

ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS: Roundtable 4: Recognising the Benefits

Accounting Technicians
Roundtable
28 April
2022

Project Overview

The Goal:

Achieving Accounting Technician Recognition

The Challenge:

Imagining
the Future

Positioning
the
Qualification

Recognising
the Benefits

Defining
an AT

The Stakeholders:

PAOs

Governments

Businesses

Development
Partners

Roundtable 1: Recognition of the AT Designation

Roundtables 2-5: Focus Areas

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?

5. Defining an AT

Aim: To explore a common definition for an AT'

- ✓ Is 'Accounting Technician' the right term/name for the desired designation'?
- ✓ How could the designation be defined?
- ✓ What education program would be required?

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?

Roundtable 3: Overall Outcomes and Next Steps for Consideration

The Outcomes:

- ✓ Recognition required globally, regionally and locally
- ✓ Recognition required by profession and relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Current AT providers need to collaborate and lead
- ✓ Greater consistency needed in AT organisational arrangement and/or programs
- ✓ Delineation between ATs and PAs important
- ✓ Any programs must achieve a quality standard
- ✓ Branding and marketing will be vital
- ✓ Recognition requires collaboration efforts between:
 - PAO and stakeholders and
 - PAOs and AT organisations
 - Within PAOs that have both a PQ and ATQ
- ✓ Increase recognition through stakeholders (governments, regulators, businesses, universities etc)

Next Steps for Consideration:

- ✓ Need understanding and acceptance from the wider profession (and stakeholders) that the AT has a clear role and position within the accountancy supply chain
- ✓ Need alignment of tertiary education with AT programs
- ✓ Requires IFAC recognition, which may require IFAC Education Panel to consider relevant education standards *or consider how the existing concepts / standards can be applied to the ATQ*
- ✓ Existing AT program providers to act as leaders, drive towards core 'consistency', and advocate for recognition of ATs
 - *recognition needs consistency: ie common content, fundamentals, principles, language.*
 - *To bring a common understanding of what/who an AT is, and what they provide*
- ✓ Invest in global recognition, branding, marketing awareness campaign
- ✓ Need a Value Proposition to retain membership

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Open Discussion

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

We asked attendees to consider three questions:

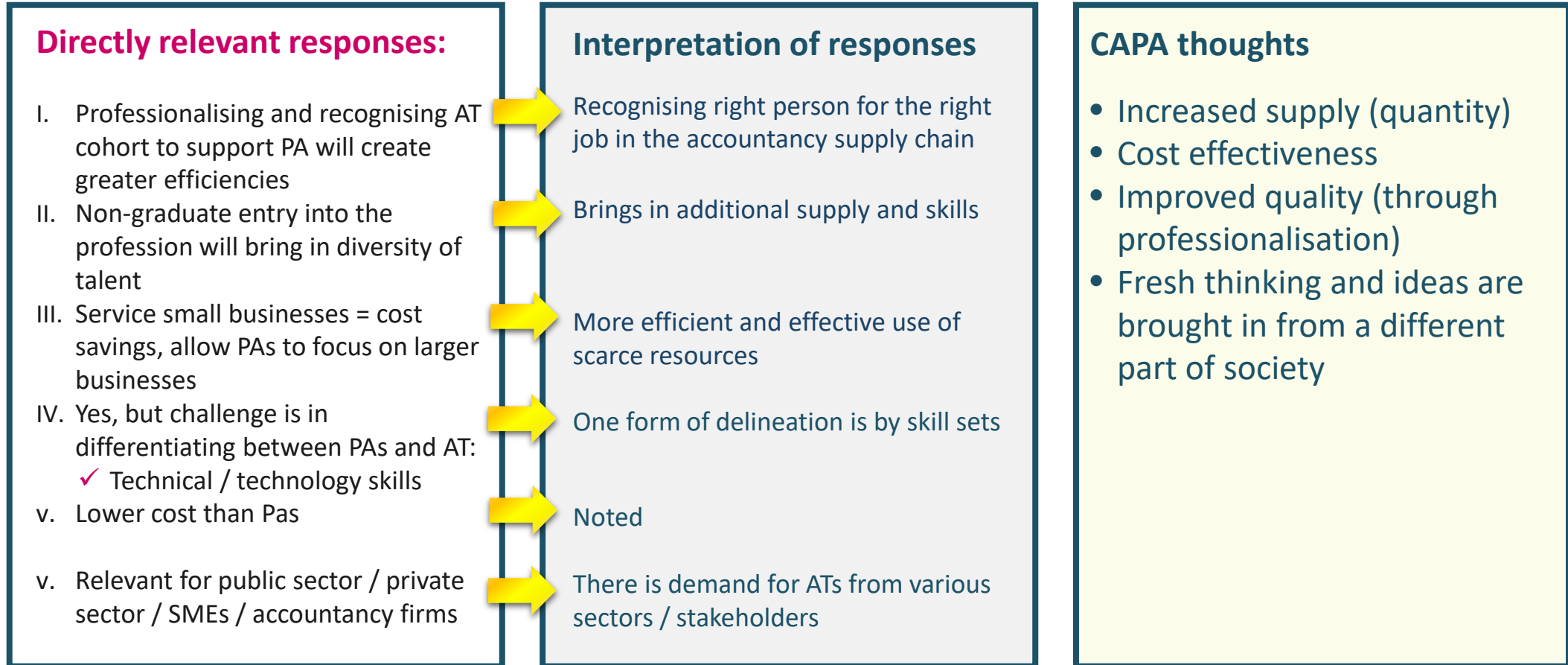
1. Can compelling benefits be identified?
2. What stakeholders have an interest in this cohort of accountants?
3. How do these* support the concept of separate recognition?

*(*Clarification: 'these' in the context of this question is 'How do the compelling benefits and interests of stakeholders lead to a conclusion that separate AT recognition is warranted'?)*

Responses from AAT UK, ACCA, CMA Sri Lanka, NIAT, – Thank you!

RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

1. Can compelling benefits be identified?



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

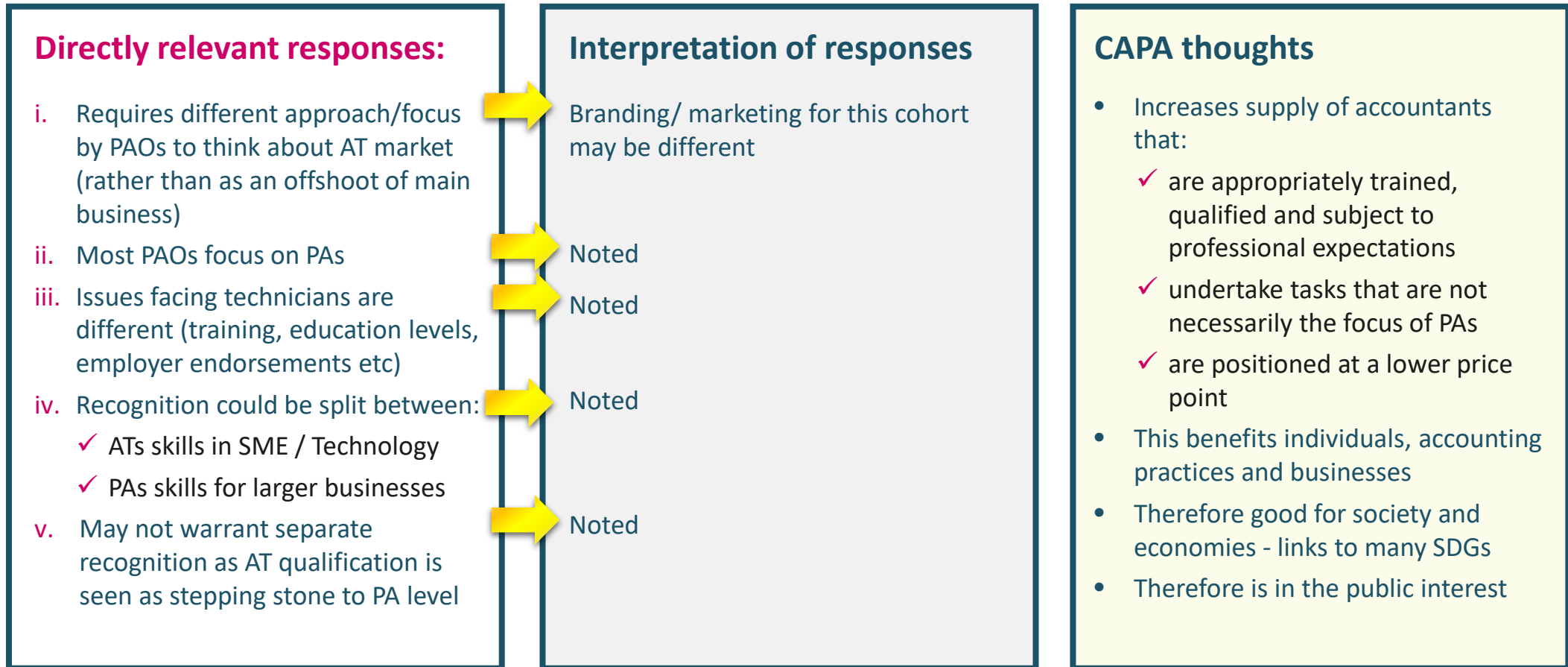
Interpretation of responses

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

RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS

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



Benefits Stakeholders*		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

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
- ✓ Skill focus and role focus

ii. Benefits the profession and users of accountants:

- ✓ Increases overall supply of 'professionalised' accountants, ie 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)

Forward Program – What next?

(including Key Questions)

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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

**21, 22 or 23
June (tbc)**

Timing: tbc