers and other colleagues. We believe that building relationships in a face to face environment is helpful when new in the workplace and these relationships really support effective working in the remote environment, so we encourage our trainees to attend the office. Feedback has been positive on the impact this has had on the trainees, but we do not mandate this and the decision on whether to attend the office is currently left to the trainee. We expect that we will continue to work flexibly as we move out of the pandemic but the exact nature of that is still emerging. That said what, we can guarantee is that no two days will be the same and you will join an organisation committed to supporting the development of finance leaders of the future.

In addition to this, you will have the opportunity to benefit from a secondment within another public sector body where you will be able to gain a greater breadth of direct knowledge and experience of public services in Wales and qualify for a level 3 award from the Institute of Leadership and Management. An excellent steppingstone for your career.

While there is no guarantee of a permanent position at the end of the four-year programme, Audit Wales will provide support and opportunities from across the wider public sector to support your career opportunities. To date, all of our graduate trainees have secured permanent roles in a wide range of organisations across both the public and private sector at the end of their training contracts.

Who we are

We're an organisation that has reach across Wales's entire public sector, auditing public spending of some £19 billion annually. On behalf of the people of Wales, we examine public spending and identify ways to improve public services. Our work supports the effective scrutiny of public money by the Senedd and locally elected representatives, and we are entirely independent of government. Our purpose is to:

- **Assure** the people of Wales that public money is well managed
- **Explain** how public money is being used to meet people's needs
- **Inspire** and **empower** the Welsh public sector to improve

You can read more about [our organisation and our work for the future in our video](#) and also [our Annual Plan](#).

Audit Wales is a fun and friendly place to work, with an incredibly supportive culture and one where we're working hard to truly embed our values and behaviours in all that we do and how we do it.

We embrace diversity in all its forms so welcome applications from people from all backgrounds and with many different skills, experiences and perspectives. This is what helps us to create a GREAT place to work and make an even bigger difference through the work we do across Wales.

We want to strengthen our workforce diversity particularly in terms of people who are black, Asian, or from other ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, people who are carers and people who are LGBT+. Find out more about our approach to diversity and inclusion on our [website](#).

At least three of our graduate roles are Welsh essential but this is not a requirement for all other roles, but there will be lots of opportunities for you to learn Welsh, if you are interested. All appointments will be made on merit against the person specification in this pack.

We're committed to working smarter, we've got great technology that supports us, we're building our coaching skills to empower and inspire each other, and we invest heavily in ongoing learning and development.

Your benefits

We pride ourselves on the pay and benefits we offer, what you can expect are:

- a competitive starting salary circa £21,000
- travel allowance of £3,350, subject to eligibility criteria (this is currently under review)
- fully paid accountancy training and student membership of ICAEW
- first class accountancy training with an external provider, with exam pass rates above the national average
- salary advance of up to £1,500 for a tenancy deposit
- 33 days annual leave (plus public holidays)
- buying and selling annual leave (following the first anniversary of joining)
- access to the Civil Service Pension Scheme
- flexible working arrangements
- a 35-hour working week, worked on a Monday to Friday basis. However, we have lots of flexibility to deliver our work as we operate within a smarter working environment where delivering business need is the priority

Take a look at our pay and other benefits to gain an understanding of our [reward package and pay scales](#).

If this opportunity excites you and you have the right skills, aptitude and motivation, we want to hear from you. Call my colleague Sian Grainger on 029 2032 0547, if you'd like to chat to us before you apply.

All the best,

Ann-Marie

Job Description

Job title	Graduate Trainee Auditor
Reports to	Audit Manager
Location	Wales
Pay band	Trainee
Mobile	Yes
Eligible for Travel Allowance	Yes

Job description

Job Purpose

- Working as part of a supportive team, you will be involved in the external audit of a range of Welsh public-sector bodies, including local government, NHS bodies and the Welsh Government and its related organisations.
- You will also train to achieve a recognised accountancy qualification Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).

Main Duties

- To successfully complete the ICAEW qualification.
- To successfully complete the ILM qualification.
- To assist in the delivery of financial audit and value for money work at Audited Bodies in compliance with Audit Wales standards.
- Working as part of a team to complete or assist in the completion of audit tasks in line with agreed procedures.
- Working as part of a project team who contributes to research and data collection and analysis of data.

Main Duties

- Demonstrate good verbal and listening skills when making enquiries with client staff and working within your audit team.
- Ensure a planned and well-organised approach to your work with support from the Audit Lead or other appropriate supervisor.
- Take responsibility for your own development and strive to improve your skills and knowledge – treat new assignments as an opportunity to apply what you have learned in a new environment or to gain new knowledge.
- Any other duties commensurate with the role, which may include value for money audit work.

Key Results Areas

- The supported delivery of audit activities to time, budget and quality.
- Successful completion of ICAEW qualification.
- Successful completion of the ILM training.
- To act as a role model for the values and behaviours of Audit Wales.

Person Specification

Requirement	Essential or Desirable
1. Qualifications	
1.1 Very good academic achievement at A Level or equivalent qualification.	Essential
1.2 Degree Level – minimum of a 2:1, except where you have achieved higher level academic qualification.	Essential
1.3 Minimum of 5 GCSEs (Grade A*-C), including Maths at grade B or above or equivalent qualification.	Essential

Person Specification	
Requirement	Essential or Desirable
2. Skills and abilities	
2.1 Good analytical skills and the ability to demonstrate sound professional judgement.	Essential
2.2 Has an understanding of the role and function of the public sector in Wales, the challenges it currently faces and the related political environment.	Desirable
2.3 Ability to see tasks through to a successful conclusion.	Desirable
2.4 Good verbal and written skills – clear, concise with excellent attention to detail.	Essential
2.5 Works effectively, enthusiastically and engaged as a member of a team.	Essential
2.6 Effective time management skills particularly the ability to work across a number of audits at any one time.	Essential
2.7 Sound questioning and listening skills.	Essential
2.8 Ability to work flexibly and manage own time effectively to ensure work is completed to appropriate standards and timescales as set out by others.	Desirable

Person Specification	
Requirement	Essential or Desirable
2.9 Good interpersonal skills – able to develop and effectively work with others at all levels.	Essential
2.10 Ability to drive or be able to drive within the probation period. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for those unable to drive due to an impairment	Essential
2.11 Confident in working at home using IT to communicate with colleagues and others	Essential
2.12 Good digital, data and technology skills, with a willingness and ability to learn new skills and software, to communicate, collaborate, create, innovate, transact and handle data safely	Desirable
3 Personal attributes	
3.1 An interest in pursuing a finance career in the public sector.	Essential
3.2 Enthusiastic and highly motivated.	Essential
3.3 Displays self-awareness and willingness to learn from experience and continually acquire and apply new and relevant knowledge and skills.	Essential
3.4 Flexible and adaptable to changing priorities/challenges.	Desirable
3.5 Able to act on own initiative but knowing when to seek supervision and guidance from colleagues.	Desirable
4 General	

Person Specification

4.1 Self-aware and a role model for the Audit Wales values and behaviours.	Essential
4.2 Ability to work flexibly and, if necessary, outside of normal office hours.	Desirable
4.3 An awareness and a commitment to equality and diversity.	Essential
4.4 An awareness and commitment to the arrangements for health and safety.	Essential

Welsh Language Skills

We value the importance of the Welsh language in our work and aim to provide a bilingual service to everyone who wants to use it. We would therefore like to especially encourage applications from individuals that have Welsh language skills to help us meet this aim.

All job descriptions will detail whether the ability to speak Welsh is an essential or desirable requirement. If successful and you do not currently have Welsh language skills, we can support you in learning Welsh if you wish.

The following Welsh language skills are desirable for this role. Please refer to our language skills matrix for a description of the various skill levels. Please contact Audit Wales if you would like to discuss the nature of the Welsh language skills.

Skill area	Essential	Desirable
Speaking and Listening	Greet others over the phone or in person with a simple Welsh greeting and sensitively forward a call to a Welsh speaker when appropriate.	Listen to Welsh-medium meetings, discussions and phone calls on simple matters, but contribute in English for more technical and complex matters.
Reading	Use translation software to get the grasp of simple correspondence with understanding of its limited capability.	Read Welsh-medium news articles, short reports and social media to develop knowledge in a field.

Writing

Update documents and correspondence with Welsh dates and other generic terms.

Write simple correspondence and social media content in Welsh with the assistance of Welsh spelling and grammar check.

General

Confidentiality and Information Security

The post holder must, at all times, be aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and security of information gained during the course of their duties. This will, in many cases, include access to personal information relating to service users. The post holder must treat all information, whether corporate or client, in a discreet and confidential manner in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and organisational policy. Any breach of such confidentiality is considered a serious disciplinary offence, which is liable to dismissal and/or prosecution under current statutory legislation (Data Protection Act) and Audit Wales Disciplinary Policy.

Equality

The Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales places a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for people with protected characteristics, both as an employer and as a provider of public services. There are nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Audit Wales is committed to ensuring that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any of the above grounds. To this end, the organisation has an Equality Policy and it is for each employee to contribute to its success.

Health and Safety

All employees of the organisation have a statutory duty of care for their own personal safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. The post holder is required to co-operate with management to enable the organisation to meet its own legal duties and to report any hazardous situations or defective equipment. The post holder must adhere to the organisation's Risk Management, Health and Safety, and associated policies.

Security Checks

All employees are subject to baseline security checks as part of their pre-employment check. These checks include proof of identity and qualifications. In addition, all mobile staff are subject to security vetting arrangements to CTC (counter terrorist check) security level.

Dignity at Work

The organisation condemns all forms of bullying and harassment and is actively seeking to promote a workplace where employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect without bias. All staff are requested to report any form of bullying and harassment to their Line Manager or to any Director of the organisation. Any inappropriate behaviour inside the workplace will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious matter under the Audit Wales Dignity at Work policy.

How to apply

We only accept applications through our online portal, we do not accept CVs, but if you need us to consider a reasonable adjustment to ensure you can apply on a level playing field with others, please let us know in good time.

When completing your application

Ensure you familiarise yourself with the Job Description and the Person Specification, so you understand the role and what are the essential qualifications, skills and attributes are.

We are looking for how your studies and/or previous work experience or outside interests makes you suitable for this role.

Please note – the application form will be used to sift all applicants. Therefore, please ensure you complete all sections of the application form in particular confirm that you provide details of all necessary essential academic qualifications for this role. Failure to demonstrate you have the minimum academic requirements for the role may result in you being sifted out of the process.

Selection Process

Application

Using the application form to apply we are looking for evidence of:

- your current qualifications meeting the minimum standard; and
- your current and past studies or previous experience to show you are suitable to complete audit work.

In your responses to the questions we are looking for evidence of:

- a commitment to working within the public sector in Wales;
- motivation and commitment to train as an accountant;
- a team working ethos;
- excellent attention to detail;
- good communication skills; and
- an innate inquisitiveness, with the ability to see flaws in logic.

Given the current pandemic situation and the possibility of continuing restrictions, Audit Wales reserves the right to amend the recruitment process to ensure we ensure the health and safety of our staff and applicants.

Application closing date xx xxxx 2021

Stage1: online application

We will initially review your application to ensure it matches our academic requirements. If you meet the academic requirements, we will assess your responses to four skills-based questions. These questions will assess you against the core skills we are looking for (set out above) and we'll be looking for specific examples of when you have demonstrated them. Examples could be from (but are not limited to) your time at university/school or work experience such as part time jobs at school or university, or any extracurricular activities you have been involved in.

TIP: Each question has a 250-word limit, allowing you to provide detailed examples. We don't have a minimum word limit, but answers which are very short are unlikely to demonstrate the behaviour we are looking for in sufficient detail, so be sure to write a reasonable amount.

Please note: all four questions carry equal marks. We are always impressed by people who are enthusiastic about the work of Audit Wales and how they feel they can contribute to it, so we would encourage you to do some research and think about how you picture yourself working with us.

Once completed, your answers are marked by our trained screeners. If you meet the minimum mark required, you will be progressed to Stage 2.

TIP: We recommend you do at least one practice of each test first before completing the tests. This will give you a feel for the types of questions asked and how long they will take you to answer. It's a great way to prepare, helping you relax and perform to the best of your ability.

Stage 2: psychometric tests

You will be invited to complete online psychometric tests in numeracy and verbal reasoning

Stage 3: assessment centre

This will involve a number of individual and group exercises where you are assessed against the job description and the values and behaviours. Further details regarding the assessment centre will be provided if you are invited to attend.

If you are successful at the assessment centre, you will be invited to stage 3 of the assessment process.

Stage 3: final interview

The final interview is a panel-based interview which will also provide you with the perfect opportunity to ask us any questions about our organisation and the training programme.

Stage 4: offer

Successful applicants will have performed well in all aspects of the assessment process. If you are successful, we will make you an offer conditional upon a number of pre-employment checks including security and verification of your academic grades entered on your application.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an assessment centre.

Further information

If you have any questions regarding, our Graduate Trainee Programme, selection process or have any specific requirements, please contact Sian Grainger, Graduate Trainee and Apprenticeship Co-ordinator on 07814 604515 or email sian.grainger@audit.wales

Please contact HR.Recruitment@audit.wales if anything in this pack is unclear or if you need us to make reasonable adjustments for you.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.