

# Career TIMES

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WORK ETHIC: Diane Pardoe enjoys working with numbers and interacting with people. PICTURE: BRENTON GEACH

## A very taxing kind of work

**W**HAT does your job entail? I'm responsible for getting clients' tax returns in by the deadlines, and ensuring payments to the SA Revenue Service (Sars) are made on time.

But mostly my job is helping clients to get their accounting and tax affairs right. Accountants have to be able to think logically, but we also need to be law abiding and committed to correctness.

We are driven by deadlines from the start of July to the end of February, every year. Tax season starts on July 1, and the first provisional tax return is due at the end of August. This is followed by annual returns for individual taxpayers who aren't provisional taxpayers at the end of November.

Provisional taxpayers' returns are due at the end of January, and provisional tax payments for individual taxpayers, close corporations and companies are due at the end of February.

The firm also takes on clients who need monthly accounting services, such as VAT and monthly PAYE returns. We also do PAYE reconciliations twice a year in May and October, and for businesses we submit annual returns to CIPCC.

We also do company secretarial work, dealing with CIPCC when there is a change of members, directors or addresses.

**Describe your average work day:** A routine job would entail processing a set of accounts for a client, drafting financial statements, submitting the tax return for the cc, receiving and checking the assessment, advising the client and doing the payment.

Correspondence and phone calls to clients and Sars form a big part of this job. I follow up incorrect assessments with objections to Sars. If objections fail the next step is to appeal.

Sometimes schedules are involved in completing tax returns, and for audits Sars requires all supporting documentation.

A lot of work is generated through e-mails, and I regularly check my bank statements to see that all payments have come in.

**Best part of the job:** I have clients from all walks of life, and enjoy continually interacting with different people.

**Worst part of the job:** Sorting out queries with Sars, and occasionally having to deal with difficult clients or chasing up clients who don't pay their accounts.

**Why did you choose this career?** My mother was a bookkeeper and encouraged me to study accounting, which I really enjoy. Another attraction was that I could work from home when my children were young. As the business grew I needed office premises, and I now prefer working away from home.

**What else would you have liked to do?** I would enjoy teaching. I lectured to accounting students for a few years and law would be another option.

**Are you paid enough?** Yes, but there's a lot of pressure.

**Rate your work stress on a scale of 1 to 10:** Very high – often 10 because of the constant deadlines and not all clients appreciate the amount of work involved.

**Travel opportunities?** Accountants are sought after worldwide. In some countries you need to do a conversion course to practice there.

## Good communication skills are essential

**YOU MUST** take maths and science as matric subjects, but you don't have to do accounting at school.

Above-average written and verbal communication skills are essential because this profession relies on good relationships – you are constantly communicating with your clients, Sars and other staff.

You must like people because you will be involved with them on all levels, from clients to staff and fellow accountants. You must be able to get on with everyone.

You must have a strong work ethic. You have to plan and carefully execute the volume of work that is given to you to get through while you are studying.

**Qualifications needed:** You need a degree, such as a B Com or B Compt, with accounting as a subject, followed by a post-graduate diploma in accounting (PGDA).

If you want to become a chartered accountant, you need to pass

### Real jobs, real people



- Today: Diane Pardoe
- Job: Accounting and tax consultant
- Qualifications: B Compt (Hons) CTA, P Grad Adv Taxation
- Place of work: Farley Accounting and Tax Consultancy (Fintax)

By Sarah-Jane Bosch

Every Monday Sarah-Jane Bosch interviews real people at work in Cape Town.

part one of the qualifying SAICA (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants) examination, followed by the second phase, which entails completing at least 18 months of your three-year trainee accountant contract.

Once you have written your second exam and completed your training contract you can apply to be registered as a chartered accountant. If you specialise in financial management or auditing you need to write the PPE (Professional

Practice Examination).

**Where to train:** Universities.

**Expected earnings:** Newly qualified accountants can expect to earn about R27 000 a month. Income is almost unlimited for company directors and partners in accounting and auditing firms.

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