

Computers as Teachers

by Ken Garrett, EQL
International Ltd



Introduction

Plato was the first. It was a computer based learning system developed at the University of Illinois in the 1960s to run on main frame computers; it used only text. Since then, computer systems, operating systems and hardware have come a long way, and the increasing sophistication of software and hardware has had a revolutionary effect on computer based training techniques. Colour, a variety of type faces, graphics, photographs, sound and video can now be incorporated. In the right circumstances all of these can improve the learning experience. However, none of them guarantees that the computer based training package will be successful in reaching its objectives nor that the use of CBT is even appropriate for a given training need.

EQL is a company that specialises in producing CBT, but we would never claim that CBT can completely supersede any other teaching technique. It is simply another tool (though a powerful one) that can be used to help students, and it will often be appropriate to combine CBT with, say, written material and lectures

Currently, we provide CBT material covering a wide range of finance and business topics. For example, we have packages that support many of the syllabuses of ICAEW, ACCA and CIMA. In all cases, the CBT packages are designed for use in conjunction with written material. This mixed approach is easier for us to provide now that we became part of the BPP group as BPP has an unrivalled library of titles covering finance and business syllabuses. For example, we are currently producing a range of products for the ACCA CAT qualification which comprises a CBT package, an accompanying integrated workbook and discs which present students with multiple choice questions for self-testing. We have plans to develop similar packages for the ACCA professional qualification and CDAF.

The advantages and disadvantages of CBT

CBT can have the following advantages:

- Cost savings. The most convincing examples of cost savings can be found in military and engineering training applications. It is obviously much less expensive to train in aircraft interception or oilrig process control

using simulation techniques than it is to train on the real thing. It does not take many crashed aircraft to pay for a sophisticated CBT alternative.

- However, there can also be substantial cost savings in less glamorous applications. CBT can save on travel and accommodation costs incurred in sending staff to a conventional course. Because CBT is available on demand, training can be undertaken whenever staff are not otherwise employed so, in professional organisations, less chargeable time is wasted. Training is delivered to the people without the people being delivered to the training.
- Convenience. Why wait for a conventional training course to come up when a CBT course is available on demand: at the work desk, in a company learning centre or at home? Similarly, if you have been on a conventional course you might not have to use your new skills in practice until some time later when you might have forgotten much of what was covered. With CBT you can revisit a course as required. Training is delivered on demand.
- Time savings. Although difficult to quantify, most studies conclude that there are time savings in using good CBT of 30% compared to conventional courses together with a similar increase in retention. These advantages arise for two reasons. First, good CBT will continually demand users to respond to questions. This tests understanding and reinforces the learning. Second, the training can be tailored to the users' needs so that time is not wasted covering material that is already known.
- Continuous assessment and assessment on demand. Users' progress and responses can be tracked and recorded - total time spent, percentage of correct responses, date first and last used. This information can be very valuable to supervisors and managers. Subject to adequate security arrangements, formal assessment exercises and examinations can be built into the CBT so that they too can be attempted at convenient times.
- Tailored learning. All trainees can follow the course at their own speed. Good CBT (see below) will allow users to repeat sections and jump sections. Users may even be able to request more questions on areas that they are unsure about. Many users also find that CBT is non-threatening. Rather than struggling with a subject in public in a conventional class, mistakes can be made and subjects revisited in the privacy of one's own computer. Enhanced learning experience. CBT can incorporate

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EDITORIAL

Editorial

They say time flies when you're having fun it only seems a few days ago I was putting 'pen to paper' to write the last Editorial. So welcome to Summer I only hope the weather has got the idea by the time this hits the streets!

For those of you who attended the successful trainee conference at Warwick, we loved the beach wear by the way !! EQL our lead article will take no introducing. (For a full report on the conference see this edition). EQL are currently working on revolutionising study by developing on line packages see their article for more and if you're interested give Graham a ring.

Since the last edition the team this end have finally processed all your returns for the GAS membership database - thanks for providing us with your updated information. Sarah has transformed the written word into a series of graphs to provide easily digestible data on the composition of the GAS and a comparison on the previous year. In addition we have included some statistics on the Hotline - 020 7270 1700; if you want to advertise on the line let us know and arrangements can be put in hand. If you have Internet access externally advertised jobs can be found on our website.

WGA, Whole of Government Accounts, forms part of the group that DART belongs to here in the Treasury and my thanks go to Ian Carruthers and Dave King for their contribution this issue. WGA are a relatively new team and once read the article should give you a good idea what they are about and what they hope to achieve. As the project progresses there will be further updates and articles.

In view of the summer holidays, we have decided to extend the closing date for our logo competition to 13 October, so please keep your entries coming in.

If you've had your summer holiday I hope the sun shone and the batteries are recharged; for those waiting for a day to arrive have a good one and don't forget to add your editor to the postcard list we could carry out a survey 'Accountants Holiday Destinations' - only joking !!

Thanks to all our contributors without you Gasette would be very thin and uninspiring. Copy date for contributions will be 13 October 2000.

Enjoy what's left of summer!

Roberta

Send your comments to:-

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financial models, internet links and video. For example, a CBT course on interviewing skills can show video of an interview in progress. The video can be stopped and the student asked to choose an appropriate follow-up question to the interviewee's response.

CBT can have the following disadvantages

- Not everyone likes it. Some people are uncomfortable with computers and this can raise a barrier to learning. Some students will regret the lower social contact that CBT is likely to bring compared to conventional courses.
- Lack of suitable hardware resources. Whether used at a university or in an office or at home, CBT requires access to suitable hardware. The more multimedia that is incorporated into the CBT, the higher the hardware specification.
- It is not as convenient as a book. Books are light, portable, provide instant access and can be used just about anywhere on the tube, sitting at a desk, lying in the garden. CBT usually requires more formal arrangements.
- CBT is poor at teaching higher skills. Generally, this is true though it is getting better. An example of higher skills is an exercise in which you must draw together evidence from a number of sources, present a case and come to a conclusion. Different people could come, quite validly, to different conclusions. Often the answer is to be presented as a report of memorandum.
- We are obviously a long way off a CBT system reading a report written by a student and awarding marks or providing feedback. Such an exercise would require artificial intelligence to be built into the CBT system. However, computer based simulations can be valuable in teaching some higher skills - though the development costs of simulations can be high.
- What if the student does not understand what the CBT package has attempted to teach? Good CBT should offer additional help to students where this is likely to be necessary. For example, in a package showing how cost behaviour can be estimated using least squares regression, a help button could be provided to take students step by step through the application of the regression formula. The problem, of course, is identifying all the occasions on which students may require more help. Inevitably some will be missed or the help provided might still be inadequate. Some form of contact with conventional teachers will always be needed, whether face to face, over the internet, by email or telephone.

Good CBT

What makes good CBT? Let's start by considering what makes a book good and what makes a good book.

Conventional textbooks allow easy navigation. They have contents pages and you can quickly go to any topic area. You can turn back and reread. You can skip the bits you know or the bits you don't need. You can use a bookmark to quickly return to where you left off. You can annotate pages and highlight important areas. As a model for a user-friendly system, books are hard to beat and CBT should try to emulate their convenience.

So, what makes good books? Well, if you don't engage the reader, you won't get far. Good writing, interesting examples, provocative statements and humour all help to keep interest alive. Attractive typography, plenty of 'white space' and illustrations also help.

So far our requirements for good CBT have merely drawn it level with books. What can it do better?

- Interactions. This what we term any action of the user which is more than merely hitting a key to go onto the next page of text or the next clip of video. Interactions therefore include asking users to make choices as to which piece of information they would like to see more about. However, the really valuable interactions are those which ask users questions about what they have studied. To read something, then be asked about it:
 - Tests understanding
 - Reinforces knowledge
 - Stimulates interest
 - Reduces the chance of mindless reading without understanding.

High interactivity levels is the key to successful CBT: without it you may as well read a book or watch a video. At EQL we pride ourselves in providing packages with many interactions.

- Tailored reactions to student responses. The CBT does not have to be merely a passive deliverer of study material. It can take on some of the role of a coach or tutor and help users to understand. One of the simplest examples of this is to offer 'Help' when a student gets a question wrong. If the package simply says 'Wrong' and immediately shows the correct answer the student will learn probably something. However, it would be much better to offer 'Help' in response to an incorrect answer such as "You should be using a discount rate of 10%. Try again". It is also possible to anticipate common incorrect answers and to offer tailored help such as "You seem to have included the cost of the market survey. Isn't that a sunk cost? Try again". This greatly enhances the learning experience and makes the student think much more about the subject.
- A variety of resources can be combined into one package. Books deliver just words, pictures and diagrams, but CBT and multimedia give the opportunity for a variety of resources to be used. For example, in an engineering application, the written instruction 'Hit lightly with a hammer' could give rise to a wide range of reactions from an ineffectual tap to serious damage. Showing a video clip might be more effective. Similarly, in an accountancy application, access to information on the internet or access to an accounting or spreadsheet package can increase the effectiveness of the learning.

In this article, I have tried to explain a little about computer based training. Think about it when you next use a CBT package - as you undoubtedly will.

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DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTANCY RESOURCE TEAM (DART):

REPORT ON 1999-2000 AND 2000-2001 PLAN

Introduction

This report sets out progress against the 1999-2000 DART Plan together with details of what is anticipated for 2000-01. The plan itself is an annual document which sets out contributions to the one-off projects undertaken each year by DART together with details of non-project work carried out.

REPORT ON 1999-2000

DART's role is to contribute towards improved financial management in government through:

- facilitating the definition and dissemination of best practice in developing the skills necessary to achieve effective financial management;
- co-ordinating the framework of the Government Accountancy Service to help meet its objectives

One of the main themes throughout 1999/2000 has been DART's continued involvement in the broader accountancy agenda. This has meant helping departments to provide the assurance required from each Principal Accounting Officer that robust Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) training programmes were in place within each department as part of the overall trigger point strategy for RAB implementation. Work has also started on the development of a Government Accountancy Service website which will be located on the Government Secure Intranet (the site is due for launch shortly) and the identification of interchange opportunities for accountants to encourage greater mobility and skills transfer throughout the GAS. These activate support objectives of the GAS and the Treasury in maintaining a professional, well motivated and outward looking organisation.

Non - project work

2. DART has run the four conferences set out in the 1999-2000 GAS Plan - the conference for qualified accountants (attended by approximately 180 delegates), the trainee conference (120 delegates) and two conferences for Heads of Profession (HOAPS) and Senior Professionals (SPs). The management of public sector IT projects and the modernising government agenda were the underlying themes of all four conferences.

3. DART organised workshops for the Finance Training Network and for its successor, the Finance Training Committee. Both covered aspects of training for RAB. Resource constraints meant it was not possible to organise a third planned workshop although a joint event with the Association of Accounting Technicians did take place earlier in the year

4. DART led a study into electronic communication which

culminated in a series of recommendations aimed at greater use of both the Internet and GSI in dealing with accountants and others involved in financial management across departments and agencies. The vacancy information service for accountants continued to receive about 7,000 calls during 1999/2000.

5. GAZETTE Published 3 times in the year and circulation is now running at about 3,600 up 5% over 1998/99. Articles on accountancy training and career development were also published in both Overview and Accounting Technician magazines.

6. Links with outside organisations included a series of meetings with accountancy recruitment and training organisations and liaison with the professional accountancy bodies. DART also co-led a UK/US session on e-commerce and electronic government at the 1999 Colloquium for Financial Management in Governments which was hosted jointly by the US and Canada in September. Details of contacts made at the Colloquium have been passed on to UK departments and agencies. Closer links with the National Health Service have continued, especially on training and recruitment issues.

7. Speaking engagements during the year included talks for Customs & Excise, CIMA Employers Group, the Civil Service College, the Royal Institute for Public Administration, the Imperial College Public Sector MBA course and numerous joint presentations with the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) to promote the take-up of the Diploma in Government Finance.

8. The annual update of statistics on the GAS took place at the end of March 1999. At that time there were 1620 accountants in departments and agencies (up from 1420 in March 1998) 770 trainees (750 in March 1998) and 1460 accounting technicians (up from 560 in March 1998, although this may have been due in part to better identification of technicians by departments given earlier difficulties in obtaining this information). The 2000 update started in April and will also include AAT and ACCA Diploma holders for the first time.

9. In giving ad hoc advice to HOAPS, DART advised on a number of recruitment campaigns including the Home Office, OFSTED and Customs & Excise. DART is also represented on the Customs & Excise Employment of Accountants Steering Group.

10. Other DART activities included the annual survey of UK-based colleges providing accountancy training. The survey covers tuition fees, pass rates, quality of lectures and individual student assessments. DART also provides the Annual Salary Survey of accountants and trainees across the GAS. The 1999 Salary Survey showed that pay rates for accountants and trainees across the GAS were broadly in line although one or two departments were offering salaries either above or below these rates.

Projects

1. **RAB Training Agenda** - This area continued to form a major element of the work of the team. The work included both guidance and advice on Accounting Officer's assurance on the adequacy of departmental RAB training programmes as part of the overall requirements for Trigger Point 3. In addition, the Finance Training Committee was launched in January 2000. After the first meeting, the Committee was split into Main and Small departments to accommodate their needs in the development and delivery of training programmes for RAB.
 2. **Key skills for senior finance posts** - The aim of this project is to take a selection of posts in departments and agencies and compare the skills and salary profiles with similar posts in local government and the NHS. The outcome will be reported to HOAPs/Senior Professionals. The project (which commenced in February 2000) will also seek to establish the potential impact of RAB on the skills profile of senior finance posts within central government departments over the next 2-3 years.
 3. **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** - Work has started to establish the nature and extent of CPD currently being undertaken across the GAS and report how this compares with professional guidelines. In parallel, negotiations are taking place to establish the extent to which departments can collectively obtain discounts from tuition providers through establishing minimum numbers attending CPD courses. Departments wishing to participate are currently ascertaining how many accountants may be interested in such inter-departmental CPD training courses.
 4. **Pay and Allowances Survey** - The second annual survey was published in January 2000. HOAPs have confirmed that they wish DART to continue to collect and issue information on pay developments affecting accountants both inside and outside the GAS.
 5. **Electronic Government** - A report on electronic publication was submitted to the FMRA Director in April 1999. A working group (led by DART) was then established to take forward the proposals. Key tasks included providing an improved Internet service and launching a pilot scheme for disseminating information via the Government Secure Intranet (GSI).
- Talks at conferences and on CSC courses on request (where resources permit)
 - (III) Co-ordinate
 - The Finance Training Committee, Forensic and Small Departments Networks
 - (IV) Provide
 - Statistics on the GAS, for use by customers in departments, and to provide HOTGAS and other internal customers with aggregate information on the size and structure of the GAS.
 - Subject to resource availability, ad hoc advice to HOAPs and other tasks for departments (eg advice on recruitment exercises)
 - Advice and guidance on Continuing Professional Development for accountants and distribution of details of courses for qualified and trainee accountants (including information on corporate discounts)
 - A survey of UK-based colleges which provide accountancy education, for use by trainee accountants in the GAS and their managers
 - A salary survey for accountants and trainees incorporating allowances and study terms
 - (V) Maintain links with
 - The major accountancy institutes, training and other bodies as an outward looking organisation ourselves
 - Overseas governments who are progressing RAB-type initiatives to learn from their experiences in developing and implementing training programmes
 - Departments, particularly those responsible for co-ordination of professional groups, to discuss human resource issues (eg emerging thinking on the modernising government agenda)
 - (VI) Other
 - Act as liaison point for interchanges of accountants

Project work and other outputs

Communications and training implementation will continue to dominate the RAB agenda in 2000-2001 together with greater use of the Internet and Government Secure Intranet (GSI) in managing information. The key area of activity will be:

1. RAB Communications Strategy and Training Agenda

The development of DART's communications network to incorporate the wider target audiences now becoming involved in RAB implementation, particularly resource budgeting. In addition, DART will be working with departments to help ensure progress in RAB training remains on target and that the programmes which were underway in 1999/2000 continue into 2000/01, particularly in achieving the key targets which departments identified as part of the TP3 training assurance.

To play a proactive role in steering the Finance Training Committee towards identifying and sharing good practice through a number of initiatives including a training evaluation working group and a benchmarking strategy.

To support the Head of the GAS in his forthcoming personal review of RAB implementation by providing and co-ordinating briefing linked to a programme of departmental visits which will be carried out in the autumn.

Other projects subject to the availability of resources:

2000-2001 Plan

Non-project work

(I) Arrange

- One self-financing GAS conference
- One self-financing trainee conference
- Two conferences for Heads of Professions and Senior Professionals
- Up to three workshops for Networks

(II) Communicate with accountants in the GAS through

- 4 editions of the Gasette magazine between May 2000 and March 2001

2. HOAP Review

On behalf of the Head of the Government Accountancy Service to co-ordinate a working group of HOAPs looking at both the 1996 GAS Review framework four years on and also what has changed since then including modernising government and GAS membership (responsibilities towards accounting technicians in terms of both the role of the centre and also HOAPS, accountants in NDPBs etc).

3. Electronic Government

To continue taking forward GSI/Internet developments, identifying best practice and encouraging greater interaction across the GAS through the establishment of a GAS website which will include electronic discussion groups, bulletin boards, technical query sections etc. Exploring electronic links to accountancy colleagues in the NHS and other sectors.

4. Small Departments

Adopting a more high profile role in facilitating/coordinating the small departments network to allow recruitment, career and succession planning to take place on a wider front. This would enable HOAPs to become more active in arranging the interchange of accountants, head for head postings etc and thus be able to offer the wider career opportunities currently denied to those working in small departments. In addition, small departments will be encouraged to take advantage of the economies of scale made possible through group bookings for training/CPD courses including, where possible, participants from NHS Trusts.

Kevin Ross
Team Leader

GAS TRAINEE CONFERENCE 2000

By Kevin Ross, DART

What sort of image is conjured up in your mind by exotic cocktails, spicy food, butterflies floating in the breeze, parrots overhead and the sound of a steel band playing as an accompaniment to limbo dancing? Some sun-drenched paradise in the Caribbean perhaps?

I think I can say with a fair degree of confidence that unless you were one of the delegates at the recent GAS Trainee Conference it would not be one of the rooms adjoining the restaurant on the Warwick University campus! This year's social event was a beach party so we pulled out all the stops to make it as authentic as possible. Well okay, the parrots and butterflies were balloons (as was the palm tree by the door) but this didn't detract from the party atmosphere and a great deal of fun was had by all. In fact, the party was gate-crashed at one point by a group of delegates from one of the other conferences running on the site a first in the entire history of the GAS!

But on to the main business of the conference - feedback from delegates indicated they felt it was a balanced programme with something in it for everybody. This is not really an easy task given that the audience is composed of trainee accountants studying at all stages of their respective qualifications plus of course accounting technicians. We also place a great deal of importance on comments made by delegates in their feedback sheets particularly suggestions for future sessions and speakers.

Accounting Standards (FRS) Update

Debbie Laing, Senior Burnham Lecturer at the MOD's School of Finance & Management at Worthy Down gave an overview of current developments which included the Statement of Principles and a quick run through FRS's 5,11,12,13,14,15 and 16. The session started with a brief description of the thoughts behind the Statement of Principles and the characteristics of relevance, reliability, comparability and of course materiality. Next came the FRS's, picking up on key features and also aspects of particular relevance to accountants in the public sector. Finally, Debbie looked ahead in terms of the impact of FRED 19 (Deferred Tax), FRED 20 (Retirement Benefits) and FRED 21 Supplement: Accounting Policies.



Debbie Lang, School of Finance and Management, Worthy Down.

ATC Study Skills Seminar for Professional Exams

This session was co-presented by Joey Harman, Director of ATC Thames Valley and Claire Dean ATC Tutor. The aim was to look at the various options available to discover more about how people currently study, learn about and experience new ways of studying and also produce a realistic study plan using these newly found techniques.

After some tips about how to put together mind maps everyone was asked to complete a short questionnaire on their preferred learning strategies. This was to determine which of the following intelligences (or combination) applied on an individual basis.

Linguistic, mathematical, visual, musical, inter-personal, intra-personal and physical. For my part, I scored on the linguistic, inter and intra personal but not as much on the visual, musical, physical and mathematical ie I like talking a lot, am not brilliant with numbers and as for being musical, forget it! For those who know me this is clearly a travesty (no comments please).

Other aspects of this session included tips on memory retention and a real-life example of an examination question, answer plan and two scripts. One of the scripts was clearly laid out, underlined as appropriate with lots of spaces between the main

points. The other was a closely written rambling mess. I leave it to your imagination to work out which one was highlighted as the recipe for success.

Syndicate Sessions

Delegates split into groups for syndicates run by AAT (Portfolio Building Question Techniques), CIMA (Syllabus 2000 and Career Profile & Practical Experience Requirements), ACCA (New Syllabus and Practical Training Requirements) or CIPFA (Revision & Question techniques). These were thought by most who attended to be very useful as it provided an opportunity to meet representatives from the Institute or Association students had registered with and ask questions



CIMA Syndicate Group.

Recent CBT Productions

Graham Divers from EQL covered the new syllabus specific e-learning courses that are being introduced for CIMA, ACCA and AAT students during the course of this year. After an overview of the company and details of syllabus specific courses that are becoming available between now and the end of 2001 he went on to talk about the evolution of e-learning. Traditional training brings with it the disruption caused by having to take time away from work, juggling with set dates for courses and examinations and of course, cost. E-learning on the other hand represented an opportunity to pursue a course of interactive study ranging from simple Yes/No True/False responses to a combination of multiple choice, drag and drop or single entry answers. The use of browsing, games and humour can also add to the learning process as well as livening it up a little.

The highlight of the session was a demonstration of e-learning in practice using the CIMA Foundation Business Mathematics paper by way of illustration. This can also be viewed on CIMA's website as a demonstration page for those who wish to pursue this option further.

Preparing for RAB - Implementation at the DSS

Dave Johnson, Resource Budgeting Manager, DSS, charted the department's progress through RAB implementation from 1995 to date. At the start, the focus was very much on cash accounts and accounting rather than budgeting. The accounts themselves were also qualified.

Part of the process of implementing RAB involved the need to change hearts and minds as well as systems. Senior managers also needed to demonstrate ownership of the process. In many ways this would have been helped if RAB had been known as resource management ie wider than the activities of accountants although the term had already been taken by a parallel Cabinet Office initiative. Nonetheless, RAB had been a

standing item on the DSS Audit Committee agenda since 1996 so it had already developed a reasonably high profile. The benefits were seen as better control through Total Managed Expenditure, longer term planning and performance management. Risks were ensuring that managers really understood the differences between cash and resource requirements and the accounting changes resulting from the implementation of FRS 5 and PFI contracts.

Looking to the future, Dave concluded by saying that RAB was leading to better debt management as well as a reduction in fraud and error, all of which should lead to the department producing unqualified accounts.



Dave Johnson, DSS.

Overview of RAB

The conference concluded with a session by Andrew Likierman taking stock of where we were with RAB and looking to the future. He talked about the outcome of the trigger point process including the number of departments with qualified accounts and how the numbers were expected to decline fairly rapidly to below the level of qualified cash accounts today. There was also to be another National Asset Register exercise later this year which would include valuations for the first time.

Overall, the time had come where RAB was expected to maximise its impact on departments and the critical factor for the future was how the information produced was managed and acted upon ie 'the way we do things' rather than a project based exercise.

A final thought

What is written here can only give a flavour of the trainee conference and indeed the point was made by a number of delegates that the opportunity to meet and talk to colleagues from other departments was just as valuable as the main conference agenda itself.

If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of these conferences before (or even if you have for that matter) it is worth turning your thoughts to the 2001 Trainee Conference. The problem from my point of view is how on earth we are going to top the steel band and beach party!

THE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS PROJECT

“Improving Government information through joined-up accounting”

What are “Whole of Government Accounts”?

Whole of Government Accounts (or WGA) will be commercial-style accounts covering the whole of the public sector - “Government” in its widest sense. The accounts will be prepared:

- on an accruals basis rather than a cash basis; and
- using commercial accounting standards and practices adapted where necessary for the public sector context.

They will therefore build on the principles already adopted for resource accounts.

In the same way as commercial group accounts, WGA will treat Government as if it were a single (consolidated) entity by eliminating all significant transactions and amounts owed between public sector entities. They will be intended to present a “true and fair” view of Government’s activities.

Why do we need WGA?

WGA will provide better quality (audited) data to underpin the operation of the Golden Rule, and will allow the public sector balance sheet to be used more directly in fiscal management.

Preparing WGA will meet the commitment in the Code for Fiscal Stability to produce accounts for the whole public sector on a consolidated basis.

What will the benefits be?

WGA will give government planners and managers, including ministers, better and more transparent data for the conduct of fiscal policy, which should lead to significant improvements in policy making in the following areas:

- setting a prudent fiscal stance
- reinforcing moves to refocus policy making from the short to the medium / long term
- more efficient and effective distribution of resources.

These improvements will be reinforced by increased consistency between fiscal policy data and that used for planning and controlling public spending.

The overview of the public sector finances provided by WGA will also improve Government’s accountability to Parliament and taxpayers, and form an important element in the Modernising Government agenda.

But how will WGA help individual bodies?

Preparing WGA will require convergence of the various different sets of accounting guidance covering public sector bodies. This will result in greater comparability of performance data, increasing the ability of individual bodies to benchmark their own performance against that of others, in turn supporting their implementation of the Modernising Government agenda. It will also enable targets, both within bodies and externally, to be set and measured on a consistent basis, allowing relative trends in performance to be more accurately evaluated.

On the practical level, the intention is to minimise the differences between accounting and budgeting policies. This will reduce the workload on departments caused by returns being required on different bases.

By promoting convergence of financial reporting guidance, and improving the links with Resource Budgeting, WGA will also allow bodies to get away from arguments about measurement bases, thereby increasing the effectiveness of funding bids.

What are the key project milestones?

The overall aim is to produce GAAP-based WGA (covering the whole of the public sector) for the financial year 2005/06. However, there are a number of significant issues to be addressed before a final decision to go ahead with full GAAP-based WGA can be taken. We therefore have a more immediate target to publish GAAP-based Central Government Accounts (CGA) for the financial year 2002/03, covering departments (including their agencies), NDPBs and central funds, such as the Consolidated Fund. We are planning to publish these by March 2004, based on returns submitted by departments during Autumn 2003.

We plan to work towards the production of CGA via a number of intermediate targets, in order to allow time for individual bodies to put in place the necessary processes. We currently plan a phased expansion of coverage as follows:

Financial year	Target coverage	Timing of input from departments
2000/01	Departments only	Autumn 2001
2001/02	“Dry run” CGA (including first departmental sub-consolidations of NDPB accounts)	Autumn 2002
2002/03	Published CGA	Autumn 2003

The timing and nature of these intermediate targets will need to take account of Parliament’s forthcoming decision on the full implementation of resource accounting and budgeting, and we will consult departments on these in due course.

In order to provide improved fiscal management information in the period until full GAAP-based WGA can be produced, we are developing WGA based on national accounts data in the interim making maximum use of the existing accruals data already being supplied by departments.

What are the priorities for the current year?

We have started to develop the accounting policies and processes necessary to make CGA a reality. In order to make sure that these are as practical and efficient as possible, we want departments to provide as much input as possible to the development process. During the next few months, we will therefore begin to make use of the existing RABIG group as well as creating a smaller Consultation Group to provide input in the earlier stages of development.

Particular areas where we will be looking for comments from departments during the coming months include:

- the NDPBs to be included for each departmental group within CGA (Trading Funds, nationalised industries and other public corporations will be excluded until the scope of the accounts is expanded); and
- a statement describing the role of an accounting officer in the context of WGA returns.

One of the main areas of difficulty in preparing WGA is likely to be the identification and agreement of intra public sector transactions and balances. The problems encountered should however be minimised if departments and NDPBs can start to prepare for this process from now onwards. We plan to consult departments on the most effective approach to this during the coming months.

How will we communicate?

In addition to the above measures, we will publish regular progress updates on the Treasury’s website, and will make presentations at as many departmental events as possible. We also plan to set up a helpline in due course.

Obtaining further information

The following Questions and Answers provide additional information on various aspects of the WGA project. Further information can be obtained by E-mail from ian.carruthers@hm-treasury.gov.uk or by telephone on 020 7270 4554.

Whole of Government Accounts Team
HM Treasury

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS (WGA) : QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Will WGA reflect reality or be used for political ends - and who will decide?

A. The form and content of WGA will be required by law to aim to present a true and fair view of the Government's activities and to conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in the UK (UK GAAP). The accounts will be based on the policies set out in the Treasury's Resource Accounting Manual (TRAM) which are reviewed by the independent Financial Reporting Advisory Board.

Q. Why produce WGA on a GAAP basis?

A. The Code for Fiscal Stability commits the Government to producing accounts for the whole public sector on a consolidated basis where reasonably practicable. It also commits the Government to applying best-practice accounting methods - UK GAAP adapted for the public sector - in the production of its accounts. GAAP-based WGA will be fully auditable, yielding additional confidence in their reliability and will be based on established accounting practice providing a true and fair view of the Government's financial performance. They will therefore provide better transparency and accountability to Parliament as well as greater certainty to fiscal planning.

Q. Are other countries preparing WGA?

A. There has been a general, if gradual, move in recent years towards an increased emphasis on transparency and accountability in budgetary and fiscal decision making processes overseas. New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Iceland and the USA are all producing WGA in some form and a number of other countries are taking steps in that direction. The decision to expand on the reforms started with RAB to produce GAAP-based WGA places the UK amongst the forerunners in the field of countries who are developing financial reporting to support a new enhanced fiscal framework.

Q. Is this another Brussels Directive?

A. No. WGA has nothing to do with Brussels. European Union measures, such as general government net borrowing and general government gross debt, are reported using national accounts data on the basis of rules issued by Eurostat.

Q. What will WGA give that the national accounts don't?

A. The Government is committed to strengthening the fiscal framework over time, and believes that GAAP-based public sector accounts offer an improved basis for monitoring developments and taking decisions.

Q. Why is there a need to provide extra information in addition to resource accounts and returns to ONS?

A. WGA will treat Government as if it were a single (consolidated) entity. Although WGA consolidation returns from individual bodies will be based on the formats and policies in the TRAM, some extra analysis will be required of transactions and balances with other public sector bodies, so that these can be eliminated. Transactions within the departmental group will be eliminated through intermediate consolidation at the departmental level. Transactions between the departmental groups will then be eliminated in the top-level consolidation by the Treasury.

Q. Why do NDPBs need to change their well-established accounting policies to come into line with RAM?

A. NDPB accounting guidance is currently being updated because the present guidance has been around for some time and accounting practice has moved on since its issue. As part of the process of being brought within the FRAB's remit, the existing guidance is being compared with the RAM and proposals on which policy should apply for the future will be made to the FRAB. There are few significant areas where policies differ materially.

Q. Does this mean that the Resource Accounting and Resource Budgeting boundaries will have to change?

A. No. WGA are intended to provide a better overview of the Government's finances, not to replace underlying control structures. The resource accounting boundary was set for in-year control and Parliamentary reporting purposes which remain valid. A different (wider) boundary has been set for resource budgeting purposes, so that it picks up all public sector expenditure and income. This also remains valid.

Q. Will resource accounts still be needed?

A. Yes. WGA will be intended to present a "true and fair" view of Government's activities and will be audited against this criterion alone, with no opinion on regularity. This is because regularity will continue to be covered in each of the underlying accounts. WGA are intended to provide additional information on the Government's overall finances, not to replace any existing reporting requirements.

Q. Will tax revenues be included?

A. Yes. An inter-departmental working group has now been set up to decide how best to approach the issue.

Q. What's going to happen about Government's long term liabilities (eg the state pension)?

A. All liabilities which meet the detailed criteria for establishing a balance sheet provision set out in Financial Reporting Standard 12 will need to be provided for in order to allow WGA to present a true and fair view of the Government's finances. Under the Standard, provisions should only be recognised when an entity has a current obligation as a result of a past event that will require settlement and can be reliably estimated. It may be appropriate to disclose other liabilities which do not meet these balance sheet recognition criteria in the notes to the accounts. An inter-departmental working group has been set up to develop accruals-based accounting policies for social security benefits.

Q. How will organisations know if they are included in WGA?

A. The bodies to be included within WGA will be listed in a Statutory Instrument. HM Treasury will then write to the Accounting Officer (or equivalent) for each body to confirm its inclusion and explain the reporting requirements.

Q. Is the information going to be needed at the same time as other requirements such as resource accounts and resource estimates?

A. The WGA consolidation returns will be a standardised version of the information in each body's normal year end accounts. Although some initial effort will be required to map the body's existing accounts into the consolidation return format, it will increasingly make sense to prepare the consolidation returns as an integral part of the year end accounts preparation process, as the WGA project progressively leads to convergence of accounting guidance and reporting formats.

Q. What additional costs will WGA impose on individual organisations?

A. The introduction of WGA will build on the implementation of RAB and other changes in public sector reporting already proposed. We also propose to structure the accounts preparation process around the same departmental groups as are already used for budgeting purposes. Preparing WGA should therefore not involve significant additional expenditure by most public bodies because the majority of systems and procedures required will already have been put in place. Although some additional organisational effort will be required at the outset, the preparation of WGA consolidation returns should quickly become an integral part of the year end accounts process, as is already the case with NHS Trusts, and in commercial groups of companies.

Q. Will WGA require the replacement of computer systems?

A. This should not be the case for individual bodies, as the WGA consolidation returns will be a standardised version of the information in each body's normal year end accounts. HMT will undertake the top-level consolidation with departments being asked to perform intermediate consolidations of the returns from their own sponsored bodies. Most departments should be able to use the same systems they already use for consolidation of agency results into their resource accounts.

Q. Who will pay the additional audit costs?

A. The WGA consolidation returns should be audited by bodies' existing auditors as an integral part of their normal audit work, so any additional costs to those bodies should be minimal.

Q Will HMT make sure that accountancy manuals are up to date/ timely?

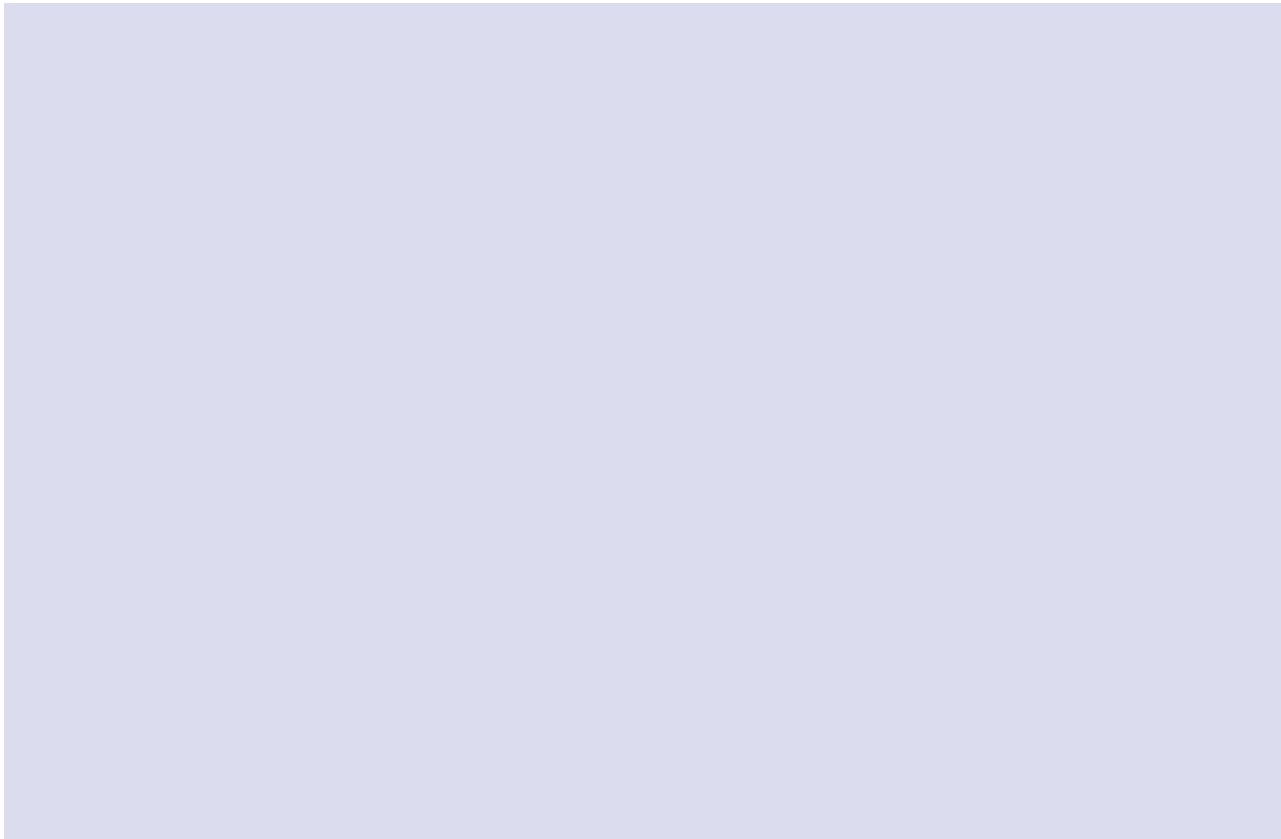
A. Yes. HMT will need to revise its consolidation returns and guidance on their completion on an annual basis. The intention is to maximise the use of the internet and E-mail in this process. The TRAM will continue to be updated in the same way as it is now.

Q. What training will be necessary?

A. We plan to consult departments to determine their exact training needs. As the consolidation will need to be revised annually HMT will inevitably need to provide briefing on the changes. There will also be a need for extra training as the consolidation guidance is introduced for the first time. This training will be provided in conjunction with the Development of Accountancy Resources Team in the Treasury.

Q. Will local authorities be included within WGA?

A. It is planned that local authorities will be included within WGA when the coverage of the accounts is extended from central government to the whole of the public sector. However there are a number of significant issues to be addressed before a final decision on the expansion of coverage can be taken.



There's no accounting for some people

By Rob Gibney, ncSoft

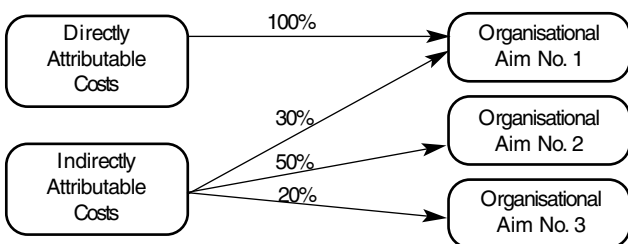
Over the years Government departments have improved their accounting both from a system and a sophistication viewpoint. The advent of Resource Accounting & Budgeting (RAB) further cements that sophistication. However, there is an area where Government (in common with most organisations) Over the years Government departments have improved their accounting both from a system and a sophistication viewpoint. The advent of Resource Accounting & Budgeting (RAB) further cements that sophistication. However, there is an area where Government (in common with most organisations) could do better - people costs or accounting for the costs of staff.

RAB is all about a different basis of accounting and about accounting against the main aims and objectives of the organisation. But are you being as sophisticated in your attribution of people costs as you are on other areas?

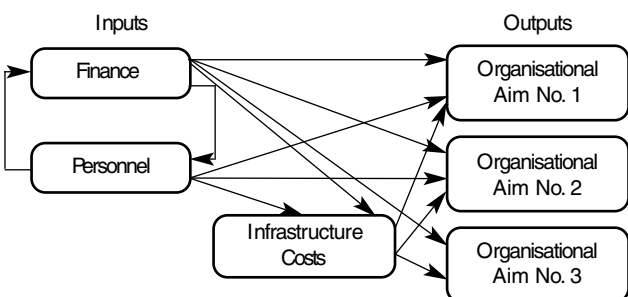
It is estimated that approximately 75-80% of the running costs of Government are people costs. It is not surprising therefore that if RAB is to deliver useful information to assist in making informed decisions, people costs must be adequately assessed and allocated to an organisation's aims and objectives.

The output costs, which at the end of the RAB process should be able to provide an insight into the true costs of meeting aims and objectives, are comprised of a mixture of direct and indirect costs.

An individual whose activity is directly related to an aim can be relatively easily attributed to that aim. For example, a policeman on the beat can have the his or her costs attributed to the aim of crime reduction. However, the costs involved in creating the infrastructure, which provides the necessary backup facilities to support the policeman, cannot be so easily measured and attributed to aims. This results in the need for potentially complex methods of allocations of the supporting costs.



This can be simply illustrated in the following diagram: However, the real situation is far more complex than this, and the following is only a part of the complete picture



In the above diagram, the following apply:

- Finance performs work directly related to each Aim;
- Personnel performs work directly related to two Aims;
- Finance and Personnel attribute work to Infrastructure Costs;
- Infrastructure Costs are allocated to each Aim;
- Finance does work which supports Personnel and Personnel does work which supports Finance;

As can be seen, just for these few inputs and outputs the situation can become complex.

It is therefore unsurprising that in organisations large and small, the effort required in order to arrive at attributable, indirect costs can be daunting. This has resulted in a number of possible methods being adopted:

The FagPacket: very popular, the packet in question involves a range of basic assumptions that are rarely adequately tested. It is often adopted in times of urgency.

The Finger-In-The-Air: Again widely used in times of need, it requires sage-like estimation based on many years experience

Both of these methods have appeal and limitations.

Surveys: A popular approach when there is time available. The survey can result in a large sample of finger-in-the-air data, which is hopefully more accurate than a single or small sample.

Exotic spreadsheets: Requiring many months, and in some cases years, of development, the exotic spreadsheet is often produced by someone who is no longer in the organisation, and cannot be tinkered with under any circumstances. Producing cosmetically appealing figures, the exotic spreadsheet can often take on a "tablets of stone" status. Often replaced at the last minute by fag packet or finger-in-the-air in times of urgency.

Measure what people spend their time on: A daunting task which can seem impossible. However, a pragmatic and considered implementation can lead to much greater accuracy and will provide an audit of how the final output costs were established.

There is an attraction in collecting people cost data. However there are a number of barriers that need to be analysed before this can be attempted.

Some roles are clear candidates for measuring time directly against activities. These would include, for example, scientists who are doing work on behalf of other Government organisations (or indeed private sector companies). At the other end of the spectrum, other roles are inappropriate for quantification, for example, a personal secretary. It is the roles

that do not fall into these extremes that present the challenge, where an individual's time is a mixture of directly and indirectly attributable effort.

Many organisations have tried in the past to implement recording systems for people's time. Often these systems fail because an incorrect approach was adopted. It is essential that the accuracy required for time recording is carefully assessed as, perhaps surprisingly, too precise a measuring scale will result in inaccurate entry as illustrated in the following example. Organisation X decides to adopt a time recording system that records time to an accuracy of 0.1 hour (6 minutes). Mr Y's first hour of work on a Monday morning is as follows:

10.04 - Arrives at office
 10.12 - Starts work
 10.15 - Phone rings - Project Manager of Project A
 10.20 - Actions discussion and works on Project A
 10.40 - Visitor to desk - discusses Project B
 10.50 - Coffee break
 11.00 - Calls Project Manager of Project B
 11.10 - Write minutes for Project B
 12.00 - Visitor to desk - discussion on idea for new project
 12.30 - Lunch

This results in the following summary:

General admin: 11 minutes, Project A: 25 minutes, Project B: 70 minutes, Unknown: 30 minutes, Breaks: 10 minutes

Now with our time system of 0.1 hours or 6 minutes this would result in a small degree of error, which would over time in theory balance out. However, there is one flaw in this argument - when does Mr Y complete his timesheet? And how long does he spend doing it? And also does it matter what proportion of his time is spent on General Administration and what proportion is on breaks? Surely if this time record were to say Project A: 30 minutes, Project B: 60 minutes, New Projects: 30 minutes and Other: 30 minutes this would be just as useful, and a lot less effort for Mr Y to complete! Administrative tasks, which are easiest to do, are done better and more reliably.

There is a point where it becomes counterproductive to measure the time taken to perform activities; do you need someone with a stopwatch over each staff member?

There are a number of solutions to time recording, some of which have been available for a considerable period. These include manual timesheets, spreadsheets and commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) packages.

Manual timesheets provide a mechanism for capturing time but little else. They require a substantial backup infrastructure including processing staff that will enter the recorded time into a "system" providing duplication of effort. Whilst ultimately they can produce the required results, the days have passed when organisations should be considering implementing such systems, due to the high unit cost of processing.

Spreadsheets can often provide an easy way of capturing the required data that can be processed with a minimal amount of effort. The drawback of spreadsheets is that they are effectively bespoke solutions, and keeping them up-to-date can prove an

onerous task. I know of one that requires no less than eleven iterations to attribute accurately overheads.

The final approach is to use a COTS package, which is the ultimate solution to this problem. In the year 2000, there are two broad classes of technology available, Windows-based packages and browser-based solutions. The former are the most widely installed, but are being superseded in an ever-increasing number of cases by packages that can be run through a web browser. Why is this? The main reasons are that a browser application requires no installation on each user's PC, and can be completely maintained in one location. This provides a significantly lower overall cost of ownership.

Products such as ncTime, Journyx, Innate, and Replicon all offer this technology and are extremely affordable. Key facilities to look for include:

- The ability to deploy the software over the web
- Co-existence with manual systems already in place, for example in some cases it will be necessary to retain a signed hardcopy of a timesheet
- Minimal effort during timesheet entry
- Effective and appropriate authorisation process (including no authorisation process if this is what is needed!)
- Flexible integration with accounting, payroll, HR and other systems
- End users, i.e. staff, can use the system with the absolute minimum amount of training (and in some cases none at all)

There are a number of other issues that need to be contemplated prior to implementing a time accounting system.

One of the trickiest aspects is the staff themselves. Unions and other staff organisations will be concerned about the purpose of such a system and the impact it has on staff liberties. There is also the perennial problem of resistance to change. To minimise these issues it is a good idea to inform as widely as possible, consulting with the appropriate bodies. But possibly more important it is critical that the internal processes behind any system are well thought through from both the staff and management perspective. This includes aspects such as the physical processes involved in capturing time, decisions on the accuracy required, the authorisation process (if any) to be adopted, and the integration of the system with other software applications. The use of management consultants may assist in this process, but it is essential that any assistance is sympathetic to the needs of all interested parties and "understands" the organisation.

The implementation itself should be managed using a tried and tested implementation methodology, controlled under PRINCE used eclectically. A system, which has the potential to be rolled out to hundreds or even thousands of users, must be piloted using a representative sample. Since the preferred device for entering and authorising timesheets is a web browser, appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that

there is no potential security breach, although the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) inherently provides this protection.

In conclusion, it is obvious that appropriate accounting of time has many potential advantages to a government organisation. Not least of these is the ability to better understand the true cost of meeting departmental aims and objectives. However, time recording is notoriously difficult to implement successfully. In order to mitigate the problems, the processes should be clearly thought through, the impact on the staff themselves should be carefully considered, and a software application with

appropriate functionality and deployment should be carefully selected. Once these tasks have been accomplished the chosen solution should be fully implemented following a pilot.

There's no accounting for some people, but perhaps there should be.

About the author: Rob Gibney is a consultant with almost twenty years experience of accounting systems, almost half of this period working with the Public Sector and can be contacted via his e-mail address, which is robgibney@hotmail.com. Presently he is working on an assignment with nSoft who can be contacted on 020 7626 3120.

RESOURCE ACCOUNTING: FRAB AIMS FOR BEST PRIVATE SECTOR PRACTICE

The FRAB has sent a copy of its third report to Parliament. The report summarises the Board's work from May 1999 to March 2000 in assessing and advising on amendments to the Treasury's Resource Accounting Manual. The Treasury has made the amendments to bring the Manual into line with the latest changes to financial reporting standards in the private sector, and to clarify some of the existing requirements.

The report sets out the Board's views on a number of issues, including:

- **PFI:** Having previously approved the Treasury's accounting guidance for PFI projects and gained Treasury acceptance to its retrospective application, the Board has announced its intention to monitor the effect of this in practice.
- **Valuation of fixed assets:** The Board is concerned that the Treasury's approach to mid-year valuations may conflict with FRS15 (the ASB's recent accounting standard on tangible fixed assets). The Board has asked the Treasury to re-examine this and report back.
- **Success of the Treasury's Resource Accounting Manual:** The Board has previously highlighted the importance of reviewing how the Manual has fared in practice. The Treasury is carrying out a review of this in connection with departments' 1998-99 "dry run" resource accounts and will be reporting the outcome to the Board later in the Summer.
- **Resource accounting boundary:** The Board retains the view that the boundary should be re-examined in the light of experience, once it is available.
- **Heritage assets:** The Board remains of the view that, in principle, all heritage assets should appear on departments'

balance sheets, but nevertheless has accepted that the case for incurring additional costs in order to place non-operational heritage buildings on balance sheets is not yet proven.

- **Extension of the Board's remit:** In line with the extension of the remit, announced last year, the Board has commenced its consideration of accounting guidance for non-departmental public bodies and trading funds.
- **Salary and provision disclosures of senior management:** In the Board's view these do not fully meet the requirements of best private sector practice. As a result the report records this as a new departure from generally accepted accounting practice. The Board has asked the Cabinet Office to look again at this and report back.

Commenting on the Board's report, its Chairman, Elwyn Eilledge, said:

- "As the full implementation of resource accounting and budgeting edges closer it is important that the standards and principles that underpin the accounts are of the highest level. Our role has been to offer an independent view on whether the Treasury's proposals meet the standards set by generally accepted accounting practice.
- Resource accounting and budgeting will revolutionise the public sector financial landscape and I am delighted that my fellow Board members and I have been able to make such a major contribution to this very important development."

For copies of the FRAB's third report please contact Sue Gamble on 020 7270 4562

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

As promised a new regular feature. Unfortunately no nominations have been received from you the reader, either sensible or otherwise, so to kick us off and give you the idea this month's website is:

www.clangers.co.uk

for those of a certain age no introductions required but to others if you've heard references to the soup dragons, metal lids or soup wells and wonder what people are on here's your chance to have all revealed

For those with a more creative flair the website includes the templates for making your own felt Clanger and a knitting pattern but most important to the fan free wallpaper !!!

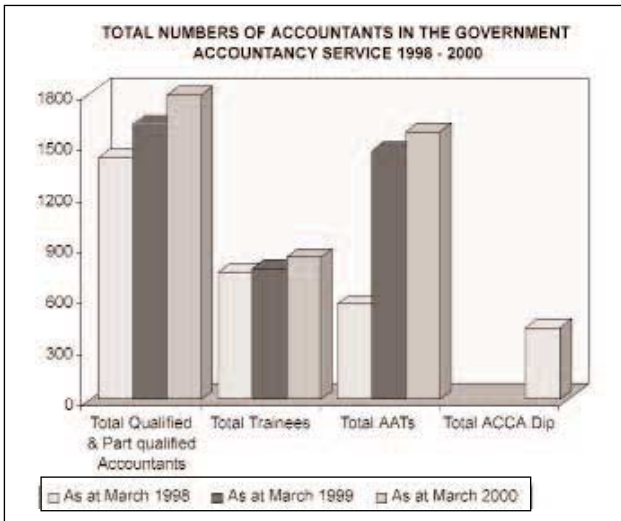
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANCY SERVICE STATISTICS: 1999/2000

DART contacted members of the Government Accountancy Service in February to ask them to update the information we hold on the DART database.

The database is used to mail members GAS related information including conference notifications, questionnaires, etc and also for collecting the exam results of our trainees. The information is also used to collect statistics relating to the Government Accountancy Service.

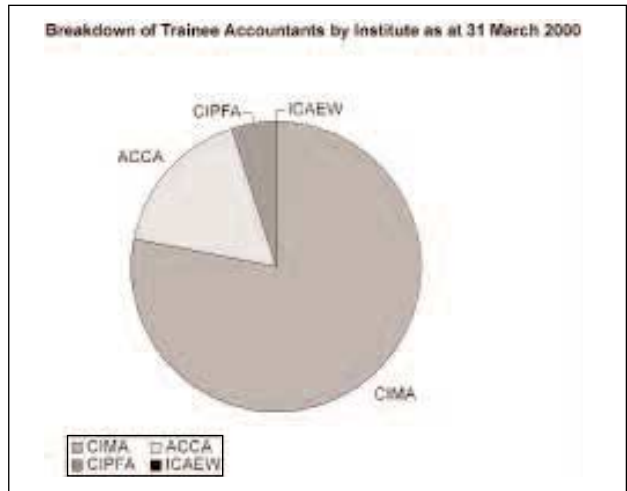
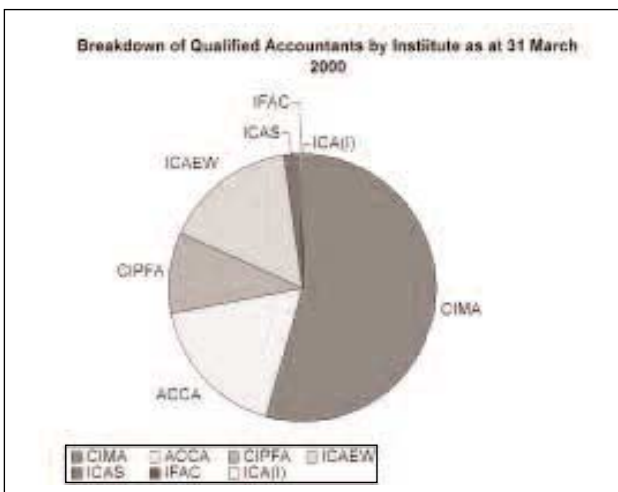
The database has now been updated in conjunction with members and Heads of Profession and the results have been collated.

Figures show another increase in numbers across the board and a total GAS population of 4626 as at 31 March 2000. The numbers include ACCA and AAT Diploma holders for the first time. (The latter are included below in the total for AAT)

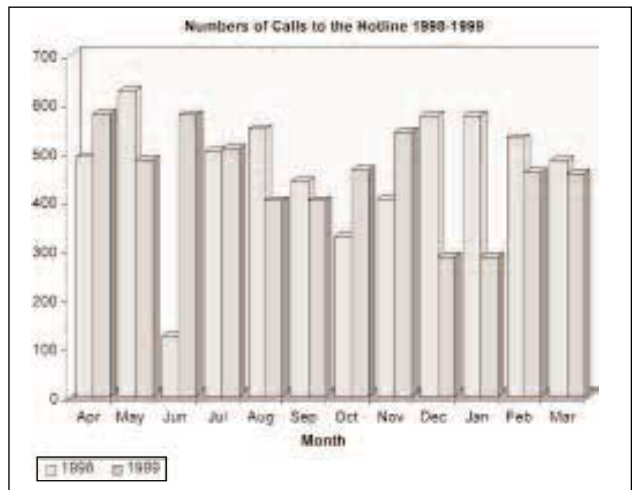


There have been particularly big increases in the numbers of qualified accountants (explained by the continuing demands of the RAB agenda); and of AATs, particularly in MOD.

CIMA continues to be the dominant institute for both qualified and trainee accountants.



Calls to the DART Hotline totalled 5442 in the year April 1999 to March 2000. The following table shows the total number of calls per month to the DART Hotline and is a useful indication of the peaks and troughs in the number of calls for those contemplating recruitment in the coming year.



The Hotline is a recorded message service accessible by telephone, which gives details of accountancy vacancies across the country and includes both those internally trawled and those externally advertised. The Hotline is available on 020 7270 1700.

If you are interested in using this service which is free of charge, including if you are advertising a job in the press which you would also like to publicise on the Hotline, then please contact Sarah Solomon 020 7270 1750.

The results of all Government Accountancy Service recruitment exercises publicised on the Hotline are published, as far as possible, in each issue of Gasette.

UKPAC ESSAY PRIZE

The United Kingdom Public Administration Consortium* is pleased to announce its first essay competition. The two winners will have their expenses paid (up to £1,000 each) to attend the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) International Conference in Athens, Greece from 10-14 July 2001.

The competition is open to any UK citizen or to anyone employed or resident in the UK under the age of 35, and the topic for the essay is:

Accountability in Public Administration

Essays should be no more than 3,000 words. Essays should contribute to the development of knowledge about public service delivery, management or policy-making. Essays should be the entrant's own work and should not have been published elsewhere. They should be in good English. They should be typed in double spacing with ample margins and three hard copies should be submitted. Essays should include a title page and an executive summary (abstract) of about 100 to 150 words. Acronyms should be spelt out and all sources properly referenced.

The deadline for submission is 31 January 2001. The competition will be judged by a panel comprising academics and practitioners and results will be announced by 16 March 2001. Essays should be sent to Professor Gavin Drewry (Convenor and Chair of the Adjudication Panel), c/o Michaela Lavender, CIPFA, 3 Robert Street, London WC2N 6BH. Essays will not be returned, so entrants should keep their own copy.

The adjudication panel reserves the right not to make an award if they consider that none of the essays submitted reaches the appropriate standard. The decisions of the panel are final and the judges will not enter into any correspondence concerning their adjudications.

*The UKPAC is a partnership enabling the UK to belong to the International Institute of Administrative Sciences; members are the Joint University Council Public Administration Committee, the Civil Service College, CIPFA and the NAO.

CCAB VIEWPOINT

AAT

Role of payroll on the increase

The AAT has recently launched an NVQ/SVQ in Payroll Administration, giving payroll staff a chance to broaden their expertise and opportunities for career development

The role payroll teams play in organisations has changed rapidly in the last few years. Payroll is no longer simply about paying people on time. Payroll professionals do more now than ever before, administering sickness and maternity pay, looking after student loan payments, overseeing and introducing flexible benefit packages, and often monitoring time keeping and attendance. And organisations are increasingly recognising the value of the information available from payroll for strategic planning purposes.

As the role of payroll grows, greater demands are being placed on payroll teams to manage new responsibilities and consequently develop new skills. Recognising this changing emphasis and the need for specialist training for staff in payroll, the AAT has developed a new qualification in conjunction with more than fifteen organisations. Launched in February this year, Payroll teams across the UK can benefit from the new qualification, which consists of a mixture of specialist payroll and the necessary IT, communication and management skills increasingly in demand. It is aimed primarily at staff already working in payroll who seek a specialist qualification which develops and recognises their competence.

The qualification is accredited at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Levels 2 and 3 in the national framework and is available throughout the UK. There are six units at Level 2 and seven at Level 3 plus the 'health and safety' unit which can be completed at either Level.

Jane Scott Paul, AAT Chief Executive, says: "The NVQ/SVQ provides employees in payroll with the opportunity to obtain a professional qualification which is widely recognised, nationally accredited, and relevant to the workplace. The qualification is designed to be flexible, so that employees can achieve their goals via an alternative to traditional examinations. For employers it means the assurance of better trained, competent and motivated staff, supported and regulated by a professional body.

"This qualification will enable a tremendous number of people to gain the formal recognition they deserve for their extensive experience, whilst utilising the services and support of a professional body."

Indeed, any Student who successfully completes the NVQ/SVQ in Payroll Administration will automatically become an AAT Affiliate. This presents Students with an opportunity to continue their links with the AAT, obtaining maximum benefit from the support and commitment of a

professional body, and to progress to AAT Membership if they wish.

Some colleges or training institutions will have approval by the AAT to offer the qualification in partnership with employers. Candidates should contact the AAT's Student Support Section on tel: 020 7837 8600 for details of the Approved Assessment Centres in their area. All organisations offering the qualification are regularly monitored by the AAT's independent inspectors.

If you would like more information about the NVQ/SVQ in Payroll Administration, or would like to find out about Approved Centres near you, call the AAT's Education and Training Division on tel: 020 7837 8600, E-mail: aatuk@dial.pipex.com or visit the Website at www.aat.co.uk



Ted Capstick, Chief Accountant, North Wales Health Authority, and a member of the Lead Body for Accounting, speaking at the launch on the importance of the new qualification being competence-based and the recognition it will give payroll staff.

AAT Diploma opens doors

People from a diverse range of backgrounds choose to train with the AAT - having a recognised qualification is a great advantage when looking to develop a successful career. Whether just leaving school, making a career change or returning to work after a period of absence, individuals will find a flexible training option that meets their needs and allows them to fulfill their potential.

Jo Hans recently successfully completed the AAT Diploma in Government Finance, designed to provide the basic principles of resource accounting and budgeting, as a result of the change to government accounting practice.

Jo, from Blackpool, Lancashire, gained a Bachelor of Education degree and worked as a teacher for five years before leaving work to concentrate on raising her children.

Jo returned to work after a period of ten years and joined the Civil Service with the DHSS in Blackpool. After six years she joined the Planning and Finance Division of the DSS where her

skills were developed in areas such as double entry bookkeeping and the preparation of estimates and appropriation accounts (cash based accounts).

Through her hard work and dedication, Jo moved on to the Banking and Accountancy Branch of the Benefits Agency in 1995 and became involved in the move to Accruals Accounting, which involved working mainly on the reconciliation of the accounts.

Jo heard about the AAT Diploma in Government Finance whilst working within the Benefits Agency as the organisation encouraged and supported staff to train with the AAT. Jo decided to undertake the course at the local college, Blackpool and the Fylde. Financial assistance was given by her employer in the form of funding for her day release at college, tuition fees and the costs of textbooks. Jo was also supported through nine days of study leave to cover the Devolved and Central Assessments and revision time.

Jo said: "When the Diploma in Government Finance was introduced it seemed ideal for me. I had quite a lot of experience and but no formal qualification, and as the Diploma was a one year qualification it suited me better than a longer course."

Jo was at a stage in her life where she was able to devote quite a lot of time for study, however she did find the routine of studying difficult to adjust to after many years away from it. Her advice to others looking at the studying and working option is to ensure that time management skills and home study requirements are thoroughly researched and suit your lifestyle.

Jo's current position involves working on a small team within the Programme and Administration Accounting Group of the DSS Banking and Accountancy Branch, which develops and reviews reconciliation and is also responsible for the cost centre budget.

Jo said "The general increase in my knowledge of different aspects of accountancy is very satisfying and I now have better overall knowledge to tackle various tasks within my role."

ACCA

ACCA launches online student registration

An online registration service for students has been launched today by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). From today, anyone wanting to register as a student for any of ACCA's qualifications may do so over the Internet.

This new development marks another technology first for ACCA, which has already become the only professional body to allow its members and students to change their personal details, pay fees and subscriptions and enter examinations online. Last month, ACCA also launched ACCAdemy.com, an interactive lifelong learning site for professional development, and announced plans for a virtual campus for student training and an e-procurement initiative with Barclays.

Mark Protherough, ACCA's Head of Student Affairs, said: "In 1999, more than 45,000 students around the world took the decision to embark on ACCA training. The main ACCA

scheme has a new modern syllabus designed for the needs of business in the 21st century and enables students to obtain degrees in applied accounting from Oxford Brookes University.

"Now students interested in any of the ACCA qualifications can get all the information they need from ACCA's website and then register and track the progress of their applications on line. This development is another part of the move to make ACCA easy to do business with. It will improve global access to learning and professional qualifications."

For further information, please contact:

Ross Midgley, Finance and IT Director 020 7396 5717

Mark Protherough, Head of Student Affairs Division 020 7396 5806

Bob Reynolds, Head of Communications 020 7396 5751

ACCA and Oxford Brookes University announce joint MBA plan

Plans for a new joint MBA have been announced by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Oxford Brookes University. This new qualification will be available worldwide from 2001.

It follows the existing agreement between ACCA and Oxford Brookes to offer ACCA students the opportunity to qualify for a BSc in Applied Accounting. Both institutions have now agreed to strengthen their strategic links through the development of a postgraduate qualification designed for ACCA members. Preliminary work has begun on the new MBA.

ACCA and Oxford Brookes enjoy outstanding reputations for their experience in working with the private and public sectors on a global scale. Both see the importance of forming alliances between education providers in order to offer high quality, vocationally focused courses to students, irrespective of location, using a variety of delivery systems. Accordingly a new ACCA-Oxford Brookes institute is being planned within the University to develop the MBA and other potential joint ventures.

Jim Bradshaw, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, comments: "We have seen in recent years the formation of various groups, partnerships and alliances between universities. As far as I am aware this is the first major alliance between a university and a professional body. This is an exciting development which will enable us to develop jointly a new postgraduate qualification designed to meet the needs of students and employers in the financial sector." Anthea Rose, ACCA's Chief Executive, comments "We are delighted with this development. It will give ACCA members the opportunity to extend their set of professional skills with a MBA, designed in partnership with a university which has an outstanding reputation. Together we are changing the nature of global professional education and responding rapidly to meet the needs of professionals worldwide."

For further information, please contact

Bob Reynolds, Head of Communications 020 7 396 5751
0410 709 707

Geoff Holmberg, Liaison Officer, Oxford Brookes 01865
485976

CIMA

CIMA's online bookshop opens for business!

CIMA's virtual bookshop finally went live at the end of July, after months of hard work and behind-the-scenes development. Giving you 24-hour access to CIMA books, the bookshop will help you find information about past, current and future publications. Search by a range of criteria and order direct through your PC.

Kim Ansell, CIMA's Head of Publishing said: 'The new bookshop is totally customer-focused and easy to use. If you know what you are looking for, you can go straight to it by using the simple or advanced search or, if you just want to browse you can use the shop directory as a guide.'

Whether you are an accountant or business person, student or academic, you'll find a wide range of interesting titles to choose from. For effective business solutions, leading-edge topical research and recommended study materials, look no further than CIMA's own virtual bookshop.

We must equip ourselves for change

We must equip ourselves for change, says new CIMA President Mike Jeans, a former Head of UK Consultancy at KPMG and now a special adviser to the firm, was elected as CIMA President at the Institute's Annual General Meeting on Saturday 10 June.

He has long-standing links with CIMA, having spoken regularly at courses and conferences and served on various committees, including the Swinson Committee, which reviewed regulation of the profession.

John Chester, CIMA Chief Executive, said: 'Our Members and staff have the strongest confidence in Mike to build on CIMA's success over the coming year. We look to his experience in both management accountancy and top-level consulting to root CIMA firmly as the global professional qualification, for tomorrow's business leaders.'

Mike Jeans, who has already served as President of the Institute of Management Consultancy, said: 'All too often, Presidents fail to make a significant impact due to the short timescale at their disposal. Therefore, my core aim over the next year is to equip CIMA internally with the capacity to absorb and thrive on change, thus facilitating the implementation of ideas proposed by future Presidents.'

'These steps are essential given the increasingly unpredictable nature of the business environment in which our Members work. Like any Organisation, CIMA will have to be flexible, creative and diverse in order to survive and grow, so we need

systems which will enable CIMA to respond quickly and effectively to changes in the market.'

He concluded: 'This is a particularly exciting time for me to take over as President. CIMA has just launched its new qualification, designed to tackle business requirements even more closely. The challenge before us is to capitalise on this opportunity to enhance the organisation's presence in the consciousness of the business world. The new qualification will enable CIMA to continue to arm students with strategic leadership across all business disciplines, a vital tool for success in the evolving knowledge-based economy.'

Mike Jeans joined KPMG Management Consultancy in 1970 and became a partner in 1981, and a member of the KPMG UK Board in 1993. In 1994, he became Head of UK Consultancy and later a special adviser to KPMG and an Independent Management Consultant. He is now also an Independent Business Adviser to the Planning Inspectorate.

He was co-opted to CIMA's Council in 1994 and was Vice-Chairman of the Research and Technical Committee from 1994-96 and a member of the Law and Parliamentary Committee from 1996-97. From 1996 to 1999 he served as Chairman of the Professional Practice Committee and became founder Chairman of the Members' Services Committee in 1999. He is currently a member of the Executive and Appointments Committees. Mike Jeans was also involved in the early development (1986 onwards) of Activity Based Costing, working with CAM-i and Professors Cooper and Kaplan.

From 1983 to 1998, Mike was a Member of Council of the Institute of Management Consultancy (formerly the Institute of Management Consultants), and was President in 1990-91. He is a founder Member and Warden of the Company of Management Consultants, and has also been a Member of Court of the Haberdashers' Company since 1985 and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants. He has been a Governor (1987-97) and Chairman (1991-97) of the Boys' School Committee of the Haberdashers' Aske's Schools, Elstree.

CIPFA

Seminar - Current Developments in Central Government Finance

CIPFA's one-day course on Current Developments in Central Government Finance, held on 22 May, was attended by practitioners from a wide range of central government departments, agencies and NDPBs.

Kevin Dixon, HM Treasury, spoke on the far-reaching implications of the Government's Modernising Agenda for financial management in central government, while Ian Carruthers, also from the Treasury, reported the progress to date on the staged approach to producing Whole of Government Accounts and producing a set of consolidated accounts for central government.

From the National Audit Office, Brian Grubb gave a comprehensive presentation on current technical developments, including accounting standards, auditing standards and management accounting issues.

Gordon Adam, HM Treasury, covered a key area for all managers and practitioners in central government: how the Corporate Governance Agenda can be advanced in central government.

The Treasury's Professor Likieman summarised the current position with a clear and detailed picture of the developments across central government finance, including resource budgeting, the spending review and developing the finance role.

Under the chairmanship of CIPFA's Central Government Panel Chairman John Codling, the two Open Forum sessions produced discussion across the whole range of subjects. Contributions from delegates included valuable insights into the practical implications of a number of the current developments in central government finance.

CIPFA provides a comprehensive range of professional, financial and managerial development programmes every year. These aim to meet the needs of accountants (whether CIPFA members or not) as well as managers from other disciplines, working in the public services.

If you would like further details of CIPFA's programme of courses, please ring Alex Aarons on 020 7543 5751.

[Cabinet Secretary addresses CIPFA Conference](#)

Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service Sir Richard Wilson delivered a keynote speech on leadership in the public service at CIPFA's annual conference in June. In his talk 'The Public Servant in a Time of Change', he emphasised the importance of better leadership and management skills as the tools essential for public servants to succeed in an age when their 'consumers' are demanding more.

Sir Richard Wilson also urged public servants to find ways of celebrating their successes. "I want this conference to inaugurate a new era in which we sing the praises of the public services. We ought to have a sense of pride in what we do."

[Presentation by Treasury on Whole of Government Accounts](#)

Ian Carruthers, Head of the Whole of Government Accounts Project at HM Treasury gave a presentation to CIPFA's Technical Committee on 11 May highlighting progress to date on the development of whole of government accounts and projecting forward to future milestones. He impressed upon Committee members that although the first full year of complete whole of government accounts is not until 2005-2006, a considerable amount of work is needed in defining the parameters of the public sector, in harmonising accounting treatments between different sectors and in devising efficient data collection systems. A close relationship between the Treasury and CIPFA will be vital throughout this work.

[PMPA News](#)

CIPFA is one of the 26 associate members of the two-year-old Public Management and Policy Association and also underwrites the organization. The associate members, all of which actively promote the PMPA to their members and are

represented on the PMPA's Policy Board (Chairman: Sir Michael Bichard, DfEE), are

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)

Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ACOP)

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

Association of University Administrators (AUA)

British Accounting Association-Public Services Special Interest Group

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

Chief Executives' Forum

Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA)

Civil Service College

Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP)

FDA

Federation of Property Societies

Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA)

Institute of Health Services Management (IHSM)
National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)

NCVO

National Directorate of Police Training (NPT)

Public Administration Committee of the Joint University Council

Society of Chief Personnel Officers (SOCPO)

Society of Education Officers (SEO)

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE)

Secondary Heads Association (SHA)

Strategic Planning Society Public Management Forum

TEC National Council

[New Publications](#)

The PMPA publishes a newsletter (PMPA Review); a refereed journal (Public Money & Management); and Reports (for example Sir Christopher Foster's May 2000 Two Concepts of Accountability: Is a Bridge Possible Between Them?)

The August 2000 issue of the PMPA Review contains articles on:

The Future of Public Audit

Neighbourhood Renewal

Changing to the Euro

Reform of the Criminal Justice System

E-Government

and Tony Wright MP on Joining-up Accountability.

The July 2000 (Volume 20, Number 3) issue of Public Money & Management includes:

External Regulation and Best Value in Local Government
George Boyne

Coping with Ambiguity: Reconciling External Legitimacy and Organisational Implementation in Performance Measurement
Alan Lawton, David McKeivitt and Michelle Millar

Financial Implications of Major Legislation Michael Chisholm

Privatized Utilities and the 'Third Way' Alan Jones
The Rapid Increase in Generic Prices in the UK: A Failure of Competition or Regulation? Adrian Kay and Darrin Baines
Observing Chief Executives: Analysing Behaviour to Explore CrossSectoral Differences Charlotte Dargie

Just How New Is Best Value? John Keenan

The UK Landfill Tax: Financial Implications for Local Authorities John R. Morris, Paul S. Phillips and Adam D. Reed
[Lectures](#)

The PMPA runs an extremely popular evening lecture programme (priority for places to PMPA members). Forthcoming speakers include:

Roger Singleton (CBE, Chief Executive: Barnardos on Do Voluntary Agencies Know They are NGOs (13 September 2000, London).

David Henshaw (Chief Executive: Liverpool City Council) on The Future Role of Local Authority Chief Executives (7 November 2000, London).

Ewart Wooldridge (Principal: Civil Service College) on Understanding the Psychological Contract in the Civil Service (5 December 2000, London).

Lecturers in 2001 include Professor Vernon Bogdanor (Oxford); Sir Richard Wilson (Head of the Home Civil Service); Rod Aldridge (Chief Executive: Capita); Steve Orchard (Chief Executive: Legal Services Commission).

In addition to lectures, the PMPA runs workshops (for example The Future of LEAs on 26 July 2000), an annual conference (Evidence-Based Policy and Management in June 2000) and sounding boards.

Membership of the PMPA costs £69.50 a year (£50 to members

of the associated bodies listed above); there is also a corporate membership scheme. If you would like further information, please contact Michaela Lavender, PMPA, 3 Robert Street, London WC2N 6BH. Tel.: 020 7543 5702. Email: michaela.lavender@cipfa.org.

ICAEW

SEPTEMBER 2000 IMPLEMENTATION DATE FOR INSTITUTE'S NEW QUALIFICATION

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales is on course for a September 2000 starting date for its innovative new syllabus.

The decision to implement the new qualification this autumn follows extensive consultation with businesses and professional firms. It represents a significant milestone in the Institute's drive to produce a qualification fit for the new millennium. Welcoming the announcement, Secretary General of the Institute, John Collier said-

"The new ACA will be both rigorous and relevant to the needs of students.

I believe that by taking the time to get this qualification right, we have produced a winning proposition and one that will position our qualification for a fast moving business world. The Institute's ACA has long been the benchmark for finance and business professionals. In order to maintain this, we need to innovate to reflect a changing market place. We also need to maintain the high standards we have set. The new qualification meets both these objectives."

Professor Brian Chiplin, Executive Director of the Institute's Education and Training directorate said:

"The ACA will now consist of a Professional and an Advanced Stage, providing the breadth of learning and experience that the modern accountant and business adviser needs. The Professional Stage will ensure that students continue to receive a firm grounding in those core skills integral to the ACA, the Advanced Stage will have a more vocational focus reflecting the diverse requirements of modern business.

The new training courses will commence in September with the first exams taking place in December.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Agreeing the draft loyal address to the Queen Mother on her 100th birthday, reporting on the new ACA qualification and the response to the Company Law Review were all agenda items at July's meeting of Council at Chartered Accountants' Hall.

A full chamber agreed unanimously to Douglas Llambias' call for the loyal address to be accompanied by a gift of the Queen Mother's favourite Champagne. The draft address was also agreed.

Mark Spofforth and Brian Chiplin, of the Education and Training Directorate, reported on the current situation regarding the new ACA qualification. The qualification, which

is due to be launched on 1st September, was reported to be on schedule, with much of the supporting material in production. Mr Spofforth emphasised the fact that some consultation had taken place between the directorate and tutors who would teach the material and the emphasis was very much on 'tutors teaching our material, not the other way round.'

Professor Chiplin added that the tutors were wholeheartedly supporting the Institute's efforts, both publicly and privately, and that he was struck by the very high quality achieved in such a short period of time.

He said that the qualification would embark on a process of 'continuous improvement' and that early milestones included progress tests in December, the launch of the Advanced Stage in July 2001 and the provision of full online learning support, including online discussion groups, by September 2001.

He drew attention to the positive write-up given the new qualification in the Guide to Accountancy Training on Accounting Web and said that he saw this as independent corroboration of the worth of the qualification.

Much debate was stimulated by the draft response to large company issues raised in the Company Law Review consultation document.

The debate centred upon the limitation of auditor liability with Nigel Turnbull and Douglas Llambias, both highlighting their concerns. Mr Llambias said he was worried that companies would be seen to be furthering the wishes of shareholders at the expense of working in the public interest and recommended the adoption of limited liability by contract, rather than imposition. The President, Graham Ward, addressed these concerns saying that the favoured remedy outlined in the response was fair and had been proposed by an independent committee, after wide consultation and buy-in from consumer groups.

The response was approved and the Chairman thanked the President, on behalf of Council, for his personal efforts in drafting the response. The Chairman brought the attention of Council to the news that Sir David Tweedie had been appointed first Chairman of the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC), welcoming the appointment of such a widely respected individual, before moving on to discuss Any Other Business.

The situation in Zimbabwe was cited by Rob Bryant as a cause for concern in the light of the imminent grant of reciprocal status to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Zimbabwe (ICAZ). Mr Bryant said that in a totalitarian state, the independence of the ICAZ could not be guaranteed and, as such, it should not be granted reciprocal status. John Collier, Secretary General, answered, saying that the question of reciprocity dealt with the standard of the qualification and the value of the services provided, and he had seen no evidence for a review of the Institute's current position on the matter. He was supported by Michael Mallet, who held that as a wider political issue, it was not a matter for Council.

The confidential stage of the meeting dealt with approving proposals for the Institute's Strategic Planning Process and sought views on draft strategic themes as well as hearing the Management Team's current assessment of key risks facing the Institute.

Further information is available from the Informal Note on Council published by the Executive Office.

Simon Keymer - News Editor, Communications.

ICAS

SCOTS CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT TO HEAD GLOBAL STANDARDS BODY

Sir David Tweedie, current Chairman of the UK Accounting Standards Board, is to head the Board of the new International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC). He will also act as IASC's Chief Executive.

A new constitution for IASC was adopted when the International Federation of Accountants met in Edinburgh in May. The Committee is expected to lead the way in establishing global Accounting Standards.

Commenting on Sir David's appointment, Grenville Johnston, President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, said:

"I am delighted that the international community has recognised the undoubted value of having a Scots CA at the helm of IASC. David embodies all of the qualities which we look for in our members: accounting expertise, business acumen and professional integrity."

For further information, please contact:

David Brew, ICAS, T: 0131 225 5673
Gordon Robertson - FMS Public Relations, T: 0131 624 5035/07909 900485

Corrections from Issue 70

[AAT Diploma in Government Finance](#)

An article in the CCAB viewpoint of the last edition of *Gazette* gave details of several candidates who have passed their diploma in Government Finance at the School of Finance and Management, Worthy Down. There are in fact only two candidates who have so far completed their diploma. They are

Ken Berry
Stephen Green

The other candidates mentioned are at various stages of their studies. Apologies for any confusion caused.

[Exam Results](#)

Julie Hall who passed CIMA Stage 4 at the last sitting was listed as working for MOD. In fact she works for Department of Health.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANCY SERVICE



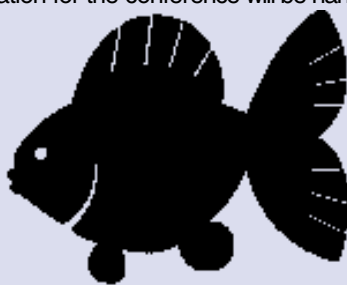
QUALIFIED CONFERENCE 14 - 15 NOVEMBER 2000

CHAMBERLAIN TOWER HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM

This is advance notice to let you know the date and location of the next GAS Qualified Conference.

The conference will contain the usual mix of government and accountancy related subjects including latest developments in Government Accounting, and syndicate sessions covering a variety of topics including CPD. There will also be a sponsored social event.

Further details will be sent soon to those eligible to attend and invitations including application forms will be circulated via Heads of Profession. Administration for the conference will be handled by Thames Management Services.



HOAPs IN MAIN DEPARTMENTS

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mr D V Fisher, Director of Audit Consultancy and Management Services Division, Room 332, 19 - 29 Woburn Place, London WC1H 0LU.
Tel: 020 7273 8889. Fax: 020 7273 8890

Cabinet Office, Miss R Tollitt, Room 403, Queen Anne's Chambers, Broadway, London SW1H 9JS.
Tel: 020 7210 0563. Fax: 020 7210 0591

Crown Prosecution Service, Mr J Levy (acting HOAP), London Branch 1, 50 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7EX.
Tel: 020 7796 8458. Fax: 020 7796 8690

Dept. for Culture Media and Sport, Miss K Hosker, Head of Accountancy and RAB Development Team, 2 - 4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH.
Tel: 020 7211 6348. Fax: 020 7211 6227

HM Customs and Excise, Mr G Fox, Deputy Accountant General, Alexander House, 21 Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6AL.
Tel: 01702 366122. Fax: 01702 367055

Ministry of Defence, Mr S J Kerley, Director of Internal Audit, Room 132, Pinesgate West, Lower Bristol Road, Bath BA1 5AB. Tel: GTN 01225 44 9640. Fax: GTN 01225 44 9639

Dept. For Education and Employment, Mr P Connor, Divisional Manager of the Financial Accounting Division, Room CS1, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2DN.
Tel: 01928 794203. Fax: 01928 794297.

Dept. of the Environment, Transport and Regions, Mr A Beard, Zone 10/D10, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE.
Tel: GTN 3533 6901. Fax: GTN 3533 6929.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr M J Brown, Chief Accountant Finance Department, Edward Watts Building,
Hanslope Park, Milton Keynes MK19 7BJ.
Tel: 01908 511 532/020 7238 4005. Fax: 01908 515561

Home Office, Miss J Brooks, Accounts Branch, India Buildings, Water Street, Liverpool L2 0UR
Tel: 0151 224 6642. Fax: 0151 224 6666

Inland Revenue, Mr D Swift, IRSW REO HQ, 3rd Floor, Longbrook House, New North Road, Exeter EX4 4UA.
Tel: 01392 663279. Fax: 01392 216803.

DFID, Mr R A Elias, Head of Internal Audit Department, 1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE.
Tel: 020 7238 4678. Fax: 020 7238 4679

Lord Chancellor's Dept. Mr A Pay, Room 5.24, Selborne House, 54-60 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6BQ.
Tel: 020 7210 1312. Fax: 020 7210 8880

Scottish Executive, Mr I M Smith, Finance Group, Room 3-B65, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.
Tel: GTN 7188 47351. Fax: GTN 7188 47287

Dept. of Social Security, Mr J Codling, Finance Director, Room GW06, Quarry House
Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UA
Tel: 01132 342 229 Fax: 01132 324 235

Dept. of Trade and Industry, Mr K Hills, FRM3, Room 3.B.33, 1-19 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET.
Tel: 020 7215 6368. Fax: 020 7215 6357.

HM Treasury, Mr D Loweth, Central Accountancy Team, 4th Floor, Allington Towers, 19 Allington Street,
London SW1E 5EB.
Tel: 020 7270 4508. Fax: 020 7270 4545.

The National Assembly for Wales, Mr L A Pavelin, Head of Financial Accountability Division, Room 2/075,
Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ.
Tel: 029 2082 3383. Fax: 029 2082 5390.

HOAPS IN SMALL DEPARTMENTS

Central Office of Information, Mr K E Williamson, Principal Establishment and Finance Officer, 4th Floor,
Hercules House, Hercules Road, London SE1 7DU.
Tel: GTN 3528 8271 Fax: 020 7261 8555

Charity Commission for England and Wales, Mr K Ashford, 2nd Floor,
20 Kings Parade, Queens Dock, Liverpool L3 4DQ.
Tel: 0151 703 1573. Fax: 0151 703 1564

Forestry Commission, Mr K Gliddon, Director of Corporate Services, Room 117, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh
EH12 7AT.
Tel: 0131 334 0303 extn. 6438 Fax: 0131 316 4896

Export Credits Guarantee Department, Mr R J Healey, P O Box 2200, Room 1329, 2 Exchange Tower,
Harbour Exchange Square, London E14 9GS.
Tel: 020 7512 7812. Fax: 020 7512 7284

House of Lords, Mr A Underwood, Management Accountant, Accountant's Office, London SW1A 0PW.
Tel: GTN 219 6017. Fax: GTN 219 2369

HM Land Registry, Miss H Jackson, Room 401, 30 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2 3PH.
Tel: GTN 3504 4551. Fax: 020 7331 8330

Dept. of National Savings, Mr R Douglas, Room 473, National Savings, Charles House, Kensington High Street,
London W14 8QH.
Tel: 020 7605 9368 Fax: 020 7605 9353

Office for National Statistics, Mr A Goldsmith, Room D4/05, 1 Drummond Gate, London SW1V 2QQ.
Tel: 020 7533 5901. Fax: 020 7533 5025

Ordnance Survey, Mr M Draffin, Romsey Road, Maybush, Southampton, SO9 4DH
Tel: 023 8079 2844. Fax: 023 8079 2056
Royal Mint, Mr G Davies, Director of Finance, Llanstrisant, Pontyclun, CF72 8YT.
Tel: 01443 623 066. Fax: 01443 623 185

Serious Fraud Office, Mr S Low, Elm House, Room 906, Elm Street, London WC1X 9BJ.
Tel: 020 7239 7058. Fax: 020 7833 5475

Treasury Solicitor's Department, Mr I Harvey, Queen Anne's Chambers, 28 Broadway, London SW1V 9JS.
Tel: GTN 210 3065. Fax: GTN 210 3158

SENIOR PROFESSIONALS

Benefits Agency, Mr J Codling, Finance Director, Room GW06, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds LS2 7UA.
Tel: 01132 324229. Fax: 01132 324235

Child Support Agency, Mr M Davison, Finance Director, Room 157N, Government Buildings,
Benton Park Road, Longbenton.
Tel: 0191 225 7508. Fax: 0191 225 4231

DERA, Mr S Park, Finance Director, Room 2012, AI Building, Ively Road, Farnborough GU14 0LX. Tel: 01252
394714. Fax: 01252 394650

Employment Service, Mr D Pearson, Financial Controller, Financial Division (F3), Level 3, Mayfield Court, 56
West Street, Sheffield S1 4EP.
Tel: GTN 5301 5808. Fax: GTN 5301 5784

Food Standards Agency, Mr I Grattidge, Room 580D, Skipton House, P O Box 25006,
80 London Road, London SE1 6XZ.
Tel: 020 7972 5956. Fax: 020 7972 6555

Intervention Board, Mr C Dennison, Kings House, 33 Kings Road, Reading RG1 3BU.
Tel: 0118 953 2778. Fax: 0118 959 2422

OFGEM, Mr C Juman, 16 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JD.
Tel: 020 7932 5805. Fax: 020 7932 1666

OFSTED, Mr P Jolly, Head of Accounting Services Unit, 3rd Floor, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6SE.
Tel: 020 7421 6534. Fax: 020 7421 6707

Dept. of Health, Mr B Burleigh, RMF 1A, Room 305 Eileen House, 80 - 94 Newington Causeway,
Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6EF.
Tel: 020 7972 2733. Fax: 020 7972 1074

Metropolitan Police Department, Mr R Alexander, Room 0.2.05, Cobalt Square, 1 South Lambeth Road,
London SW8 1SU.
Tel: 020 7230 8437. Fax: 020 7230 9149

NHS ME, Mr J Tomlinson, Room 1, Number 6, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds L52 7HE.
Tel: GTN 513 45421. Fax: 0113 2545473

Office of Fair Trading, Mr J Blakemore, Chancery House, 53 - 64 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1SP.
Tel: 020 7211 8712. Fax: 020 7211 8545

HM Prison Service, Mr S Jenner, Room 211, Abell House, John Islip Street, London SW1P 4LH.
Tel: GTN 217 5559. Fax: GTN 217 5163

Registers of Scotland, Mr J T Clark, Chief Accountant, Meadowbank House, 153 London Road,
Edinburgh EH8 7AU.
Tel: 0131 479 3637. Fax: 0131 479 3928

Civil Service College, Mrs V Archibald, AD 224, Sunningdale Park, Larch Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 0QE.
Tel: 01344 634291. Fax: 01344 634775

Specialist Procurement Services, Mr J Clark, SPS AD/P3, Block 2, Government Buildings, Burghill Road,
Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 6EZ.
Tel: 0117 983 4133 Fax: 0117 983 4104

War Pensions Agency, Mr R F Munslow, Room 6405, North Fylde Central Offices, Norcross,
Blackpool, Lancs FY5 3TA.
Tel: GTN 421 62886. Fax: 01253 330437

DIARY

September

6	Cost Accounting	AAT	Bristol
7&8	Finance for non financial managers	ICAS	Glasgow
12	FRS5 & Private financial initiative	ICAS	Glasgow
	Finance Act 2000	ACCA	London
13	VAT - The Essential Update	ACCA	Kingston upon Thames
20	Career Progression: Interview Techniques and CVs	ACCA	Nottingham
21	Accounting Standards Update	ACCA	Reading
23	Saturday CPD Conference	ACCA	Sheffield
26	Promoting Yourself using Communications Skills	AAT	London

October

2	CPD Investment Appraisal - Basic	SFM	Allington Towes
4	What's new in Accounting and Auditing Standards?	ACCA	Peterborough
5	Communicating and Managing Expectations	ACCA	London
	Recent Developments in Management Accounting	CIMA	London
6	Effective Presentation Skills	ACCA	London
	ABC basics	CIMA	Manchester
9	CPD Investment Appraisal - Advanced	SFM	Allington Towes
	New perspectives in management accounting	CIMA	London
10	Working effectively with IT professionals	CIMA	Windsor
	Dynamic budgetary control	CIMA	London
11	Accounting Standards Update	ACCA	Cardiff
12	Autumn Update for Accountants	ACCA	Birmingham
	VAT Update	AAT	London
16	Project Management	CIMA	Bristol
17	Developing and Motivating Your Staff	ACCA	Warrington
18	Accounting Standards Update	ACCA	Kegworth (Leicestershire)
19	Outsourcing & Shared Services - The Finance Function	ACCA	London
	Spreadsheet skills for forecasting, planning and Budgeting	CIMA	Oxford

October Cont.

20	When and how to communicate through E mail	CIMA	London
23	Financial Awareness - finance for Non-financial managers	ACCA	Weybridge, Surrey
25	Performance measurement	ICAS	Edinburgh
	Accountancy software comparison	CIMA	London am
	The accounting standards masterclass	CIMA	East Midlands
28	Self-Employed Members' Conference	AAT	London
30	Managing successful outsourcing projects	CIMA	London

November

1	Financial Reporting Update	ICAS	Edinburgh
	Presenting, persuading and negotiating skills	CIMA	Windsor, Berks
	Key persuasive techniques for accountants	CIMA	Bristol
2&3	Finance for non financial managers	ICAS	Edinburgh
2	Financial Reporting Update	ICAS	Perth
7	Accounting Techniques for Better Performance Management	ICAS	Edinburgh
	Outsourcing Finance for Success	ACCA	London
	Accounting Standards Update	ACCA	Manchester
9	Accounting Standards Update	ACCA	Preston
10	Beyond budgeting	CIMA	London
11	SAGE accounting	AAT	London
13	Managing people effectively	CIMA	Birmingham
14&15	GAS Qualified Conference		Chamberlain Hotel, Birmingham
17	New accounting standards	CIMA	London
20	Sharpen your time management skills	CIMA	London
21	Financial Reporting Update	ICAS	Glasgow
	Financial Reporting: a refresher	ACCA	London
	What's new in Accounting Standards	ACCA	Birmingham
25	Audit and Accounting Update	AAT	London

December

2	The Power of Professional Presentations	AAT	London
5	What's new in Accounting Standards	ACCA	Southampton
	Accounting standards in depth	CIMA	Bucks/Berks
8	When and how to communicate through E mail	CIMA	London
11	Caught in a Web? A guide through Business E commerce	ACCA	London
12	Activity based cost management implementation Workshop	CIMA	London
13	Christmas Social and VAT Pitfalls	ACCA	Cardiff

VACANCIES FOR YEAR 2000

Closing Date	Dept	Grade / Level	Job	Location	Method/ Location of ad.	No. Applied	No. Interviewed	Appointees
31/1/2000	HSE	HEO- SEO	Accountant	Liverpool	Press	9	3	Paula Moorhouse
28/1/2000	Strategic Rail Authority	Grade 7	Chief Accountant	London	Trawl/Press	33	6	Karen Sanderson
ASAP	Ordnance Survey	SEO	Financial Accountant	Southampton	Press	-	-	Information not available
04/02/00	CSC	EO	Purchase Ledger Administrator	Ascot, Berkshire	Trawl	10	7	Carina Squirrell
04/02/00	Debt Man. Office	Grade 7	Finance Manager	Central London	Press	26	4	Jonathan Cooper
11/02/00	Employment Service	SEO level	Regional Management Accountant	Leeds	Trawl	4	4	Mick Hill
11/2/2000	Driving Standards Ag.	EO	EO, Management Accounts	Nottingham	Trawl/ External Advert	52	5	Darren Hayes
11/2/2000	LCD	Pay Band E	Management Acc. and Development Systems Accountant	London	Trawl	4	2	Name with held
12/02/00	Pesticides Safety Directorate	HEO (Q) £17358 - £25643	Accountant, Finance & Corporate Services Unit	York	Hotline and letter to HOAPs	4	1	Helen Wyatt-Pike
16/02/00	FCO	SEO/C5	Management & Financial Accountants 2 vacancies	London or Milton Keynes	Trawl	2	0	Names With held
18/02/00	DERA	HEO - SEO	Management Accountants	Malvern or Farnborough	Press	25	9	3 candidates appointed - names with held
18/02/00	HMT	Range D	Qualified Accountants	London	Trawl	2	1	No body appointed
19/2/2000	Prison Service	Grade 7	Headquarters Accounts Manager	London	Trawl	5	3	Robert Rodgers
25/02/00	ACAS	HEO	Part qualified Accountant	London	Trawl	1	1	Nobody appointed
03/3/2000	MOD, (SFM) Worthy Down	SEO	Senior Burnham Lectures (2 posts)	Worthy Down, Winchester	Press	2	-	1 vacancy filled - name with held
03/3/2000	Employment Tribunals Service	SEO level	Accountant	London	Trawl	1	5(incl 4 external candidates)	Name withheld

Closing Date	Dept	Grade / Level	Job	Location	Method/ Location of ad.	No. Applied	No. Interviewed	Appointees
06/3/2000	Dept. Of Health	HEO-SEO	Accountant	London	Trawl	2	2	Post not filled
06/3/2000	National Lottery Comm	Grade 7	Head of Administration	London	Trawl	23	5	Name with held
13/3/2000	SSRA	HEO - SEO	Finance Analyst - Franchise Group	London	Trawl/Press	25	7	Muhammad Syed
13/3/2000	DTI	Grade 7	Finance Managers	Central London	Press			No appointment made. Readvertising
17/3/2000	Home Office	Grade 7	Group Accountant	London	Accountancy Age	50	6	Peter Bellaby
24/3/2000	HMP	SEO	Banking & Payables Manager	London	Trawl REF: RN/SEO3/FCA	1	1	Tony Frier
24/3/2000	LCD	HEO	Management Accounts	London	Trawl	2	1	Nicholas Ajaeebu
24/3/2000	LCD	HEO	Accounting Development	London	Trawl	2	2	Marcus Hook
24/3/2000	Inland Revenue	HEO to SEO	Accountancy Posts	Worthing	Trawl	11	6	Nobody appointed
27/3/2000	CEFAS - MAFF	Grade 7	Finance Director	Suffolk	Press A/Age 2/3/2000	32	6	Name with held
31/3/2000	Charity Commission	HEO	Accounts Manager	London EC4	Trawl	4	2	Name with held

REMINDER

The last issue of Gasette included a book appeal on behalf of the AAT.

AAT President Margaret Rawding announced the Millennium Book Appeal at the AAT/NASBE Conference. The objective is to provide study texts to international students where resources are limited. In countries such as Guyana, Maldives and Zambia old well worn textbooks and workbooks are often shared by 10 students; a stark contrast to UK students who have the luxury of their own books.

Primarily AAT are looking for text and workbooks for students although general accountancy books may be acceptable. The age is not as important as condition as they need to withstand the climatic changes in these countries.

Timetable - to gather books to send overseas during September and October in readiness for the start of the academic year. There is still time to send us your old books.

Please send your books via IDS to DART, HM Treasury, 4th Floor, Allington Towers, 19 Allington Street, LONDON SW1E 5EB.

A big thank you to those who have already responded.

REMEMBER THE APPEAL IS NOT JUST FOR AAT BOOKS

TECHNICAL UPDATE No. 20

This Technical Update describes developments arising in the period from May to July 2000. Not a great deal has happened on the ASB front, but the Update considers a couple of domestic issues, in particular, issues arising on the application of DAO(GEN) 3/00 (see Technical Update No 19) which deals with the disclosure requirements for salaries and pensions.

Papers issued by the ASB

In the period, the ASB has issued an exposure draft on Interest methods of depreciation, and there have been a few documents from the UITF.

The exposure draft was issued on 22 June, following a period of discussion within the Board. The ED proposes amendments to FRSs 10 and 15 which have the effect of outlawing the use of so-called interest methods of depreciation which take account of the time value of money, and result in lower depreciation charges in the early years of an asset's useful life compared to those in the latter years. The annuity method is one such method. The exposure period ends on 25 August. Departments and bodies currently using interest methods of depreciation will need to be aware of the proposals.

The UITF's documents are (a) Abstract 23 Application of the Transitional Rules in FRS 15, (b) Abstract 24 Accounting for start-up costs and (c) information sheet 39 Employee share schemes. This last document is unlikely to have many implications for central government. It amends UITF Abstract 17 EmployeeShareOptions.

Abstract 23 was issued on 18 May, and deals with the prior-period adjustment required by paragraph 108 of FRS 15. The UITF has concluded that the adjustment should be restricted to the effects of treating separately components of an asset that meet specified conditions. It should not embrace changes to the useful economic lives or residual values of the remainder of the asset. Abstract 23 is effective for accounting periods ending on or after 23 March 2000.

Abstract 24 was issued on 22 June and considers the treatment of start-up costs which cannot be included as part of the cost of a fixed asset. It requires such start-up costs to be accounted for on the same basis as similar costs incurred as part of an entity's on-going activities. If there are no such similar costs, start-up costs which do not satisfy the definition of an asset should be recognised as an expense when incurred. The effective date of the Abstract is 23 July 2000.

Other ASB news

Debate on the proposals on deferred tax outlined in FRED 19 (see Technical Update 18) continues. A draft FRS is expected during the summer.

There has also been discussion on FRED 20 Retirement benefits (see Technical Update 18) in particular on the question of multi-employer schemes. The proposals in FRED 20 are far-

reaching and the Treasury is assessing the potential impact across the public sector as a whole. More information will be given in future Technical Updates.

FRED 21 Accounting policies (see Technical Update 18) continues its slow progress. An accounting standard is expected by the end of the year; its requirements will be incorporated into the resource accounting manual and any other guidance on accounting within central government.

Details of how to obtain any ASB documents are given on the ASB's website at <http://www.asb.org.uk>.

Domestic issues

The Treasury has received a number of enquiries regarding the application of DAO(GEN) 3/00, which considers the disclosure requirements for salaries and pensions in the accounts of trading funds and NDPBs. Although the arrangements for departments were agreed as part of the initial discussions, it now appears that similar agreements were not reached with trading funds and NDPBs. As a result of the application of the Data Protection Act, these organisations will only be able to disclose information on named individuals if they have obtained prior consent from those individuals. Trading funds and NDPBs will thus need to consult those individuals whose information they intend to disclose as failure to do so runs the risk of legal challenge under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Where an individual withholds consent, the Cabinet Office has recommended that "consent to disclosure withheld" should be shown against that individual's name. This may, in extreme cases, mean that no information on salaries and pensions can be given.

An addendum to DAO(GEN) 3/00 has been drafted and will be issued shortly (it may already have been issued by the time this edition of GAZETTE is published).

DAO(GEN) 7/00 was issued on 23 June 2000. It provides guidance on the additional paragraph to be added to the statement on the system of internal financial control to address the application of the recommendations of the Turnbull committee, as well as tidying up one or two loose ends from the original guidance DAO(GEN) 13/97