President's page

Welcomes

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Spreading the word

At a recent professional dinner, the conversation was all about the difficulties young people can face in deciding on a career. Given the complexities of our tax system, I'm sure that we'd all like to feel confident that there's a new generation coming into the tax profession who can pick up the baton! How can we make sure of that?

Catching them early! It has to start by talking about tax in the first place. As an educational charity, we're delighted to be part of the Tax in Education project, developing materials for schools and colleges. When students realise the significance of the topic, they're more likely to consider working in that sphere in the future. We need to make sure that the possibility of a career in tax is highlighted so that students can take it into account as one of their choices early on.

The best way to inspire students is by people in the business passing on their enthusiasm and experience. So if you have links with schools in your area, why not get in touch with us to find out how you can become a 'tax ambassador'?

Starting out: Although apprenticeships have been around in the UK for more than 650 years, in 2015 the first tax apprentices complete their training after sitting the ATT exams. Most of these young people have come into jobs straight from school and it's been wonderful to see how successful they have been.

As well as providing opportunities for the apprentices themselves, government funding for training helps employers to provide the skilled workers they need in order to grow their businesses. We've already signed up for the new Trailblazer apprenticeship programme which will start in a few years. Find out more about the programme at www.att.org.uk/students/higher-apprenticeship-in-tax

Training: We're committed to providing a qualification which provides students (and their employers/clients) with the confidence that they are capable of working in tax compliance. As an entry-level qualification, we want to make sure that everyone has a way in to training but that the exams remain robust and relevant. Although our exams are very successful, we don't want to rest on our laurels so we've agreed to review the whole system, including the syllabus and the ways by which we assess knowledge.

If you have views on what tomorrow's tax practitioners need to know, get in touch and be part of the debate.

Moving on: We recognise that many of our successful students want to go on to study as a CTA. For those starting out in tax, the ATT/CTA route should be the obvious one to a career. To help make sure that this is the case, we and the CIOT are working together to make sure that the process is as seamless and effective as possible. There's some great new material on the website which explains the transition from one qualification to another: www.att.org.uk/members/Moving+from+ATT+to+CTA.htm

If you're a CTA already, did you know that you can become a member of ATT without sitting our exams? You can find out more about the benefits of joint membership at www.tax.org.uk/members/joint

> **We'd all like to feel confident that there's a new generation coming into the tax profession who can pick up the baton**

It's never too late! While we've rightly put a lot of effort into encouraging people to come into tax as early as possible, it's also true that many people take a little time to hear the call of the tax books! We want to offer a way in, whatever you've done before.

Those who have passed other financial studies qualifications may be able to earn credits against some of our exams, reducing study time. Those who do need to sit all the exams can do so flexibly over a number of years, including choosing to apply for certificates of competence where they want to mark an achievement in a particular topic.

However, the biggest challenge can be finding an employer that will give someone a chance for a career change so I'd encourage everyone to be open to those who

come into tax via an unconventional route.

I started a tax career in my late 20s, inspired by the enthusiasm of a friend who worked in tax, supported by an employer who was willing to give me a chance, and subsequently empowered by colleagues and firms who have allowed me the opportunities to continue to learn and develop. I hope that, by offering that support and encouragement to others, we can all make sure that there are others ready and willing to take our place!