


Thinking Beyond Your Degree

Accounting Career Paths and Application Process

October 2023



OVERVIEW

1. Career-related support services
 2. Accounting career paths
 3. Accounting recruitment season
 4. What to focus before and after applying to jobs
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CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Achieve your professional potential

Haskayne Student Services

- ***Résumé and Cover Letter*** Review
- ***Interview*** Preparation & Practice
- ***LinkedIn Profile*** Optimization & Utilization
- Effective ***Networking*** Skills & Strategies
- ***Job Search*** Strategies
- ***Co-operative Education Program***
- ***Elevate, Vmock & Standout***
- ***Events*** (Career Fairs, Info Sessions, Workshops, etc.)
- Facilitating ***student and employer connections***



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Achieve your professional potential

**Haskayne
Student
Services
(book
now)**

To book an appointment with our Haskayne Career Specialists, email careercentre@haskayne.ucalgary.ca.

OR

- 1) Log in to your Haskayne Elevate account
- 2) Select "HSB Advising Appointments"
- 3) Follow the instructions to book a 30-minute one-on-one appointment with one of our Career Development Specialists

Accounting Career Paths

- Public Practice Firms (Big 4, Midsize & boutique firms)
- Private Sector – also referred to as “Industry”
- Public Service - CRA

Public Practice

- Provides accounting work for the general public. That means that you may have a variety of clients from individuals, partnerships, Trusts, Super funds, or companies. They can come from all walks of life and any kind of industry.
- Most common Service lines: Audit / Assurance and Tax (must pursue CPA designation)
- Common roles: Associate, Sr. Associate, Manager, Sr. Manager, Partner
- You might recognize BDO, Deloitte, EY, Grant Thornton, KPMG, MNP, PwC, RSM, etc.

Public Practice

➤ PROS

- Wide variety of work that you can expose to from your clients.
- Large cohort of new grad hires completing CPA together
- Social environment, colleagues become friends
- Prestige

➤ CONS

- Work / Life balance
- Constant deadline pressure during busy season (Jan – May)
- Highly competitive entry resulting in very low paid at the junior level

Private Sector “Industry”

- Completed accounting tasks for one group of specific businesses. For example, you work in the Finance Department of an oil and gas company, government body, or not for profit organization.
- You will deal with their accounts payable, or budgeting or any other accounting task within the Finance Department.
- Common roles: Accounts Payable / Receivable clerk, Junior Accountant, Accountant, Accounting Manager, Assistant Controller, Controller, CFO
- Possible to pursue CPA designation, not mandatory (through pre- approved program providers or experience verification route)

Private Sector “Industry”

➤ PROS

- Reasonable work life balance.
- Greater job stability working in a large organisation (depending on industry)
- Pay is higher at the junior level, however tapers off later in the career
- SME for company, contribute to strategic decision making

➤ CONS

- The work may be repetitive, ie. doing month end for the same group each month.
- There is reasonably low turnover, so it may be hard to get your next promotion.

Public Sector “CRA”

- Administer tax, benefits, and related programs, and ensure compliance on behalf of governments across Canada, thereby contributing to the ongoing economic and social well-being of Canadians.
- Common Services Lines: Call Centre, Audit
- Common Roles: Call centre agent, auditor
- Possible to pursue CPA designation (not mandatory for call centre roles)

Private Sector “CRA”

➤ PROS

- Great work-life balance.
- Greater job stability - union
- Pay is higher at the junior level, excellent benefits
- Progression over time

➤ CONS


- Very bureaucratic, a lot of red tape
- There is reasonably low turnover, so it may be hard to get your next promotion.
- Start in call center

Accounting Recruitment

Public practice positions are generally filled 1 to 1.5 years in advance.

That means, if you want to work with a firm in 2024 (*summer, co-op, new grad*), you need to apply to roles in 2023

Accounting Recruitment (typical)

- Traditionally Alberta has 2 accounting recruitment cycles (campaigns) in spring and fall, and leadership conference recruitment (campaign) in March
 - Spring recruitment job postings go up in early May, and the selection process occurs in May / June.
 - Fall recruitment job postings go up in early September, and the selection process occurs in Sept / Oct
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Accounting Recruitment – What Employers Are Looking For

- A “well rounded” student with transferable skills developed through:
 - Employment Experience (part-time, summer, co-op, etc.)
 - Engagement with campus extra-curricular activities (student clubs, case competitions, sports, etc.)
 - Volunteerism (involved in your community)
- Solid GPA (Generally a 3.0 or higher is competitive)
- Authenticity: Be yourself!
- Connection (through networking opportunities; start early!)

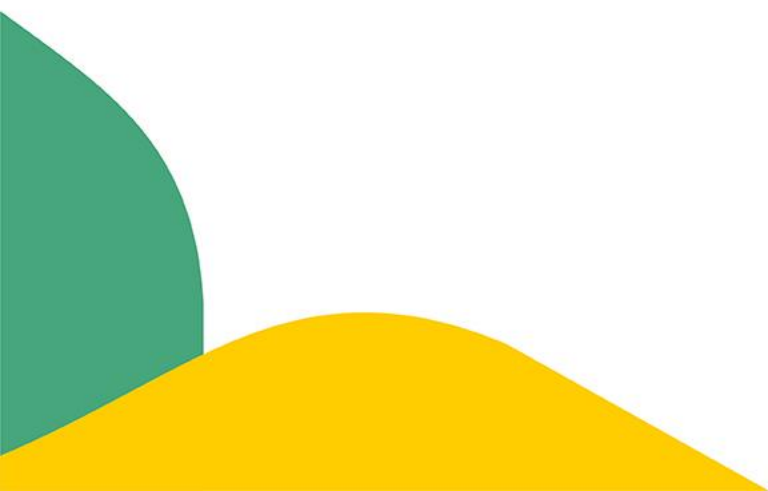
What to focus on **PRIOR** to applying

- **Job Postings:** Understand what the company is looking for
- **Cover Letter:** Tell your story and highlight your value based on the job posting
- **Resume:** Showcase how/when/where you developed the skills listed on the job posting from a variety of areas
- **LinkedIn Profile:** Use it to your advantage
- **Networking:** Get on the employer's radar to increase your
- Interview odds

What to focus on DURING application stage

- Be professional:
 - Strive for professional attire and demeanor
- Be engaged:
 - Attend as many networking events as you can. The more that the firms get to know you, the better your chances of application success
- Be accountable:
 - Always be on time for networking events
 - Attend any networking event that you RSVP'd to
 - If you absolutely can't attend anymore, email to explain your absence

What to focus on **AFTER** applying

- **Interview:** Preparing & Practicing (yes, you need to practice!)
 - **LinkedIn:** Keep building your professional network
 - **Networking:** It never ends!
 - **Offers:** Don't just accept the first one
 - **Feedback:** Take the extra step
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Questions/Comments/Concerns

