



Accounting  
Technicians  
Ireland



Department for the  
**Economy**  
An Roinn  
**Geilleagair**  
[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

**Apprenticeships**

# EMPLOYER GUIDE 2024

Higher Level Apprenticeship  
Accounting Technologist  
Level 6





# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

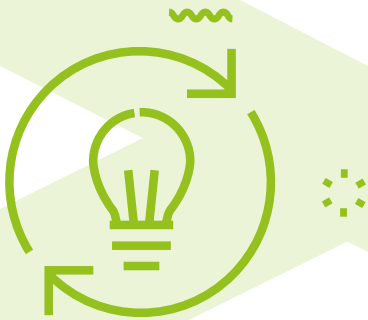
**The Accounting Technologist is a newly established professional accounting role aimed at fostering sustainable value creation within businesses. This role is pivotal in optimising long-term financial, social, and environmental outcomes, thus ensuring businesses are equipped for the transition towards a more sustainable economic model.**

The programme was developed by Accounting Technicians Ireland (industry lead), and a Consortium, comprising professional bodies, employers, and academic experts from Open University, Belfast Metropolitan College, Southern Regional College, South West Regional College and the Technological University of the Shannon in the Republic of Ireland. The programme is tailored to meet the evolving demands of the accounting and finance sector, focusing on cultivating both the technical and interpersonal skills of apprentices, encompassing areas such as accountancy, data analytics, and sustainability practices.

Approved and overseen by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland, the Higher-Level Apprenticeship Accounting Technologist Level 6 is underpinned by the BSc (Hons) in Accounting Technology validated by Open University. The Higher-Level Apprenticeship Accounting Technologist Level 6, operating at degree level, adopts an earn-and-learn model to address the evolving needs of the accounting and finance sector. It emphasises the development of technical expertise alongside interpersonal skills, covering key areas such as accountancy, data analytics, and sustainable practices.

Completion of the programme ensures alignment with industry standards, providing apprentices with essential workplace proficiencies such as modern finance, information systems management, organisational governance, financial sustainability reporting, and effective communication.

Delivery of the programme is through [Belfast Metropolitan College](#), [Southern Regional College](#), and [South West Regional College](#), ensuring accessibility across the region.



# ACCOUNTING TECHNOLOGIST: A new professional occupation designed for future business needs

The role will typically work at the intersection of modern finance, information systems, and organisational governance, financial and sustainability reporting. The Accounting Technologist takes responsibility for;

- financial and sustainability reporting.
- data management and analysis.
- the development of insights in support of the breadth of organisational governance for which executives are accountable.
- statutory compliance.
- decision-support and advice in relation to matters such as data and information ecosystems, digital transformation and data analytics.
- sustainability reporting & ESG responsibilities.





# From an Accounting Technician to an Accounting Technologist

TECHNICIAN	TECHNOLOGIST
Low level of complexity and ambiguity	Moderate level of complexity and ambiguity
<p>Audit exempt activities</p> <p>Bookkeeping and taxation compliance</p> <p>FRS 105</p>	<p>Audit exempt activities</p> <p>Financial reporting to FRS 102,</p> <p>Advisory work related to systems automation and integration, data analytics, sustainability/ESG</p>
MS Office, accounting and payroll software	Business intelligence, data analytics software, ERP
Internal communication, assisting more	External communication, cross-functional, client secondment



## What is the Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship?

**The Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship was created to optimise long-term financial, social, and environmental value, thereby preparing businesses for the transition to a more sustainable economic model.**

- The apprentices undergo a comprehensive two-year, work-based learning programme, with mentorship.
- Apprentices will spend four days per week working with a registered employer (on-the-job) and one day attending classes (off-the-job).
- It is a degree-level modular standards-based programme spanning two years, combining on-the-job training and off-the-job education.
- Apprentices are paid by the employer for their 4 days at their workplace (on-the-job) as well as their one day in the College (off-the job). The apprentice's college tuition is fully funded by the Department for the Economy.

Provided that all relevant criteria are met, upon successful completion of the apprenticeship and award of the degree, all candidates may then apply to ATI for permission to use the title “Certified Accounting Technologist” designation.

**Note:** The apprenticeship is deemed complete only upon the apprentice's attainment of the requisite standards, encompassing both on-the-job and off-the-job components.



# Benefits of the Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship

- **Fee Free:** The 'Off-the-Job' element of the HLA Accounting Technologist Level 6 is fully funded by the Department for the Economy.
- **Addressing Skill Gaps through Customised Training:** Tailored training programs to meet specific business needs and industry requirements, ensuring apprentices acquire essential skills for organisational success.
- **Early Functional Proficiency:** Benefit from apprentices who swiftly demonstrate their functional capabilities, delivering valuable contributions from the outset of their apprenticeship.
- **Increased Productivity:** Enhance productivity by providing hands-on experience to apprentices, who learn while actively contributing to business operations.
- **Strengthen employee loyalty** through comprehensive support structures, including mentorship training for mentor/coaches, enhancing the apprenticeship experience and fostering long-term commitment.
- **Opportunity** to achieve a prestigious degree from accredited institutions and earn the professional designation with pathways for further professional development through membership or exemptions.





## Workplace Learning in an Apprenticeship

Work-based learning is an integral aspect of the Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship, and fundamental to the apprentice's growth and achievement.

Prospective candidates seeking to undertake the Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship must either hold a position in an accountancy or financial role or have secured employment with an employer committed to supporting their apprenticeship journey throughout the two-year period.

On-the-job training serves as a bridge between theoretical concepts taught in the classroom and their practical application in professional settings. Through hands-on experience, guided by a suitable mentor, apprentices deepen their understanding of accounting principles, financial regulations, information systems, and organisational governance.

This immersive learning experience unfolds over the entire 104-week apprenticeship duration (2 years), combined with "off the job" education at college.

The apprenticeship is deemed complete only upon the apprentice's attainment of the requisite standards, encompassing both on-the-job and off-the-job components.



## Employer Role and Responsibilities

- 1. Can you recruit and select the apprentice on a two-year fixed permanent contract (including the day off-the-job release) and provide continuity of employment for the apprentice(s) to complete all phases of their two-year apprenticeship programme?**

Employers must provide a permanent employment contract guaranteeing at least 21 hours per week, including directed training. Directed training in college must be compensated within the apprentice's contracted hours of work<sup>1</sup>, ensuring equitable pay for the apprentice's commitment. You are required to establish and endorse a contract of employment with the apprentice, aligning with company policies and procedures while acknowledging the apprentice's college attendance requirements. The provision of study leave with pay is at the discretion of the employer.

- 2. Can you provide access for the apprentice(s) to the range/type of work that will allow the apprentice to gain experience and develop the skills across the full range of competencies included in the training plan?**

You are required to facilitate rotation (where possible) of tasks or roles to ensure the apprentice gains an appreciation of the varying roles/types of work within the company.

<sup>1</sup> 4 days in work + 1 day in college = 5 days' pay

### 3. Can you provide a qualified or experienced staff member who will supervise their training and work and assess/verify the apprentice in the workplace?

You are required to provide a qualified or experienced person to act as the workplace supervisor with responsibility for day-to-day supervision of the apprentice within a team environment.

### 4. Can you provide a mentor/supervisor to provide support and guidance to apprentices in the workplace?

They will also be required to manage the recruitment and initial orientation of apprentices and act as liaison with Accounting Technicians Ireland and the partner college delivering the programme. They will also be required to arrange task/team rotations to ensure the apprentice has access to the range/type of work required to meet the training plan learning outcomes.

Periodic face-to-face observation of the experience and achievements of the apprentice will be required, and outcomes recorded and discussed with the Mentor/Supervisor who will record the data within the apprentice training/ learning plan. They should have as a minimum Level 6 in the field of accountancy to ensure that they can effectively support the apprentice.

## A workplace supervisor/mentor

- Acts as a role model
- Promotes independence and self-direction in learning
- Manages the apprentice's training needs and motivation
- Provides regular feedback and encouragement
- Maintains records of progress
- Helps the apprentice develop problem-solving and general employability skills

**5. Can you provide the time, facilities and equipment necessary to support the apprentice in respect of both on and off-the-job training at your premises?**

Facilities include a desk, PC or portable device within a team environment whilst on-the-job. You are also required to support off-the-job learning by giving the apprentice appropriate time and facilities/equipment necessary (quiet area with PC or portable device and headphones) to participate in online lectures, tutorials and to attend face to face lectures in house or at venues arranged by their college to enhance professional and technical knowledge.



# Entry Requirements & Programme Structure

## Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements for the Higher-Level Apprenticeship Accounting Technologist Level 6, delivered in partnership with ATI and Open University validated partner colleges are as follows:

1. **A Level 5 Accounting Technician Diploma on the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF); ATI NFQ Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Accounting (ROI) or an equivalent qualification at these levels.**

Or

2. **Part-qualified accountants (e.g. CAI, ACCA, CPA Ireland, CIMA) who have successfully completed CAI CAP 1 or corresponding equivalent.**

## Programme Structure



### 01 |

The academic year is divided into three semesters.



### 02 |

The programme comprises a total of ten (10) modules, including two (2) work-based projects. Apprentices are required to complete all 10 modules over the two-year programme duration while concurrently working as apprentices with registered employers.



### 03 |

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Each year of the programme consists of four (4) modules, delivered simultaneously within the college, along with one (1) work-based project spanning the academic year and submitted at the end of the summer semester.



### 04 |

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Apprentices will be assessed using a variety of methods including group presentations, practical tests, online examinations and assignments/reports.



### 05 |

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End of semester exams will be via e-assessment platforms (i.e. online)



## Year 1

SEMESTER 1 ( SEPT - DEC)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Performance Management	Mandatory	1 day a week for 15 weeks
Financial Reporting and Taxation	Mandatory	
Information Systems for Accounting and Finance Professionals	Mandatory	
Sustainability for Accounting and Finance Professionals	Mandatory	

SEMESTER 2 ( JAN - MAY)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Performance Management	Mandatory	1 day a week for 15 weeks
Financial Reporting and Taxation	Mandatory	
Information Systems for Accounting and Finance Professionals	Mandatory	
Sustainability for Accounting and Finance Professionals	Mandatory	

SEMESTER 3 (JUNE - AUGUST)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Professional Practice and Industry Project 1	Mandatory	0.5 day a week for 11 weeks

## Year 2

SEMESTER 1 ( SEPT - DEC)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Financial Management	Mandatory	1 day a week for 15 weeks
Data Analytics	Mandatory	

SEMESTER 2 ( JAN - MAY)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Adv. Data Analytics and Visualisation	Mandatory	1 day a week for 15 weeks
Governance and Strategic Management for Business	Mandatory	

SEMESTER 3 (JUNE - AUGUST)	STATUS	OFF THE JOB RELEASE
Professional Practice and Industry Project 2	Mandatory	0.5 day a week for 11 weeks

Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship, graduates will be awarded a

### **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONS) IN ACCOUNTING TECHNOLOGY (LEVEL 6)**

and earn the professional designation of Certified Accounting Technologists conferred by ATI.

**Note:** The apprenticeship is deemed complete only upon the apprentice's attainment of the requisite standards, encompassing both on-the-job and off-the-job components.

## Progression and Pathways

### Progression

Upon graduation, the Accounting Technologist has the flexibility to specialise in various areas such as accounting and finance, information systems, or organisational governance.



They may opt to pursue a career in information systems or sustainability and could further their education if desired.

1. An Accounting Technologist graduate who has completed the Accounting Technician pathway is eligible for all the exemptions granted to an Accounting Technician. The exemptions for graduates of the Accounting Technologist program are currently under review by the relevant professional bodies. The confirmed list of exemptions will be officially published in due course.
2. Progress to Master’s level programs, including MSc in Data Analytics, Master of Business Administration, or specialised programs in Sustainability and Governance, among similar options.

## Pathways

TECHNICIAN	TECHNOLOGIST	ACCOUNTANT
Low level of complexity and ambiguity	Moderate level of complexity and ambiguity	Complex environments in terms of size and/or issues
Audit exempt activities Bookkeeping and taxation compliance FRS 105	Audit exempt activities Financial reporting to FRS 102 Advisory work related to systems automation and integration, data analytics, sustainability/ ESG	IFRS financial reporting environment, strategic tax planning Statutory audit engagements, work that is overseen by IAASA
MS Office, accounting and payroll software	Business intelligence, data analytics software, ERP	Strategic use of business intelligence
Internal communication, assisting more	External communication, cross-functional, client secondment	Executive level communication, strategic risk management, quality assurance

## How it works

You register as a participating employer with our partner Further Education College. Your FE College source, screen and process applications on your behalf, based on the minimum programme entry\*

You select candidates for interview and offer successful applicants' permanent paid employment as an apprentice for the programme commencing annually every September. \*\*

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

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

Workplace learning is assessed throughout the programme and exams are completed at the end of each semester.

Fully Qualified Accounting Technologists can further advance their professional career by taking various progression pathways whilst contributing to your business.

### YOU SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO:

- Offer the apprentice permanent paid employment paying at least the National Minimum Wage
- Meet all of the requirements of the Department for the Economy 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 exam time
- Appoint a suitably qualified workplace mentor

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

\*\* The apprentice may start their employment up to a maximum of 6 months prior to the commencement of their off-the-job training.

The Higher-Level Apprenticeship Accounting Technologist Level 6 is in partnership with the following colleges.

- Belfast Metropolitan College, Titanic campus
- Southern Regional College, Newry campus
- South West College, Omagh Campus, Enniskillen Campus & Dungannon Campus

Employers register your interest to recruit now with one of our partners colleges.

We are holding a series of Virtual Open Days for Applicants, Employers and Careers Advisors over the coming months - see ATI website below for more details.

## For further information contact us

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

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**Apprenticeships**

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#### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

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