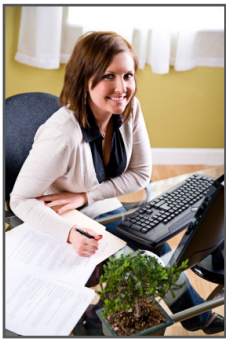




## Accounting Jobs Today

By C. Rock

*A number of recent surveys suggest that the number of jobs within the accounting field is diversifying and growing. The following article reviews recent findings regarding jobs for prospective accounting workers.*



### How Does the Accounting Job Market Look Today?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the accounting field is expected to experience continued growth within the next 10 years — and for several reasons. The need for accountants will always grow as the economy expands and as each new business starts. That's great news for job-seeking accountants already! But

now, as finance regulations evolve, employers need new candidates with more specific training to round out their staffs.

The staffing agency Robert Half International (RHI) reports in its *2008 Salary Guide* that business valuation services, attestation services, litigation support, forensic accounting, fraud investigation, and risk and advisory services are all growing fields in accounting. A recent press release from RHI notes that 32% of CFOs surveyed found accounting positions the hardest jobs to fill, suggesting an advantage for truly qualified and experienced professionals seeking jobs. According to the press release, business service firms will likely yield the greatest growth in hiring for accounting and financial jobs within the upcoming quarter.

### Have Earnings Been Affected by Recent Financial Market Fluctuations?

All in all, despite the layoffs, cutbacks, and lawsuits making financial news headlines, the accounting field appears to be growing. Recently, the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) announced that its members, a network of 60,000 accounting professionals, reported an average salary of over \$100,000. Additionally, 74% of respondents reported receiving a salary increase last year. RHI also reports a steady increase in accounting job salaries in its *2008 Salary Guide*.

### How Can I Improve My Chances of Attaining an Accounting Job?

In general, companies looking to fill a full-time position prefer a candidate with a bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, or business administration, if not a master's. Having CPA certification adds to your desirability. In fact, IMA survey respondents with certification reportedly earned 25% more than uncertified accounting professionals who responded. RHI reports that having CPA certification can increase an initial salary offer by up to 10%.

While a CPA certification is the most in demand, there is a veritable alphabet soup of assorted accreditations offered by different professional accounting and auditing societies. Many of the certifications have minimum requirements along with qualifying tests. Acquiring one of these specialty certificates will both help you stand out and give you direction in your field.

The Institute of Management Accountants offers the following certification:

- CMA (Certified Management Accountant)

The Institute of Internal Auditors offers the following certifications:

- CIA (Certified Internal Auditor)
- CCSA (Certified in Control Self-Assessment)
- CGAP (Certified Government Auditing Professional)
- CFSA (Certified Financial Services Auditor)

The Information Systems Audit and Control Association offers the following certification:

- CISA (Certified Information Systems Auditor)



## Accounting Job Advice

The Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation offers:

- ABA (Accredited Business Accountant)
- ATA (Accredited Tax Advisor)
- ATP (Accredited Tax Preparer)
- ECS (Elder Care Specialist)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook* offers pithy explanations of many of these certifications, and a quick Google search for each acronym is sure to provide you more detailed information. A decision to specialize early on in your career may help you carve your own niche in the field.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants offers:

- ABV (Accredited in Business Valuation)
- CITP (Certified Information Technology Professional)
- PFS (Personal Financial Specialist)
- CFF (Certified in Financial Forensics)

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*, July 9, 2008; Institute of Management Accountants press release, July 9, 2008; Robert Half International press release, June 3, 2008; Robert Half International, *2008 Salary Guide*, July 9, 2008

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