



ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS: Roundtable 4: Recognising the Benefits Outcomes

Accounting Technicians
Roundtable
28 April
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Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA)

Recognising the benefits – key responses and comments

- Flexible entry and exit paths make finance qualifications more widely accessible, increasing the overall supply (**quantity**) of talent to the accounting sector
- Professionalisation and regulation, through education, qualification and membership, increases the **quality** of this cohort of accountants
- Increases efficiency and effectiveness of overall accountancy supply chain (**cost**)
- Benefits the wider public interest, including trust and confidence, economic growth, SDGs, employment opportunities, reduced fraud and corruption

Slides 3 - 7 :

Key responses to the specific questions, and challenges/ thoughts arising from these

Slides 8:

Stakeholder Benefits

Slides 9 - 14:

Original slides presented at Roundtable 4

RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

1. Can compelling benefits be identified?

Directly relevant responses:

- I. Professionalising and recognising AT cohort to support PA will create greater efficiencies
- II. Non-graduate entry into the profession will bring in diversity of talent
- III. Service small businesses = cost savings, allow PAs to focus on larger businesses
- IV. Yes, but challenge is in differentiating between PAs and AT:
 - ✓ Technical / technology skills
- V. Lower cost than PAs
- VI. Relevant for public sector / private sector / SMEs / accountancy firms

CAPA thoughts

- Increased supply (quantity)
- Cost effectiveness
- Improved quality (through professionalisation)
- Fresh thinking and ideas are brought in from a different part of society

Further comments from RTD

- Flexible entry and exit routes and learning methods lead to achievable career goals
- Attractive duration of course (1 to 2 years)

RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

2. What stakeholders have an interest in this cohort of accountants?

Directly relevant responses:

- i. Audit firms
- ii. Students
- iii. PAOs
- iv. Public Sector: Government/
funding agencies
- v. Private sector – all sizes
- vi. Training Providers
- vii. SMEs

CAPA thoughts

- Wide range of stakeholders have an interest with differing interests and/or needs – what are these?
- Development partners in certain jurisdictions have significant interests in developing AT cohort

Further comments from RTD

- Also consider:
 - ✓ The public and civil society
 - ✓ Not-for-profits
 - ✓ Other practitioners (e.g.: tax specialists, consultants)
- PAOs will need to achieve 'internal buy-in'
- Some stakeholders will have a greater say on if and where 'recognition' gets supported e.g. legal/govt or market recognition
- Emphasis on quality, supply and cost should get attention of the profession and employers

RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

3. How do the compelling benefits and interests of stakeholders support the concept of separate recognition?

Directly relevant responses:

- i. Requires different approach/focus by PAOs to think about AT market (rather than as an offshoot of main business)
- ii. Most PAOs focus on PAs
- iii. Issues facing technicians are different (training, education levels, employer endorsements etc.)
- iv. Recognition could be split between:
 - ✓ ATs skills in SME / Technology
 - ✓ PAs skills for larger businesses
- v. May not warrant separate recognition as AT qualification is seen as stepping stone to PA level

CAPA thoughts

- Increases supply of accountants that:
 - ✓ are appropriately trained, qualified and subject to professional expectations
 - ✓ undertake tasks that are not necessarily the focus of PAs
 - ✓ are positioned at a lower price point
- This benefits individuals, accounting practices and businesses
- Therefore, good for society and economies - links to many SDGs
- Therefore, is in the public interest

No further relevant comments from Roundtable under this question

Recognising the benefits: Does this mean there is a compelling case for separate recognition?

A good case for separate recognition can be made:

i. The AT sector can be differentiated from the PA sector, based on:

- ✓ Entry requirements
- ✓ Skill focus and role focus

ii. Benefits the profession and users of accountants:

- ✓ Increases overall supply of 'professionalised' accountants, i.e. qualified and 'regulated' (where membership retained)
- ✓ Improves efficiency and effectiveness of the accountancy supply chain

iii. Benefits society:

- ✓ Lowers the average cost of the accountancy supply chain
- ✓ Increases employment opportunities (for non-graduates)
- ✓ Improves information for decision-making (reduces fraud and corruption)

Need to consider:

- **What is the risk and cost of not recognising the AT cohort?**
 - ✓ For the profession and PAOs
 - ✓ For businesses and public sector
 - ✓ For the public interest (society, economy)

Additional comments captured at Roundtable 4

To consider for final outcomes:

- Retention of Staff: In more rural locations where AT could be offered, employers will benefit from an increase in supply of accountants at the AT level with school leavers and staff more likely to settle longer-term
- Recognition of Prior Learning - existing accountants' (operating at AT level) skills and knowledge gained through work experiences.
- PAOs need to:
 - ✓ Understand the market needs
 - ✓ Consider an AT program in its own right (i.e. separately, outside of the PA qualification)
 - ✓ Ensure any AT programs receive the appropriate level of attention
 - ✓ Consider opportunities and direct impact on business model (e.g. revenue streams)
- Flexible entry and entry routes improves access
- In discussing stakeholder benefits, previously discussed matters surfaced again:
 - ✓ Recognition at global v regional / local level
 - ✓ The most appropriate organisational arrangements
 - ✓ Relative emphasis on public sector v private sector
 - ✓ Addressing perceived competition concerns

The Benefits Matrix

Stakeholders*		Benefits		Public Interest	
		Economic		Public Interest	
		Supply	Cost	Quality / Professionalisation	Societal Good
Profession	PAOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased membership – Improve sustainability 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduce the ‘unqualified’ – Increased confidence in profession 	
	Firms	Right person for the job	Reduced cost of service	Appropriately trained**	N/A
Business	Corporates	Right person for the job	Reduced cost of operation	Appropriately trained**	Economic growth
	SMEs	Right person for the job	Reduced cost of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appropriately trained** – Better information 	Economic growth
	Public Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Right person for the job – Ability to attract finance personnel 	Efficient cost of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Access to trained, qualified finance personnel – Better information 	Improved PFM
Society	Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employment opportunities – PA Pathway opportunities 	N/A	Recognised qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Career opportunities – Mobility
All	N/A	N/A	N/A	Reduce fraud & corruption	Impact various SDGs

*relative emphasis varies by jurisdiction, particularly across developed or developing economies

**includes training in ethics and for those in membership, requirement for Code of Conduct compliance and CPD

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Interpretation of responses

- Recognising right person for the right job in the accountancy supply chain
- Brings in additional supply and skills
- More efficient and effective use of scarce resources
- One form of delineation is by skill sets
- Noted
- There is demand for ATs from various sectors / stakeholders

CAPA thoughts

- Increased supply (quantity)
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RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

2. What stakeholders have an interest in this cohort of accountants?

Directly relevant responses:

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funding agencies
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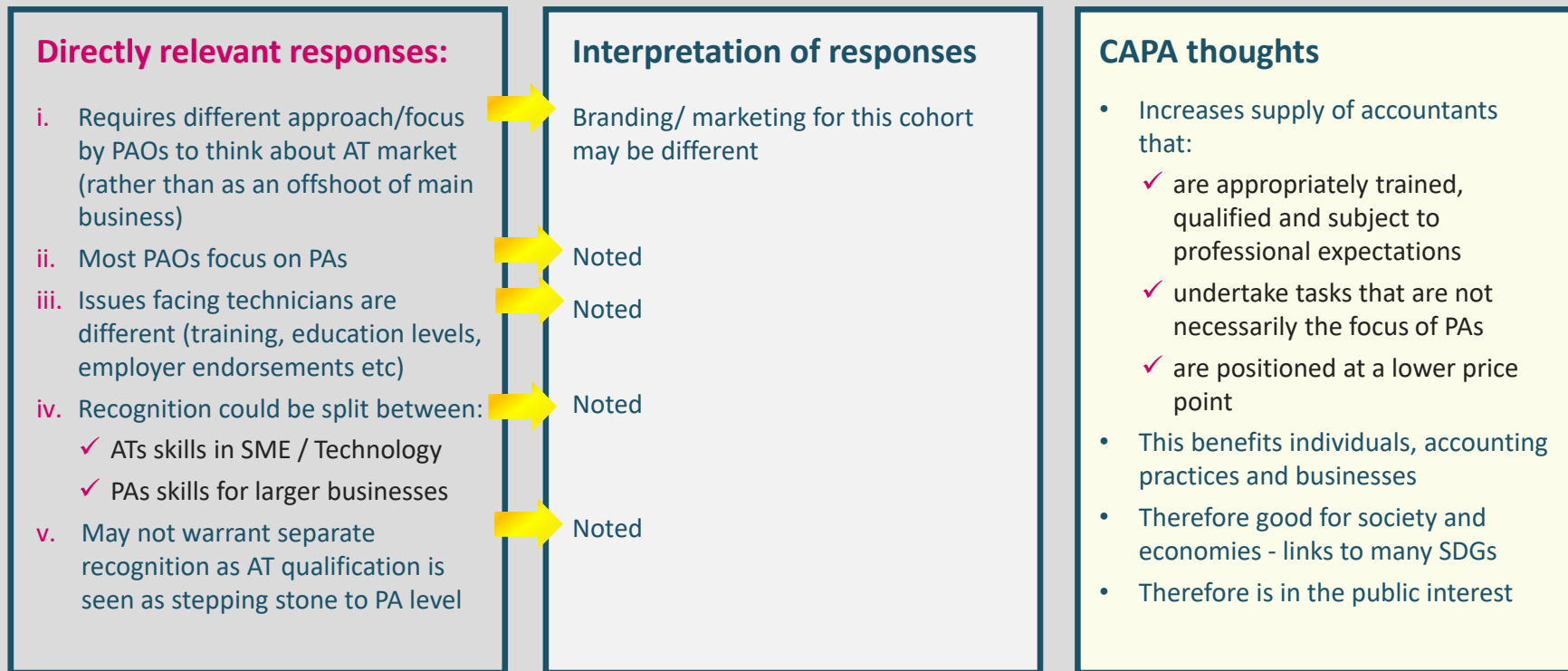
Interpretation of responses

CAPA thoughts

- Wide range of stakeholders have an interest with differing interests and/or needs – what are these?
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RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

3. How do the compelling of benefits and interests of stakeholders support the concept of separate recognition?



RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

- *Does this mean there is a case for separate recognition?*

There is a good case for separate recognition:

i. The AT sector can be differentiated from the PA sector, based on:

- ✓ Entry requirements
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ii. Benefits the profession and users of accountants:

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Forward Program – What next?

1. Scene Setting

2. Imagining the Future

Aim: To explore 'the future AT'

- ✓ Will there be a market need/demand for this type of accountant?
- ✓ What roles (and critical skills) are envisaged?
- ✓ What, if anything, needs to change in how this type of accountant is perceived?

3. Positioning the Qualification

Aim: To explore if qualified ATs can be established as a recognized element of the broader accountancy profession

- ✓ Why has it not become a widely recognised qualification?
- ✓ Can the related issues be overcome?
- ✓ How could the qualification become an established part of the professional accountancy supply chain?

4. Recognising the Benefits

Aim: To explore the benefits of ATs and if these warrant the separate recognition of ATs

- ✓ Can compelling benefits be identified?
- ✓ What stakeholders have an interest in this cohort of accountants?
- ✓ How do these support the concept of separate recognition?

5. Defining an AT

Aim: To explore a common definition for an AT'

- ✓ Acknowledging current differences in terminologies & programs globally, would you like to see (& would your organisation support) a common term/name for this cohort?
- ✓ Is 'Accounting Technician' the right term/name for the desired designation?
- ✓ How could the designation be defined?

6. Stakeholder Analysis – details tbc

Forward Program – Dates

Roundtable 5:
Defining an AT

Wed 25 May

Timing:
08:00 (London),
15:00 (Kuala Lumpur),
17:00 (Sydney)

Roundtable 6:
Stakeholder
Analysis

22 or 23 June

Timing:
08:00 (London),
15:00 (Kuala Lumpur),
17:00 (Sydney)