Closing the tax skills gap: why it matters for your business now

Briefings

September 2026

24 August 2026

As the tax skills gap grows, investing in structured training and professional qualifications can help organisations build resilient teams with the expertise needed to navigate an increasingly complex tax environment.

The tax profession has always evolved alongside legislation, regulation and economic change.

What feels different now is the pace and breadth of that change. Digitalisation, international work, increasingly complex compliance obligations and rising business expectations mean that it has never been so important for tax knowledge to be deeper, broader and more widely shared across teams.

Organisations now operate in an environment where tax knowledge is more valuable than ever. Yet many employers are finding that recruiting and retaining qualified tax professionals is neither quick nor straightforward, prompting a renewed focus on how to build capability from within.

The impact of the tax skills gap

Tax rules and legislation in the UK are changing frequently, while globalisation means more organisations are dealing with international clients and complex supply chains. Technology, data and international tax considerations are now routine parts of day-to-day work, rather than occasional specialist topics.

The consequences of a tax skills gap are not always immediately visible. Compliance deadlines may still be met, and advisory work may continue as usual, but capability gaps often emerge when legislation changes, a key member of staff leaves, succession plans are tested or clients expect more sophisticated advice.

Murat Kurt, Managing Director of Accountancy Assist Ltd, has seen this shift first-hand.

‘Over the last few years, tax has become a much bigger part of the day-to-day role. UK tax rules and legislation keep changing, and everything is getting more international and technology-driven,’ he said.

‘Studying the ATT Qualification has completely changed my professional perspective and the way I advise clients. I now understand each area of tax and can give a better service to my clients; it has been really valuable.’

The growing complexity of tax reinforces the need for investment in skills development. Tax professionals are expected to understand legislation while also navigating technology, data, governance and changing stakeholder expectations. Today’s advisers must combine technical knowledge with commercial awareness and clear communication.

Building capability from within

Addressing these challenges requires a long-term approach. Increasingly, employers are developing talent from within rather than relying solely on external recruitment. Structured training, mentoring and professional qualifications can all help to build sustainable capability.

Murat’s experience highlights the importance of building tax capability across the wider team, particularly in smaller firms where expertise can easily be concentrated in one person. Having completed ATT and progressed to CTA, he now encourages colleagues to follow the same route and spread knowledge more widely.

A structured route to tax expertise

Professional qualifications, such as ATT, provide a recognised pathway into the profession, helping individuals build practical tax expertise while giving employers a clearer route to develop their talent pipeline.

For many practitioners, ATT reveals the breadth and depth of the UK tax system in a way that general accountancy training may not, equipping them to deal more confidently with complex transactions, international issues and the tax dimensions of everyday finance roles.

Closing the tax skills gap is not simply about filling vacancies. It is about building resilient, future-ready teams that can respond to an increasingly complex tax environment. For firms and finance teams, structured tax training and qualifications such as ATT should be a central part of long-term workforce planning.

For employers, the ATT Qualification offers a practical way to build tax confidence across finance teams, not just among specialist tax staff. For individuals working in finance, it provides a structured route to develop the technical knowledge needed to handle tax issues more confidently on a day-to-day basis. CIOT members are also eligible to join ATT without completing any further qualifications, giving them access to ATT member benefits and a wider professional community. Find out more about joint ATT/CTA membership.

Take the next step: find out more about the ATT Qualification, member benefits and how ATT could support skills development in your organisation by visiting the ATT website: www.att.org.uk/stepup-finance