Look Up

You have a bright career ahead.

Get it started now with Advanced Accounting.
A career in accounting is one of the most rewarding paths to pursue. This pathway to entrepreneurship gives you the opportunity to be at the forefront of helping businesses, nonprofits, professional sports teams, and individuals — like celebrities — make sound financial and strategic decisions. Accountants are in a unique position to create, analyze, and interpret data to assess and maintain the financial health of an organization or individual.

Since ancient Egypt, accountants have and continue to be the key champions of the decision-making process. But many of the ways accountants operate and contribute have greatly changed.

**Preparation for tomorrow’s skills sets today**

Today’s entry-level accountants face expectations to do more, know more, and contribute right away — which is great news for you! Instead of just having the skills needed to analyze and interpret data, accountants also need savvy business and communication skills to be successful.

In a profession that is becoming more tech dependent, the following skills are needed to provide the human aspect to interpret data.

**Critical thinking:** Sometimes the easiest answers are not the best choices. Possessing critical thinking skills will allow you to think deeper, understand the logical connections between ideas, and detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning. Developing critical thinking skills will allow you to recognize connections and flaws when reviewing data.

**Decision-making:** Every decision can have positive and negative results that impact the state of a company (imagine the video streaming world landscape if the accountants for then movie rental giant Blockbuster had recommended purchasing Netflix for $50 million in 2000). As an accountant, it will be your role to weave through the data and forecast moves. Using both reasoning and intuition to decide the best options available will be important.

**Problem-solving:** It’s a guarantee that you’ll eventually be faced with a problem in your career; some being more severe or complex than others. It’s difficult to prep for every issue, but when it does arise, you should know how to tackle the situation at hand. This includes identifying and solving problems through creative thinking, research, collaboration, and decision-making skills. Using these approaches will help you better comprehend the problem and construct an appropriate solution.

**Leadership:** Leaders aren’t just someone whom others follow. They exist to grow the company, get the most out of their employees, and help grow the next generation of leaders. Being a great leader means possessing the charisma,
discipline, knowledge, empathy, and self-confidence needed to rally employees and make the tough decisions to ensure a company’s future. To be a CEO or CFO in the age of technology, having great leadership skills will ensure that you’ll help your employees adapt to rapid change.

Learning and implementing these skills can take time, but it’s well worth putting it into practice while you’re still in high school. However, exposure to these skills, alongside learning business acumen and current accounting technologies, tends to not exist with traditional high school accounting courses that teach basic accounting principles.

To get proper exposure to the accounting field in high school, take an advanced accounting course to help you gain a better insight into the industry and the confidence that this is the right path for you.

Curriculum that goes beyond ‘debits and credits’

High school is a time to go outside your comfort zone and explore different classes available to you. However, your first experience with a specific subject can sway how you view it as a career choice. If you have a great first classroom experience with accounting, it can often go a long way toward determining if you want to enter the profession.

This is why you need to expose yourself to a course that goes beyond “debits and credits” and into higher-order skills, like critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership — skills that accountants and CPAs need to thrive in today’s profession.

AICPA’s Accounting Program for Building the Profession (APBP) is an advanced accounting course that teaches a higher-level accounting curriculum that combines financial and managerial concepts. It’s similar to what a college student would learn in an entry-level accounting course. You can earn college credit that’s transferable to 13 universities (and counting) if you pass the APBP qualifying exam. Plus, you can apply for the exclusive AICPA Foundation High School Scholarship to pay for your studies.

Taking the APBP advanced accounting course allows you to understand the skill sets that you need to thrive in today’s accounting profession by integrating accounting knowledge, analytics, and strategic decision-making.

By the time you complete the course, you’ll have gained the confidence to pursue accounting in college and, eventually, your career.

Preparing for new experiences

For many high school students, the college experience is a road paved with new opportunities, from meeting new friends to finding the best places to eat on campus. However, one challenge that upcoming college students face is readjusting coursework expectations.

To help prepare for this change, students often elect to take college-level courses in high school to get a better glimpse of what will be expected. Taking an advanced accounting course, like APBP, is the perfect opportunity to see what a college course is like — which is no surprise considering the curriculum was developed by Dr. Dan Deines, CPA, a retired accounting professor at Kansas State University.

The program goes beyond basic accounting skills to push you to become acquainted with both financial and managerial accounting. By introducing these principles in high school, you can enter college with the confidence and knowledge needed to be successful during the introductory accounting courses.

“I took a couple of AP courses in high school, but the advanced accounting course felt more structured like a college class. I felt that course put me ahead, as having the skills from taking the advanced accounting class in high school made my first accounting class in college much easier than [it was for] those that only had a basic accounting class,” Kristy Trupka, CPA, recalled when discussing her experiences after taking the course.

Since the APBP program focuses on preparing students with accounting concepts taught in higher education, it’s no surprise that students who take accounting courses in college often find success by helping to tutor their fellow classmates.

Therese Dukes, a business high school teacher in Independence, Kentucky, shared how one of her former students did just that. “During his first accounting class in college, my former stu-
dent mentioned that his classmates were drowning and were not understanding the material. He became their tutor and helped those students pass the course. The fact that he was well prepared, especially since it was my first year teaching the APBP program, speaks volumes about the curriculum.”

One way the material is delivered is through case studies. The curriculum isn’t just lectures; it allows you to learn by role-playing through scenarios that accounting professionals often experience. And by taking part in these case studies, you’ll take away much more.

“We participated in a project where we ran a company and we had to run through transactions and produce financial statements. There was a lot of time management skills wrapped around it and I was able to learn how to process things and be self-driven to figure out answers on my own,” said Darien Stokes, a former APBP student and current Master of Accounting student at Kansas State University.

A true look inside the accounting career

Taking an advanced accounting course, like APBP, can not only prepare you for college, but it can set you up for the start of your professional journey. One of the best ways the program does this is by exposing students to the vast number of career paths within accounting, whether it’s to solve mysteries as a forensic accountant, save the world as an environmental compliance analyst, or even travel the world as a CPA for an airline company.

For Trupka, taking the APBP course allowed her to see all that accounting has to offer.

“This class really introduced some other career paths for me. I felt like the advanced accounting course really opened the door to public accounting, and some of the more complex careers I can pursue. I was a first-generation college student, and I didn’t know what I wanted to do. But taking this class really helped me figure out my major in college.”

Being prepared for the start of your professional journey also means having the tools needed understand your next steps. AICPA’s StartHereGoPlaces.com provides resources for you to explore different careers within the profession, get a snapshot of salaries accountants are making today, find the right college for you, and understand the pathway to become a CPA.

You can also put your accounting skills to the test by playing Bank On It on StartHereGoPlaces.com. Developed by students, for students, this interactive game will challenge you on accounting fundamentals, provide a taste of real, working-world scenarios, and reinforce learning concepts in the classroom. This game will test your wit, wisdom, and ambition.

Finding your calling

The biggest testament to the APBP advanced accounting program is that this honors-level course inspires students to pursue accounting as a career. Many former students have since graduated with accounting degrees, work at some of the most prestigious companies and public accounting firms, and ultimately earn the coveted CPA license.

It’s hard to know what your calling is while you’re in high school, but the APBP advanced accounting program will give you a great opportunity to explore whether accounting is a career for you.

“High school is a time to test things out. So why not look at accounting, get a taste for business, and look at all the options available? Because if you don’t, there’s a chance you’ll regret it and miss out on your true calling,” Stokes said.

“I tried to diversify my classes while in high school. That led me to the advanced accounting course and a career path that I would not have pursued if I wasn’t experimental in how I chose classes.”

Even if you don’t have the option to take the APBP advanced accounting course in high school, pursuing an accounting career can take you far in life and will provide the skills to be a successful business owner, run a Fortune 500 company, or help a nonprofit support local communities. With Start Here, Go Places as a resource, you’ll feel confident to take the first step towards this profession. To learn more, visit StartHereGoPlaces.com.
Thinking of a career in accounting? We’ve got your back.

Get started today as a Student Affiliate Member.

CPAs drive the success of many companies. And the global financial system. Whether you’re looking for a great salary, job security or travel opportunities, becoming a CPA can help make all that a reality. The AICPA® is here to help you become a CPA — with scholarships, mentoring, support and the latest certificate programs, including blockchain, data analytics and cybersecurity.

Get ready to join the AICPA as a Student Affiliate Member for FREE when you begin your college journey. Just visit ThisWayToCPA.com/JumpStart.