



Accounting  
Technicians  
Ireland



# Higher Level Apprenticeship in Accountancy

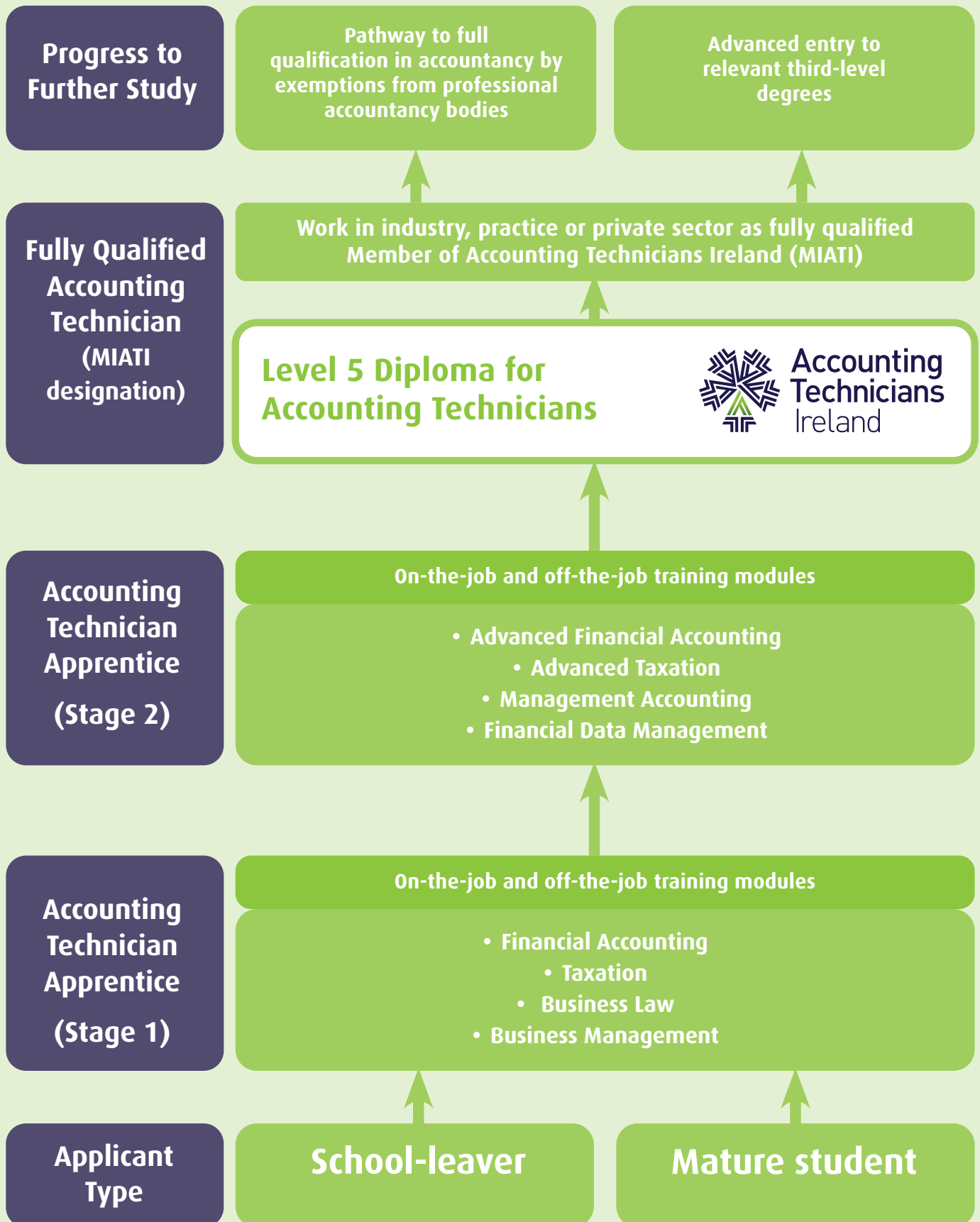
## Employer Guide 2020



**CREDIT YOURSELF** Make a career with your talent for numbers

[www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie](http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie)

# Accounting Technician Apprenticeship Career Pathway



# About the new Higher Level Apprenticeship in Accountancy



Accounting Technicians Ireland is the leading professional body for Accounting Technicians on the island of Ireland. With offices in Dublin and Belfast, and strong links with Chartered Accountants Ireland and other professional accountancy bodies, we supply high-calibre Accounting Technician graduates to industry, practice and the public sector.

Many progress to the highest levels in their field. We have 10,000 students and members across the Island of Ireland.

**Apprentices get paid at least minimum wage by the employer and college tuition is fully funded by the Department for the Economy and the European Social Fund.**

This new Higher Level Apprenticeship leads to a Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians and provides school-leavers with a practical alternative to the traditional full-time college route.

The programme is also open to mature learners and 'role changers', or non-accountancy staff who would like to move into an accountancy role.

“Students gain valuable knowledge, practical skills and work experience, as well as a professional qualification: the ATI Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians. This winning combination will increase their employability, boost their CV and open up new career opportunities”

**Anne McCallum, HLA Co-Ordinator, Northern Regional College.**



# Employers: How will your company benefit?

The skills, knowledge and competencies obtained by apprentice Accounting Technicians means graduates are capable of filling all kinds of accounting and finance roles, in all sectors of the economy.

Our talented graduates provide cost-effective staffing solutions for industry, practice and the public sector in a tight recruitment market.

**The Higher Level Apprenticeship is tailor-made for organisations that need well-skilled, committed and loyal accounting and finance staff with the capacity to develop their career to a senior level.**

Employers can recruit from a high calibre of talent including school-leavers, graduates and mature learners that are progressed to them.

There is also an option for existing employees looking to change to a career in Accounting that employers would like to upskill to apply. Furthermore if an employer has someone specifically in mind to complete the programme they can apply as well.

Candidates will bring significant value to your organisation as they progress through the programme from beginner to fully qualified Accounting Technician.

## Other benefits of the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship:

- Increased employee retention resulting in a productive and positive workplace
- College learning is applied to specific job requirements of the role
- Learning from the bottom up, employees develop an excellent understanding of the business and can bring this into future management roles
- The programme prepares apprentices to meet the challenge of future developments in their occupation and workplace by providing them with relevant skills, knowledge and competencies



“ Our partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College has helped attract smart, enthusiastic and engaged people into our business ”

Nigel Harra - Senior Partner at  
BDO Northern Ireland





# Five reasons employers are coming on board...



## 1

The Higher Level Apprenticeship in Accountancy is a modern, practical route to a career in accountancy where employers recruit apprentices on a two-year, earn-as-you-learn programme

## 2

Employers have a high calibre pool of applicants to choose from as a result of stringent programme entry criteria developed and approved in conjunction with accountancy employers

## 3

Employers can save on recruitment costs as the Regional Colleges actively promote and recruit for the HLA in Accountancy. Employers then become involved at interview stage whereby they choose to interview whichever candidates they feel would suit their organisation needs best from the application forms sent across to them from their local regional college.

## 4

Employers can grow and nurture talented participants with the potential to become versatile accountants with wide-ranging skills, and boost employee retention

## 5

The Higher Level Apprenticeship leads to a Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians and is funded by the Department for the Economy. Employers pay no training fees or costs for the duration of the programme



“

*SERC was the perfect choice for me.*  
*The best part about completing this HLA was the combination of work experience alongside the theory behind it in the classroom.*

*I believe this helps shape you for future employment much better than just study alone.*”

**Amber Scott,**  
**Higher Level Apprenticeship Accounting**



# How it works

You register as a participating employer with a local Further Education college who source, screen and process applications on your behalf, based on the programme entry criteria\*

You select candidates for interview and offer successful applicants a two-year apprenticeship contract commencing September 2020\*\*

During term time, your apprentice will work at your office four days a week and study at their local college one day a week

A qualified workplace mentor provides the apprentice with training support covering all aspects of the programme

Workplace learning is assessed throughout the programme and exams are held in May each year

You can retain your fully qualified Accounting Technician, release them, or offer them the chance to continue their studies with a professional accountancy body

\* Eligibility and screening processes are detailed on the College website or <http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie>. Employers have the discretion to enhance the entry requirements beyond the minimum academic standards.

\*\* Employers are free to commence the contract before the programme start date, however the contract must run for the entire duration of the apprenticeship programme.



## You should be in a position to:

- Offer the apprentice a two-year contract which pays at least the minimum wage
- Meet all of the requirements of the Department of the Economy's Tripartite Agreement and agree to comply with DfE's Rules and Regulations
- Ensure that the role offers participant exposure to all elements of Accounting Technicians Ireland's two-year programme
- Be in a position to offer apprentices a minimum of 2 weeks study leave. ATI recommends 3 weeks study leave, including the exams
- Appoint a suitably qualified workplace mentor

\*Correct as of January 1st 2020.

“The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) employed our first Higher Level Apprentice (HLA) in September 2019 and we have been delighted with the scheme to date. Our apprentice quickly established himself as a valued member of our team, and earlier this year was named the winner of the Public People Managers Association's 'Apprentice of the Year' award, out of a pool of outstanding finalists from across the UK. The NIAO believes in home grown talent and is committed to unlocking the potential of its staff. It is our hope that our Apprentice will continue his career at NIAO to join our Graduate Training Scheme at the end of his Apprenticeship. We are committed to providing young people in Northern Ireland meaningful and well paid career paths and plan to continue to work with ATI and Belfast Metropolitan College to grow and develop our Apprenticeship scheme.

**Pamela McCreedy,**  
Chief Operating Officer



Northern Ireland  
Audit Office

# Programme Overview and Role of Workplace Mentor



The on-the-job training lasts for two years (104 weeks) based on a two year employment contract and takes place with the employer 4 days a week in term time and 5 days a week outside term time.

## FOR THE **FIRST YEAR** IN COLLEGE

### The Stage 1 modules are:

- Financial Accounting
- Taxation
- Business Law
- Business Management

## FOR THE **SECOND YEAR** IN COLLEGE

### The Stage 2 modules are:

- Advanced Financial Accounting
- Advanced Taxation
- Management Accounting
- Financial Data Management

- Exams for each module will take place in May and August for each year.

Apprentices will also be required to complete two Work Based Modules. The Work-Based modules are a mandatory part of the ATI Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians enabling learners to apply, consolidate and extend their learning within a workplace environment. They have two elements:

- Completion of a programme of Work-Based Learning (WBL).
- Work-Based Assignments (WBAs).

Each Work-Based module has four equally weighted Work-Based Assignments:

- Work Practice module - 2 WBAs on Financial Accounting and 2 WBAs on Business Management
- Advanced Work Practice module – 2 WBAs on Advanced Financial Accounting and 2 WBAs on Financial Data Management

**Throughout the two years with an employer an apprentice will need to be assigned a workplace mentor to oversee and support them in their on the job training.**

The mentor will need to be a qualified professional accountant or accounting technician.

The main **role** of the workplace mentor is as follows:

- Responsible for the training of the apprentice;
- To make sure the apprentice settles in, is introduced to their colleagues and peers and becomes familiar with their surroundings.
- To ensure the apprentice has adequate exposure to all relevant work experience for the programme.
- To agree a customised Training Plan with the apprentice at the beginning of each year.
- Ensure that their apprentice is able to adequately record their work-experience for assessment purposes.
- To review the apprentice's completed four work place assessment tasks per year.
- To provide pastoral care in the workplace on an ongoing basis and bring any support needed or concerns to ATI.
- Meets with their apprentice formally every 10-12 weeks for periodic review meetings to review the apprentice's progress and modify the agreed training Plan where necessary.
- Ensures their apprentice submits successfully the approved four workplace assessment tasks per year in line with the programme timetable and submission deadlines.
- Reviews their apprentice is on track with study preparation each year towards their exams and for any repeat exams.
- Meets with an ATI representative/college mentor periodically to update on their apprentice.





**The Higher Level Apprenticeship in Accountancy is in partnership with the following colleges and at these locations:**

- Belfast Metropolitan College, Titanic campus
- Northern Regional College, Coleraine campus
- North West Regional College, Strand Road campus
- Southern Regional College, Newry campus
- South Eastern Regional College, Lisburn campus
- South West College, Omagh campus

**Employers register your interest to recruit now  
with your local Further Education college**

**We are holding a series of Open Days for employers, applicants  
and guidance counsellors at various locations nationwide.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT US:**

 [www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie](http://www.accountingtechniciansireland.ie)

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