BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Accounting for Non-Accountants: Recording, Budgets, Controls

22 November – 3 December 2027
Los Angeles (USA)



Accounting for Non-Accountants: Recording, Budgets, Controls

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Accounting for non-accountants is the study of how organisations record transactions, prepare financial statements, budget and control their money, explained for managers without a finance background. This two-week course is for mid-level non-finance managers, and its final deliverable is a mini financial report on a sample company, containing adjusted statements, a simple budget and recommendations, presented for peer review.

Introduction

The course rests on three references. The IFRS Conceptual Framework sets out the purpose of financial reporting and the qualities that make figures useful. IFRS 15 is the standard on revenue from contracts with customers. The COSO Internal Control – Integrated Framework describes the five components of an internal control system. The level is introductory, extended over two weeks so that recording, period-end adjustments, budgeting and controls are practised rather than only statement reading. Teaching combines hands-on exercises on sample transactions with case studies from retail and construction.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish financial accounting from management accounting and identify which statements each user group relies on
- Apply double-entry bookkeeping to record transactions in a journal and ledger and confirm them with a trial balance
- Interpret the income statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement and explain why profit and cash differ
- Apply period-end adjustments for accruals, prepayments, depreciation and provisions to sample accounts
- Compare fixed and variable costs and select a simple budget format to monitor a project or department
- Justify internal control measures such as segregation of duties by linking each to a specific error or fraud risk



Target Audience

- Department and operations managers who control a budget, who must decide whether reported figures support a spending or staffing choice
- Project leads and technical managers who cost their own work, who must judge how overheads and allocations change a project's reported cost
- Sales and commercial managers responsible for revenue targets, who must interpret when a contract's revenue can be recognised
- Administrative and purchasing supervisors who approve payments, who must assess whether controls and authorisation limits are adequate
- Managers newly given profit-and-loss responsibility, who must choose which statement or ratio answers a given question

Course Outline

Day 1: Accounting's Role and the Users of Financial Information

- Financial vs Management Accounting: External Reporting Compared with Internal Decision Support
- Users of Accounting Information: Investors, Lenders, Managers and Their Differing Needs
- Accounting in Organisational Decisions: Turning Transactions into Information Managers Can Use
- Core Statements Overview: Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement
- Reading a Simple Corporate Report: Locating Key Figures in Published Accounts

Day 2: IFRS and the Principles Behind the Numbers

- Accrual vs Cash Basis: When Revenue and Expenses Are Recognised Under Each
- IFRS Conceptual Framework: Qualitative Characteristics That Make Financial Information Useful
- Going Concern, Consistency and Prudence: Assumptions Underlying Every Set of Accounts
- IFRS and IAS Numbering: How the Body of International Standards Is Organised
- Accounting Policies and Estimates: Why Two Organisations Report Similar Events Differently

Day 3: The Accounting Equation and Double-Entry Recording

- Assets vs Liabilities vs Equity: The Three Elements of the Accounting Equation
- Double-Entry Bookkeeping Rules: Debits and Credits for Each Type of Account
- Chart of Accounts: Organising and Coding Accounts for Consistent Classification
- General Journal and Ledger: Recording Entries and Posting Them to Accounts
- Trial Balance Exercise: Recording Basic Transactions and Checking That the Totals Agree

Day 4: The Income Statement and Revenue Recognition

- Revenue vs Operating Expenses: Separating Income Lines from Costs on the Statement
- Income Statement Structure: Order of Lines from Revenue Down to Net Profit
- Gross, Operating and Net Profit: Calculating Each Level of Profit from Sample Figures
- IFRS 15 Five-Step Model: Recognising Revenue from Contracts with Customers
- Mini Income Statement Exercise: Building a Statement from a Set of Sample Transactions



Day 5: The Balance Sheet and Equity

- Current vs Non-Current Classification: Separating Short-Term from Long-Term Assets and Liabilities
- Assets and Liabilities in Depth: Recognition, Measurement and Typical Line Items
- Capital Stock, Retained Earnings and Dividends: Movements in Shareholders' Equity
- Financial Health Indicators: Reading Solvency and Working Capital from the Balance Sheet
- Balance Sheet Construction Exercise: Preparing a Statement from Provided Account Balances

Day 6: The Cash Flow Statement and Liquidity

- Profit vs Cash: Why a Profitable Organisation Can Still Run Short of Cash
- Operating, Investing and Financing Activities: The Three Sections of a Cash Flow Statement
- Cash and Cash Equivalents: Definitions and Day-to-Day Cash Management Practices
- Cash Flow Analysis for Decisions: Spotting Liquidity Pressure Before It Becomes Urgent
- Cash Flow Exercise: Preparing a Simple Statement from Two Balance Sheets

Day 7: Month-End and Year-End Adjustments

- Accruals vs Prepayments: Matching Expenses and Income to the Correct Period
- Deferrals: Treating Cash Received Before Goods or Services Are Delivered
- Depreciation and Amortisation Methods: Straight-Line and Reducing Balance Approaches Explained
- Provisions and Bad Debt Treatment: Recognising Likely Obligations and Doubtful Receivables
- Month-End Reconciliation Exercise: Adjusting Sample Statements and Matching Them to Records

Day 8: Cost Accounting and Budgeting Basics

- Fixed vs Variable Costs: How Each Behaves as Activity Levels Change
- Overheads, Cost Allocation and Absorption: Assigning Indirect Costs to Products or Projects
- Linking Accounting with Planning: How Recorded Figures Feed the Budget
- Performance Monitoring with Budgets: Comparing Planned Figures with Reported Results
- Project Cost Exercise: Analysing Project Costs and Preparing a Simple Budget

Day 9: Internal Controls and Fraud Prevention

- Preventive vs Detective Controls: Stopping Errors Compared with Finding Them Afterwards
- COSO Internal Control Framework: Five Components of an Internal Control System
- Segregation of Duties and Authorisation Hierarchies: Who Records, Approves and Holds Assets
- Error and Fraud Detection: Warning Signs, Common Schemes and Prevention Measures
- Irregularities Case Study: Identifying Accounting Risk Areas in a Sample Organisation



Day 10: Integrated Practice and the Mini Financial Report

- Ratio Analysis vs Trend Analysis: Single-Period Measures Compared with Movement over Time
- Benchmarking and Performance Metrics: Comparing Results with Peers and Internal Targets
- Integrated Exercise: Applying Journal Entries, Adjustments and Statements to One Company
- Decision Recommendations: Using Statement Analysis and Budget Results to Advise Managers
- Mini Financial Report: Finalising, Presenting and Peer-Reviewing the Report with an Action Plan

Skills You Will Gain

- Double-Entry Recording
- Trial Balance Preparation
- Income Statement Reading
- Balance Sheet Interpretation
- Cash Flow Analysis
- Period-End Adjustments
- Cost Behaviour Analysis
- Internal Control Assessment

Why Attend This Course

- From relying on finance colleagues to explain every figure to recording and checking basic transactions independently
- From reading only the profit line to tracing how adjustments, cash flows and equity movements shape the reported result
- From approving budgets on instinct to building a simple budget from cost behaviour and monitoring it against results
- From an unstructured view of the accounts to a mini financial report with recommendations, presented and peer-reviewed

Conclusion

Accounting turns an organisation's daily transactions into statements, budgets and checks that managers can rely on. The course makes three distinctions clear: profit versus cash, accruals versus prepayments, and preventive versus detective controls. Its two weeks leave room to record entries, adjust accounts and build a budget rather than only read finished statements. It suits mid-level managers without a finance background who carry budget or profit responsibility and want working fluency with the figures they approve.

Course FAQs

What is accounting for non-accountants?

Accounting for non-accountants explains, in plain terms, how transactions are recorded and summarised into the income statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement, and how budgets and internal controls use those records, so that managers can read and question figures.



What is the difference between profit and cash in accounting for non-accountants?

Profit is income minus expenses recognised on the accrual basis, whether or not money has moved. Cash is the money actually received and paid. Credit sales, stock purchases and loan repayments make the two differ.

Which standards does the accounting for non-accountants course follow?

The course follows the IFRS Conceptual Framework for reporting principles and IFRS 15 for revenue recognition, and uses the COSO Internal Control – Integrated Framework when examining controls and fraud prevention.

Is accounting for non-accountants training right for a project manager?

Yes. Project managers who cost their work and report against budgets gain most from the sessions on cost behaviour, overhead allocation, accruals and budget monitoring, which link project figures to the organisation's accounts.

What do delegates produce on the accounting for non-accountants course?

Delegates produce a mini financial report on a sample company, containing adjusted statements, a simple budget and recommendations for managers, which they present for peer review together with a personal action plan.

