

# Career Guide for Accounting Majors

Cohen Career Center Primary Contact & Liaison for Accounting:  
Virginia Damron, Assistant Director, Business Careers, Accounting and Finance  
[vmdamron@wm.edu](mailto:vmdamron@wm.edu) 757-221-3234



## Introduction





Thank you for reviewing this guide to Career Planning for Accounting majors. The Cohen Career Center is your partner in the educational process. We provide access to career development programs, services, connections, and resources, empowering you to pursue your post-graduate plans and navigate lifelong career changes. This guide offers you specific resources and strategies tailored for your Accounting major. The Cohen Career Center partners with the Raymond A. Mason School of Business to provide targeted career advising resources for business students. As career development professionals, all members of the Cohen Career Center advising team are accessible to students from all majors and career interests. In addition to this generalist role, our staff members are also responsible for unique career and industry liaison roles.

## Core Competencies for Accounting Majors

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) compiles research data from employers and recruiting professionals to determine the key career expectations for recent graduates. These core competencies are a list of skills required by a majority of employers hiring candidates for internship and entry level roles across industries and functional areas. The following infographic provides specific detail for each of the eight core competencies.

As you build your resume, draft your cover letter, and prepare for interviews, consider the following competencies as they relate to your specific background and experience. Employers are looking for candidates with the ability to articulate and/or demonstrate these skills. In addition to these comprehensive skills, following are specific recommendations for opportunities to highlight your skills as an Accounting major to prospective employers.

NACE Competency	Definition:	Strategies for ACCOUNTING majors :
 <p><b>Critical Thinking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues</li> <li>• Make decisions, overcome problems</li> <li>• Obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the skills to interpret business situations when you take <b>BUAD 350 (Intro to Business Analytics)</b> as part of the block</li> <li>• Learn and understand <b>accounting terminology</b></li> </ul>
 <p><b>Oral &amp; Written Communication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly</li> <li>• Effectively communicate to persons inside and outside the organization</li> <li>• Demonstrates public speaking skills</li> <li>• Can write and edit written pieces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign up for a <b>mock interview</b> through your <b>Tribe Careers</b> account to practice your oral &amp; communication skills with a professional</li> <li>• Develop a well-written <b>resume &amp; cover letter</b> &amp; have it reviewed by a Cohen career advisor</li> <li>• Attend a Cohen workshop or schedule a 1-on-1 appointment to learn <b>networking skills</b> to conduct informational interviews with W&amp;M alumni, employers, &amp; recruiters.</li> </ul>

 <p><b>Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to work with diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles &amp; viewpoints</li> <li>• Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers</li> <li>• Negotiate and manage conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in <b>case competitions</b> to acquire teamwork &amp; negotiation skills.</li> <li>• Join a student organization, like the <b>Wayne F. Gibbs Accounting Society</b>, to build relationships with peers who have common interests and are from diverse backgrounds</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Digital Technology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task</li> <li>• Demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the appropriate accounting software when you take <b>BUAD 301 (Financial Reporting &amp; Analysis)</b></li> <li>• Take <b>BUAD 492 (Accounting Information Systems)</b> as one of your electives to learn the latest technology for the profession</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals</li> <li>• Use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others</li> <li>• Use empathetic skills to guide, motivate, organize, prioritize, and delegate work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead a group project</b> for a class assignment. Recognize the strengths of others to delegate and distribute the work fairly.</li> <li>• <b>Mentor a younger student</b> and help guide that peer by pointing out appropriate resources: classes to take, clubs to join.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Professionalism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits</li> <li>• Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior</li> <li>• Acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete 1 or more <b>internships</b> to develop the needed skills to succeed in the workplace.</li> <li>• Take <b>BUAD 304 (Not-for-Profit Accounting)</b> as one of your electives</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Career Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired</li> <li>• Identify and explore career goals</li> <li>• Recognize areas necessary for professional growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a strategy for earning your <b>CPA license</b>. Formulate a plan &amp; timeline of how you will meet the educational requirements to complete <b>150 academic credit hours</b>. Review <a href="http://AICPA.org">AICPA.org</a> for more information.</li> <li>• Utilize <b>Executive Partners (EPs)</b> and professors to learn more about the profession</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Global &amp; Intercultural Fluency</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations &amp; religions</li> <li>• Demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity and respectful interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Study abroad</b> to develop an appreciation of other cultures and educational systems. Check with the <b>Reves International Center for Studies</b> for opportunities.</li> <li>• Consider adding the official designation of <b>"International Emphasis"</b> to your BBA degree. Consult with the Undergraduate Business Office &amp; the Business Majors Curriculum Guide for the requirements.</li> </ul>

## What should I be doing to get ahead?

### TRIBE CAREERS

- W&M's jobs and internships database. Tribe Careers is where employers post their jobs, where you search for positions that interest you, and where you submit your applications. Make sure to update your profile, and upload the latest copy of your resume. Tribe Careers is where you also learn of upcoming events and RSVP for career panels and employer information sessions.

### STAY INFORMED

- **Accounting/Finance Newsletter** – Sign up to receive Cohen's weekly newsletter through your Tribe Careers account.

### STAY INVOLVED

- **Wayne F. Gibbs Accounting Society** – Better known as the Gibbs Society, Gibbs is a student-run organization designed for all students interested in accounting careers. Sign up for their listserv to learn of their meetings, special events. To find the current point of contact, go to the Mason Student Organization’s page:  
<http://mason.wm.edu/programs/undergraduate/community/studentorgs/index.php>.

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES for ACCOUNTING MAJORS

- **Employer Tables & Informal Chats.** During the FALL and SPRING semester, certain organizations sponsor employer tables in the Sadler lobby and Mason lobby. PwC’s table has a walk-up resume review in the Mason lobby. Deloitte reserves time for you to speak informally with their recruiter at The Daily Grind. Check your Tribe Careers account for when and where they will be on campus.
- **Accounting Edge.** Co-Sponsored by the Gibbs Society and the Cohen Career Center, Accounting Edge happens at the start of every FALL semester, usually the first week of classes. An informal 2-night event, a select number of accounting firms plus W&M accounting majors come together to educate interested students about the profession. For more information and learn the current event date, contact either Gibbs or Cohen.
- **Meet the Firms.** Held every FALL semester, this half-day accounting career expo is co-sponsored by the Cohen Career Center and the Graduate Career Management Center (GCMC) in the Mason School. The morning consists of a series of career panels given by accounting professionals who discuss topics such as the different fields of accounting: audit, tax, advisory, and forensic, and how to “ace a case” interview, among others. The afternoon involves an informal networking session where students can speak with employers and learn more about their organizations.

## Employers

Following are employers who are actively recruiting, interviewing, and/or hiring William & Mary students with backgrounds in Accounting. This list represents a small sample of the organizations recruiting for accounting positions. The average reported, first-destination salary for William & Mary Accounting graduates is **\$55,822.67**. **\$35,000-\$65,000** was the reported salary range for Accounting graduates in Accounting roles.

<p><b>Capital One*+</b>  <b>CohnReznick, LLP</b>  <b>Clearsight Advisors*+</b>  <b>Deloitte*+</b>  <b>Elliot Davis Decosimo</b>  <b>Ernst &amp; Young (EY) *+</b>  <b>FTI Consulting*+</b>  <b>Grant Thornton*+</b>  <b>Johnson Lambert*+</b>  <i>*Organizations that have posted positions and/or held info sessions on-campus</i></p>	<p><b>The Kenrich Group, LLC*+</b>  <b>KPMG*+</b>  <b>National MS Society</b>  <b>Navigant Consulting*+</b>  <b>PricewaterhouseCoopers*+</b>  <b>RSM US LLP</b>  <b>UPS</b>  <b>Veris Consulting*+</b>  <i>+Organizations with an active on-campus recruiting presence (on-campus interviews and career fairs)</i></p>
---	--

## Job Titles

Certified public accountant (CPA)	Assurance manager	Personal financial advisor
Government accountant	Information technology auditor	Cost estimator
Management accountant	Private accountant	Tax examiner
Corporate Accountant	Financial analyst	Revenue tax specialist
Internal auditor	Budget analyst	Auditor
External auditor	Financial manager	Financial auditor

*(Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook)*

## Other Resources

---

### Learn more about the Accounting profession:

- **Vault** – Vault contains information on the Top 50 Accounting Firms plus 2 career guides devoted to accounting. You can also find resources on Case Interviewing. (*Access Vault from your Tribe Careers account by searching for the heading “External Job Resources”*).
- **Candid Careers** – Watch short videos of individuals who work in the accounting field. Hear directly from them on what a typical work day is like, pros and cons of the job, and their recommendations for young professionals. (*Access Candid Careers from the Cohen website under the heading of Career/Major Exploration*).
- **O\*NET Online** – Read in-depth information on specific accounting fields. Learn about education requirements employment trends, and average salaries on the national, state, and local level.

### Professional Associations:

Exactly what is a professional association and why should it matter to me? Professional associations serve as the formal organization for a profession, think of it as a professional “club.” Professional associations set the standard for the industry. They also host workshops and webinars to meet the ongoing educational training to maintain your CPA licensure. Students can often join associations at a discounted rate.

- AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants): <http://www.aicpa.org>.
  - Students can join the AICPA for free! Once a member, you are then eligible to apply for several scholarships ranging from \$5K to \$10K. Check ThisWaytoCPA for more information: <https://www.thiswaytocpa.com/>
- NASBA (National Association of State Boards of Accountancy): <https://www.nasba.org/stateboards>

## ANN MARIE TRIBE

amdtribe@email.wm.edu • <https://www.linkedin.com/annmarietribe>  
804-225-XXX6

### EDUCATION

---

**William and Mary**, Williamsburg, VA Expected May 2017  
Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, Finance Concentration  
GPA: 3.62  
Honors: Dean's List, Phi Eta Sigma Freshman Honors Society  
Relevant Coursework: Federal Taxation, Auditing and Internal Controls, Equity Markets and Portfolio Management, Corporate Financial Strategy

### ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE

---

**Capital Group Companies** Norfolk, VA  
Accounting Intern May – Aug 2016

- Collaborated with senior staff to assist in the development of risk assessments and audit plans
- Participated in select portions of internal controls and internal/external audits
- Analyzed financial transactions including cash, income and expenses to assess tax implications of foreign market activities
- Attended weekly professional skills development workshop

**Deloitte National Leadership Conference** Westlake, TX  
Participant July 8 – 11, 2015

- Engaged in interactive workshops designed to develop leadership skills and gain in-depth knowledge about the accounting profession
- Networked with Deloitte executives to build communication skills and develop professional relationships

**Deloitte FanTAXtic Competition** (*formerly known as Deloitte Tax Challenge*) Charlottesville, VA  
Team Member Sept 2014 – Jan 2015

- Represented William and Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business as part of a 5-member team
- Competed in an intensive tax case study simulation, presenting solution to a board of Deloitte tax professionals
- Trained for six months with Professor James Smith to memorize Internal Revenue Service tax codes, practice composing professional memos, and strengthen team work skills
- Selected as one of only nine regional teams in the country to participate in the national competition in Atlanta, GA
- Awarded second place out of a total of 77 teams nationwide

### COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

---

Women in Business Club Jan 2015 – present  
Wayne F. Gibbs Accounting Society Sept 2014 – present

- President (Mar 2015 –present)
- Co Vice-President (Mar 2014 – Feb 2015)

William and Mary Division 1, Women's Basketball Sept 2013 – May 2015