AI AND THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL CHARTERED ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION

Research carried out by Ipsos UK on behalf of Chartered Accountants Worldwide

Report: April 2025

The purpose and focus of this report

About

Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW), representing 1.8 million members and students globally, has commissioned Ipsos UK to help inform navigating the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the Chartered Accountancy profession.

Using these findings as a benchmarking project, CAW aims to equip Chartered Accountants with the insights and tools needed to thrive in an AI-driven future, and to understand the challenges and opportunities that AI's implications involve for the profession more clearly.

Objectives

Partnering with Ipsos UK in 2024, the AI Working Group focused its efforts on a global research study with the aim of:

- Providing a global picture of the state of AI in the profession, including risks, opportunities, and recommendations.

- Identifying best practice and outlining AI implementation roadmaps to accelerate AI adoption across the profession.

- Identifying skills and knowledge required by Chartered Accountants to enhance their role and take advantage of the opportunity AI offers.

Purpose

The following report, produced by Ipsos UK on behalf of CAW, is the first set of results from this research. It provides actionable insights and an understanding of the current levels of AI adoption in the global Chartered Accountancy profession.

Among other findings, it highlights the willingness of professionals to use AI, the barriers stopping them from using it, and their expectations regarding the need for upskilling to match requirements in the fast-changing world of AI.

A clear roadmap is laid out to provide 'pathways to adoption', and analysis based on respondents' attitudes - and willingness to use AI in their roles as Chartered Accountants.

Methodology

Online Quantitative Survey

Institute	Completes*
ICAEW	124
ICAS	135
CAI	274
CA ANZ	703
ICAP	444
SAICA	78
ISCA	204
ZICA	243
ICAZ	63
ICAM	86
ICAN	332
ICAI	62
IAI	90
TOTAL COMPLETES	2718

*NB. Respondents were able to select membership of more than one Institute. As such the total number of completed interviews sums to less than the aggregate of interviews assigned to Institutes.

Fieldwork Dates: 03/09/2024 – 06/12/2024

The above dates indicate the total length of time interviews took place across all participating institutes. Institutes launched and closed surveys with memberships across this time window.

- 20-minute online survey

- Aimed to understand views, experience and expectations regarding AI technologies in the Chartered Accountancy role

- Invitations to complete the survey were sent to members of participating institutes via email, social media, and institute leadership advocacy. For the purposes of analysis members who are retired and not professionally active have been excluded from results.

- As an open link, participants had the flexibility of skipping questions so base sizes vary throughout the results. Quotas were not applied. The results are not intended to be representative of the accountancy profession as a whole – percentages in the report are indicative of respondents to the survey rather than all Chartered Accountants.

Following the online quantitative part of this study, Ipsos UK contacted individuals who had self-reported in the survey they were both willing to be contacted and had played a key role in implementing AI within their organisation, resulting in six 30-minute qualitative interviews exploring how the implementation had been conducted.

Demographics

Seniority

Job level	Completes	% of sample
Executive/C-Suite	274	12
Partner	323	15
Director	250	11
Senior Manager	321	15
Manager	282	13
Mid-level	382	17
Entry-level/Junior Accountant	131	6
Freelance / Sole Trader	108	5
Other	138	7

Age

	%	Count
18-24	5%	144
25-34	17%	462
35-44	23%	626
45-54	25%	691
55+	29%	795

Gender

	%	Count
Male	71%	1903
Female	29%	793

Location

Location	Completes	Location	Completes	Location	Completes
Angola	1	Kuwait	1	South Africa	56
Australia	379	Luxembourg	2	South Sudan	1
Bahrain	2	Malawi	82	Spain	1
Canada	20	Malaysia	12	Sweden	1
China	8	Mauritius	1	Switzerland	7
Costa Rica	1	Myanmar	1	Tanzania	1
Côte d'Ivoire	1	Namibia	1	Ukraine	1
Cyprus	3	Netherlands	1	United Arab Emirates	17
Czech Republic	1	New Zealand	284	United Kingdom	211
Egypt	1	Nigeria	314	United States	28
France	1	Oman	3	Vanuatu	1
Germany	4	Pakistan	403	Venezuela	1
Ghana	2	PNG	1		
India	47	Philippines	1		
Indonesia	88	Qatar	1		
Iraq	2	Saudi Arabia	18		
Ireland	207	Seychelles	1		
Italy	1	Singapore	205		

Headline findings

There is a clear willingness to use AI in the profession

- Chartered Accountants are embracing AI, especially younger professionals and those in larger organisations.

- Most recognise AI's potential; however, many feel unprepared for it.

- There is consensus that it will augment, rather than replace, the Chartered Accountant's role.

- AI is expected to significantly impact the profession, but there's uncertainty about implementation strategies. Some, particularly senior business members, feel adoption is slow.

- Current usage focuses on general productivity with generic tools, driven by individual initiative.

85%
of those surveyed are at least fairly willing to use AI technology, given the opportunity

Data security concerns hindering uptake

- Trust in AI software often relies on pre-existing security measures, such as adopting Co-Pilot under Microsoft's security system. Some companies have established internal governance structures to ensure compliance. However, cross-national regulations can hinder adoption.

- C-suite executives are more likely to increase AI usage with data security assurances, citing it as a primary barrier to more frequent use.

30%
say concerns about data security is the main reason they aren't using AI more frequently

Professional bodies are expected to drive upskilling

- There is a gap between low availability of organisational-led AI training, and high employee willingness to participate, highlighting a need for improved training programs.

- As it stands, individual initiative is driving preparation for the future through self-directed AI learning.

- Chartered Accountants expect professional bodies, rather than employers, to provide AI training, prioritising practical skills, ethics, and integration with existing tools. There's little expectation of government funding to support this upskilling.

52%
feel that insufficient skills and training is the biggest barrier to the adoption of AI by the Accountancy profession

'Data Guardians' increasingly key as business adopts AI

- The role of Chartered Accountants as 'Data Guardians' – e.g. ensuring data governance in businesses – is perceived as becoming increasingly important by those surveyed, as AI is adopted into business more widely.

- Many are optimistic about AI's impact on their profession; more feel that AI will lead to increased job opportunities than losses.

- The majority of Chartered Accountants surveyed feel that AI will make the profession more attractive in the future, with the role changing to be more focused on strategic advice, with less focus on repeated manual tasks.

79%
agree that that as AI is integrated more into business, the role of Accountants as 'Data Guardians' will become increasingly important to organisations

Expert Reflections

As part of our research for Chartered Accountants Worldwide, we gathered thoughts from our own Ipsos experts on the findings of this report. These conversations focused on the transformative role of artificial intelligence and its potential to impact the accountancy profession.

Maciek Ozorowski
Head of AI Transformation

" In line with trends observed across various professional services, the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) among Chartered Accountants is gaining momentum, driven by a widespread interest in enhancing efficiency and job satisfaction. This enthusiasm, however, is tempered by the current limitations of generic AI chatbots, which are not yet equipped to handle complex, specialized tasks, restricting their use to simpler functions. To fully realise AI's potential in the Accountancy sector, there is an urgent need for bespoke AI solutions that integrate seamlessly into existing workflows. Moreover, upskilling remains a critical area of focus, as many accountants lack the confidence to effectively utilise AI tools. Addressing these challenges will be pivotal in advancing AI adoption, ensuring that Chartered Accountants can harness the technology to its fullest, ultimately transforming their roles into more strategic, advisory capacities.

Tim Bond
Associate Director

" Advancements in AI have the potential to change how many of us do our jobs — either today or in the near future. However, this is not about replacing human intelligence with an artificial one — as there will always be a need for the creative thinking and contextual understanding that we bring. This report highlights the opportunity that a majority of Chartered Accountants surveyed see in AI potential to augment their roles and enable them to spend more time as strategic advisers in the future. The key for organisations will be willingness to embrace and implement these new technologies, alongside ensuring everyone has the skills and understanding to best utilise these tools. All the while remembering that it's in the convergence of "Human Intelligence" and "Artificial Intelligence" that organisations will thrive and grow.

Recommendations for Chartered Accountants Worldwide

1 **Take the lead on promoting a positive vision of AI's impact**

While surveyed Chartered Accountants are optimistic about AI's impact on their profession, there's a need for clear communication and thought leadership from membership bodies on the benefits of AI, to reassure those who are more hesitant about the innovation. Highlighting the opportunities AI offers, such as enhanced strategic advisory, improved data interpretation, and stronger client relationships, will encourage a more proactive approach to AI adoption. Addressing concerns about data security and ethical implications through clear guidelines and best practices will further build trust and help bring a smoother transition in the implementation of AI in the Accountancy profession.

2 **Collaborate with institutes to develop and deliver targeted AI training programs**

Despite a high willingness to use AI among Chartered Accountants surveyed, there is a significant skills gap and feeling of unpreparedness for the changes AI will bring. Expectations of surveyed Chartered Accountants are on professional bodies to provide training, especially in small and medium-sized organisations. These bodies can take the lead in providing accessible, relevant training programs focused on practical application. At the same time, this training should also focus on reassuring what members see as the key barriers to adoption: data security and ethics. Signposting to self-directed learning resources supporting members who are proactively developing their AI skills will also encourage further upskilling.

3 **Work to develop an AI competency framework for the profession**

Developing competency frameworks that outline the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required for Chartered Accountants at different levels could help guide AI training programs, recruitment strategies, and professional development initiatives. It would also provide a benchmark for assessing AI proficiency and recognising individuals who have demonstrated expertise in this area. A structured framework approach would help ensure that the Accountancy profession has the necessary talent to thrive in an AI-driven world, as there is a belief among those surveyed that AI adoption will make the profession both more attractive and more important in future years.

What are the Key Opportunities for …

Members

Students

The profession in Business and Practice

Capitalise on AI to transform into strategic advisors and leverage new technologies for career leadership.

Members of Chartered Accountancy Institutes not only can become more efficient by upskilling in AI, but also have the chance to become the architects of the future in accountancy, setting the stage for how AI is utilised ethically and strategically across the industry. With the landscape still largely untapped, they can both adapt to change and also be the change, establishing new standards and guiding principles that will shape the evolution of accountancy in the era of AI.

Seize the role of tech-savvy trailblazers by becoming instrumental in shaping an AI-fluent culture in their future workplaces.

Students have the unique opportunity to enter the workforce as digital natives with a strong command of AI. They can leverage this to quickly create impact and, in a role-reversal, teachers of AI within their organisations, driving the adoption of AI practices and fostering a culture that is well-versed in the latest technological advancements. Their fresh perspective and tech-savvy skills position them as valuable assets ready to lead the charge in the new era of Accountancy.

Adopt AI to redefine the accountancy role, focusing on analytical insight and strategic business impact.

The broader accountancy business stands on the brink of a significant shift, with AI poised to redefine roles within it. By integrating AI, the profession can spend less time on routine tasks to providing deeper analytical insights and strategic business impact. This will not only enhance the value accountants bring to the table but also open new pathways for service offerings, further securing relevance and perceived growing importance in the business world as 'guardians of data'.

1. AI in Chartered Accountancy

What is the current state of AI in Accountancy, and how is it being adopted?

Appetite for AI is clear, and most claim a good understanding and confidence in using it

What you need to know…

- Across all demographics, Chartered Accountants surveyed are overwhelmingly willing to use AI.
- Willingness is particularly high among those employed by larger organisations, where opportunities are likely to be more readily available, as well as among the younger cohorts of participants.
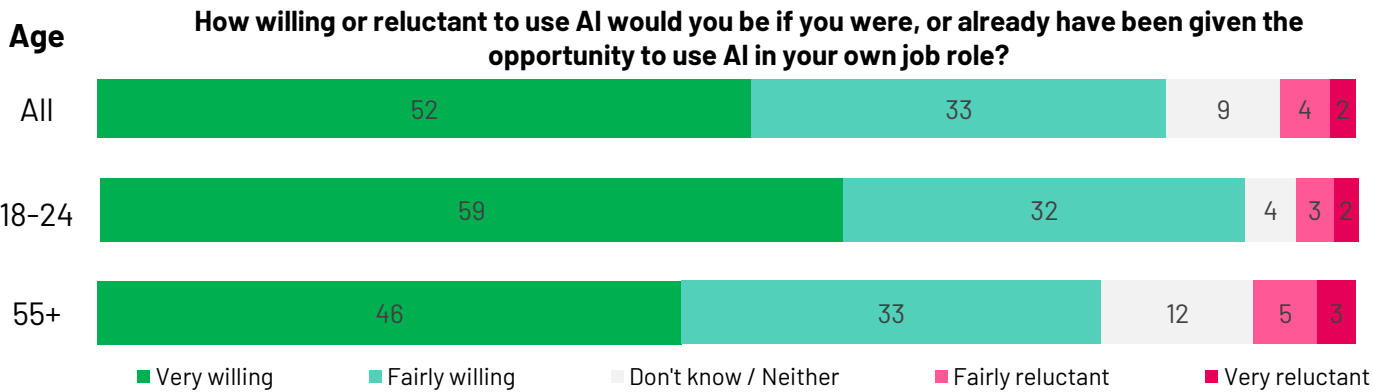- A majority of participants claim to have a good understanding of the potential uses of AI for Chartered Accountants.

Key finding

85% of Chartered Accountants surveyed are at least fairly willing to use AI technology, given the opportunity

What do you need to consider?

1. What can organisations do to match the willingness of Chartered Accountants?

Willingness to use AI | Base: All = 2541, 18-24 =140, 55+ = 710

Age

How willing or reluctant to use AI would you be if you were, or already have been given the opportunity to use AI in your own job role?

Age	Very willing	Fairly willing	Don't know / Neither	Fairly reluctant	Very reluctant
All	52	33	9	4	2
18-24	59	32	4	3	2
55+	46	33	12	5	3

- ■ Very willing
- ■ Fairly willing
- ■ Don't know / Neither
- ■ Fairly reluctant
- ■ Very reluctant

Attitude towards AI | Base: All = 2541, 18-24 =140, 55+ = 710

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%)   **Strongly Agree (%)**

Statement		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly Agree (%)
I have a good understanding of the potential uses of AI for my role	All	18	41	20	14	5	59%
	18-24	18	51	13	7	4	**69%**
	55+	12	37	22	18	7	49%
I am confident in using AI in my role	All	22	36	21	13	7	58%
	18-24	35	45	11	6	1	**80%**
	55+	15	32	56	16	9	47%

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Tend to agree
- ■ Neither
- ■ Tend to disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree

The transformative potential of AI on the industry is widely acknowledged

What you need to know...

- There is a group that sees the profession as too slow in its adoption of AI technology. This view is more common among those with greater professional seniority.
- While there is wide acceptance about the transformative change AI will bring to the Chartered Accountant members, surveyed Chartered Accountants indicate uncertainty regarding their understanding of governmental and organizational strategies and ethical structures for AI adoption.
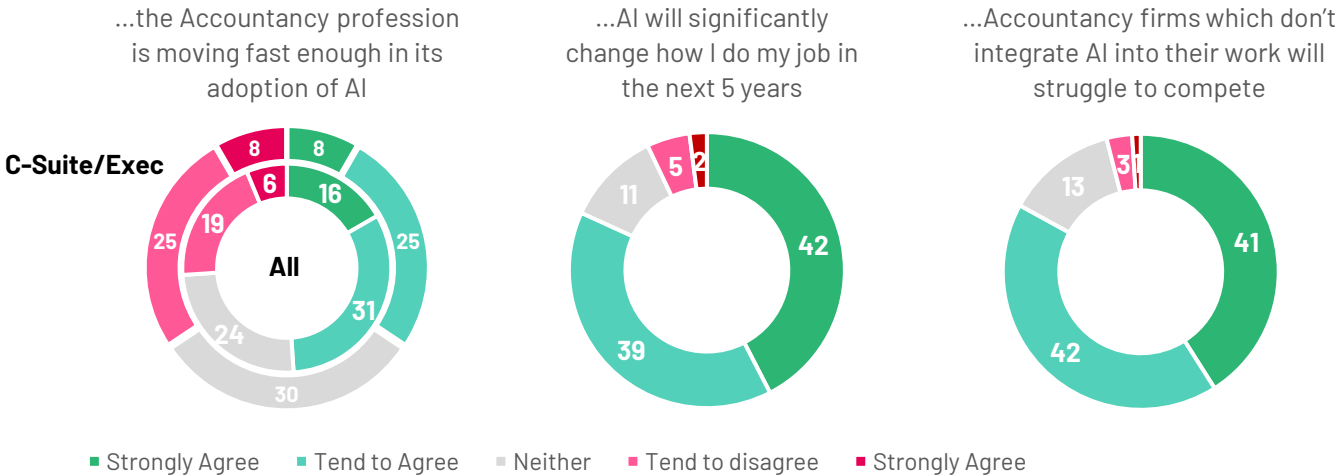
Key finding

C-Suite and Exec level participants are split in their judgments of the speed of adoption, but overall are less likely than others to say that the profession is evolving fast enough. As these are organisational decision makers, this begs the question of what are the barriers to increased speed of adoption.
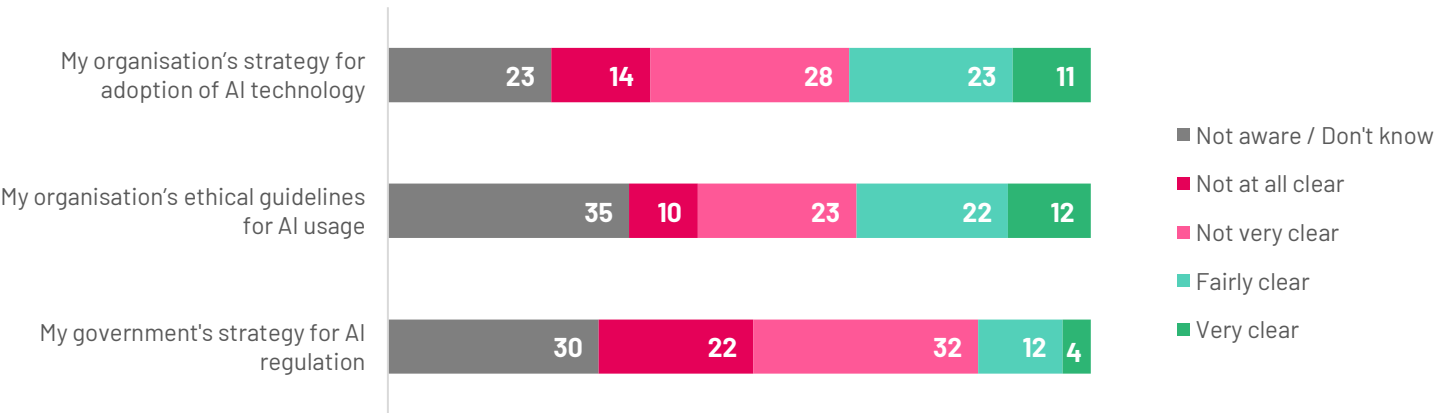
What do you need to consider?

1. Clarity of usage and ethical guidelines are likely to help transform willingness into more effective usage. How can this be incorporated into clearer communication of organisations' strategic approach to AI implementation?

Competitive landscape | Base: All = 2541, C-Suite/Exec = 273

...the Accountancy profession is moving fast enough in its adoption of AI

C-Suite/Exec: 8, 6, 19, 25, (All) 16, 25
All: 24, 30, 31

...AI will significantly change how I do my job in the next 5 years
11, 5, 2, 42, 39

...Accountancy firms which don't integrate AI into their work will struggle to compete
13, 3, 1, 41, 42

■ Strongly Agree ■ Tend to Agree ■ Neither ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly Agree

Strategic clarity | Base: In order, All = 2168; All Active Within A Professional Organization = 1918; All = 2214

	Not aware / Don't know	Not at all clear	Not very clear	Fairly clear	Very clear
My organisation's strategy for adoption of AI technology	23	14	28	23	11
My organisation's ethical guidelines for AI usage	35	10	23	22	12
My government's strategy for AI regulation	30	22	32	12	4

There is confidence that AI cannot completely replace Chartered Accountants, but not all are prepared for its impacts

What you need to know...

- Chartered Accountants surveyed see AI as a technology that will augment rather than replace their role.
- Survey participants are split on how prepared they feel for the impact of AI. This divide might be linked to how often Chartered Accountants use AI in their daily tasks, which may affect their sense of preparedness.
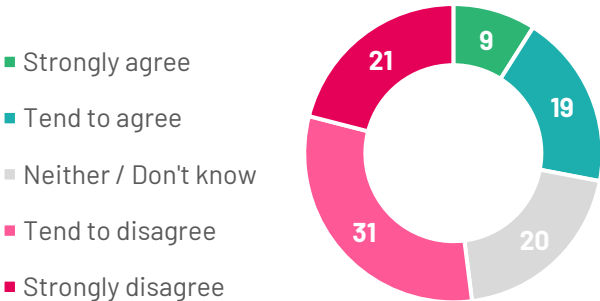
Key finding

83%

of those aged 18-24 are using AI tools at least once a week. This high frequency of usage correlates with younger participants feeling more prepared for the impact of AI than older colleagues
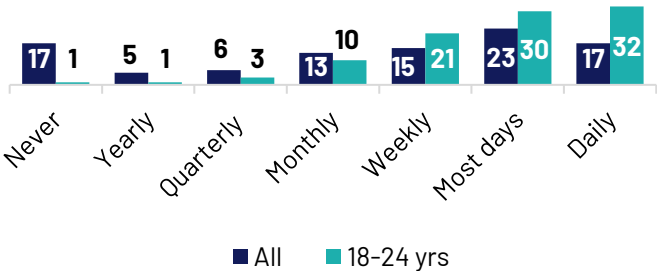
What do you need to consider?

1. With over half feeling that the human value cannot be replaced by AI in the profession, can elements of the job be dialled up in communications to engage, encourage and excite both those within the profession and those who may be considering it as a future career?
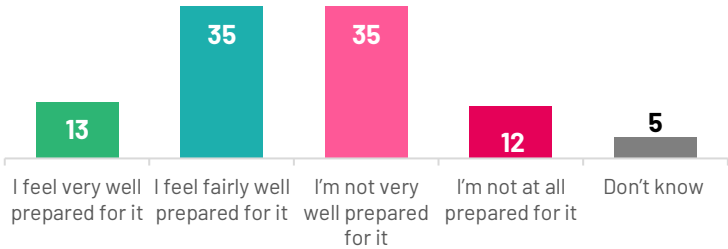
The value that accountants provide can be replaced by automated systems (%) | Base: All = 2386

- Strongly agree — 9
- Tend to agree — 19
- Neither / Don't know — 20
- Tend to disagree — 31
- Strongly disagree — 21

How often do you tend to use AI tools in your day-to-day job? (%) | Base: All : 2168, 18-24:90

	Never	Yearly	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly	Most days	Daily
All	17	5	6	13	15	23	17
18-24 yrs	1	1	3	10	21	30	32

■ All ■ 18-24 yrs

How prepared do you feel for the impact AI will have on your job role over the next 5 years? | Base: All = 2541

I feel very well prepared for it	I feel fairly well prepared for it	I'm not very well prepared for it	I'm not at all prepared for it	Don't know
13	35	35	12	5

Preparedness by job level...

	Entry-level/ Junior Base: 124	Executive/C-Suite Base: 273
Base:	124	273
NET: **Prepared**	54%	43%
NET: **Not prepared**	42%	53%

Chartered Accountants are still in the early stages of discovering the more technical applications of AI

What you need to know...

- Participants are predominantly using generic AI tools for general productivity in their daily workflow and simple tasks, rather than technical work.
- Programs or tools already in use are the most likely conduits for exposure to AI. For example, professional accountants in business (PAIB) are often using AI via business intelligence tools and professional accountants in practice (PAIP) via accounting software, suggesting that AI adoption will be driven by the capabilities of these products for many.
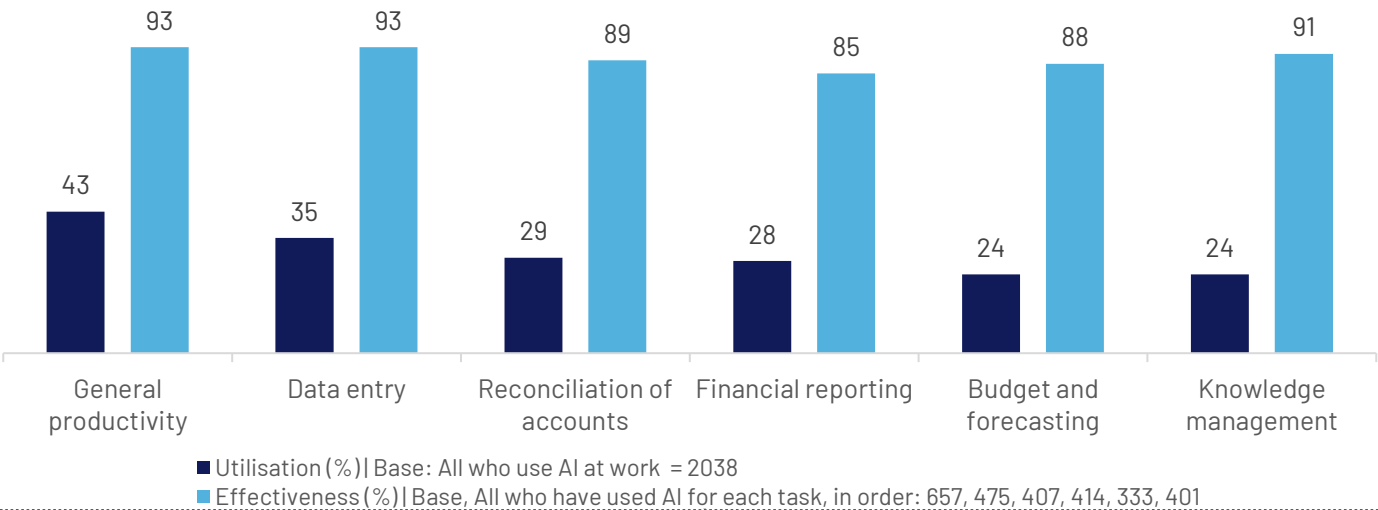
Key findings

70%

Of survey participants use publicly available GenAI chatbots, like ChatGPT or Gemini, at least once or twice a month
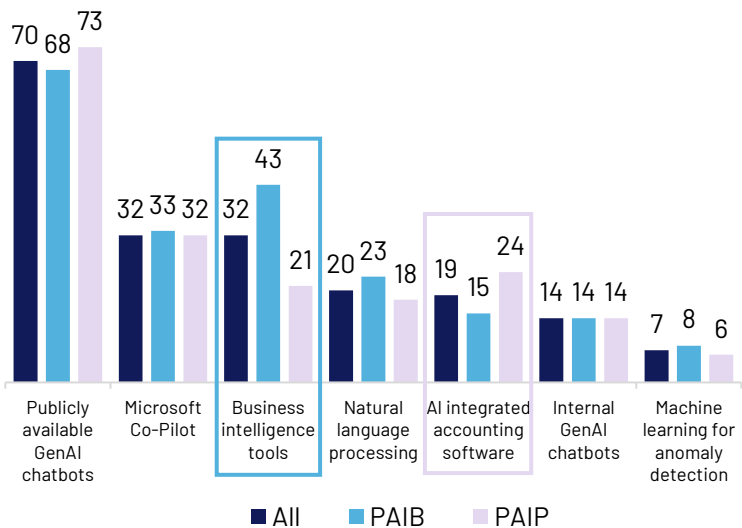
What do you need to consider?

1. With 70% of participants who use AI at least once a month using publicly available GenAI, is there a need for enhanced education and training around data security to ensure compliance in roles?

AI Task use vs effectiveness

Task	Utilisation (%)	Effectiveness (%)
General productivity	43	93
Data entry	35	93
Reconciliation of accounts	29	89
Financial reporting	28	85
Budget and forecasting	24	88
Knowledge management	24	91

■ Utilisation (%) | Base: All who use AI at work = 2038
■ Effectiveness (%) | Base, All who have used AI for each task, in order: 657, 475, 407, 414, 333, 401

Which tools are used at least once or twice a month?
(Top 5,%) | Base: All = 1471, PAIB = 631, PAIP = 602

Tool	All	PAIB	PAIP
Publicly available GenAI chatbots	70	68	73
Microsoft Co-Pilot	32	33	32
Business intelligence tools	32	43	21
Natural language processing	20	23	18
AI integrated accounting software	19	15	24
Internal GenAI chatbots	14	14	14
Machine learning for anomaly detection	7	8	6

■ All ■ PAIB ■ PAIP

Name of the AI integrated accounting software you are using? | Base: All who have used AI integrated software and use AI at least once a month = 155

Name	%
Xero	23%
QuickBooks	15%
Sage	12%
Microsoft / CoPilot	9%
ChatGPT	6%
SAP	6%
Dext	5%
Internal	4%

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Usage of AI is more likely to be driven by individual proactivity than organisational change

What you need to know...

- AI adoption often begins as a grassroots effort, with individuals and teams leveraging the technology to improve personal efficiency, rather than a top-down directed initiative.
- Those who use AI frequently cite excitement and personal reasons for doing so, as well as spending their own time to self-teach. This suggests that current adoption is being driven more so by individuals' initiative than organisational innovation.
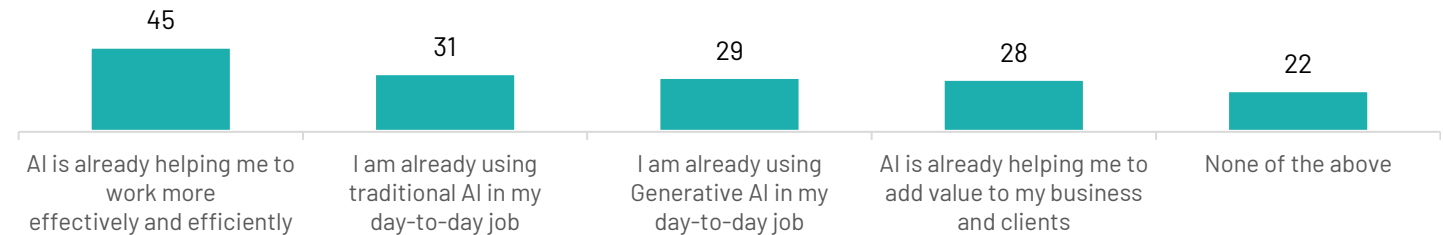
Just under

1 in 2

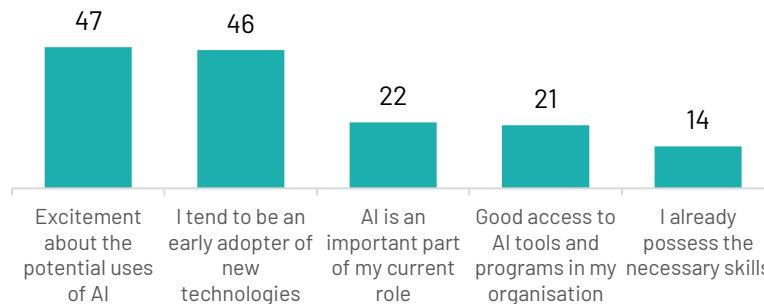Survey participants are already finding AI is helping them work more effectively

What do you need to consider?

1. Excitement about the potential uses of AI should be tapped into by showcasing what it can do in streamlining technical Accountancy tasks.

2. What is the most effective way of improving access to AI tools? Buy it in? Develop in house? Keep in mind that this may be different depending on size of business.

Current experience of using AI technologies | Base: Uses AI at least once a year = 1708

AI is already helping me to work more effectively and efficiently	I am already using traditional AI in my day-to-day job	I am already using Generative AI in my day-to-day job	AI is already helping me to add value to my business and clients	None of the above
45	31	29	28	22

What are the main reasons that you frequently use AI at work? (Top 5,%) | Base: Frequent users = 1185

Excitement about the potential uses of AI	I tend to be an early adopter of new technologies	AI is an important part of my current role	Good access to AI tools and programs in my organisation	I already possess the necessary skills
47	46	22	21	14

If you are already prepared for - or are in the process of preparing - what sort of activities have you done/been doing, including specific training/learning courses?

"Peer to peer knowledge sharing, CPD activities including webinars and conferences from various providers (including own Institute), reading relevant material in various business, science and Accountancy publications, experimenting with tools in a safe environment using anonymised, non-sensitive practice datasets."
Senior Manager

"Participating in internal training courses, leveraging external knowledge like Gartner and consultants (Accenture, Boston Consulting Group etc.), looking to the art of the possible to streamline processes, deliver insights and value for my main client."
Freelancer /Solo Trader

Similar levels of concerns around skills and data security arise when thinking about barriers to personal usage, and to adoption by the profession as a whole

What you need to know...

- Since Chartered Accountants are mainly using external tools, data security is seen as a primary barrier to adoption.
- Another major barrier is lack of skills. Perceived lack of skills reinforces the picture where usage is personally driven rather than organisationally driven.
- Although there are some opposing views, concerns about the reliability of AI technology are not among the top barriers to its adoption.
- Junior roles are less worried about skills / data security as a barrier. Coupled with feeling more prepared, it suggests a natural upskilling of the profession will occur over time.
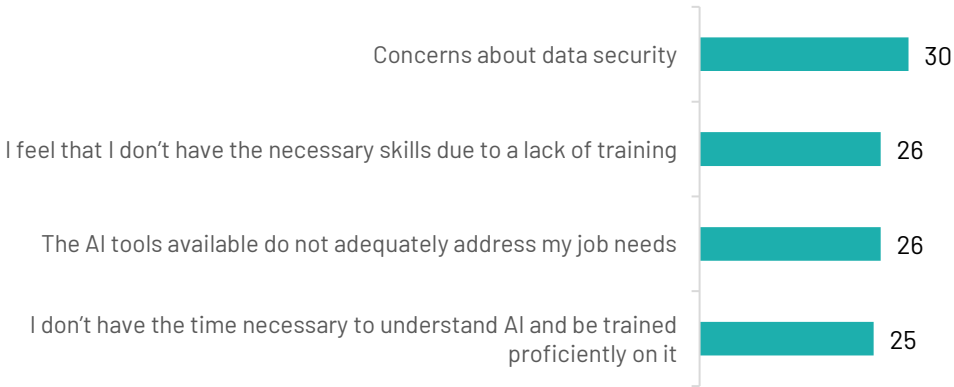
Key finding

52% of Surveyed Charted Accountant members state that the biggest barrier to AI adoption in Accountancy are insufficient skills and training.

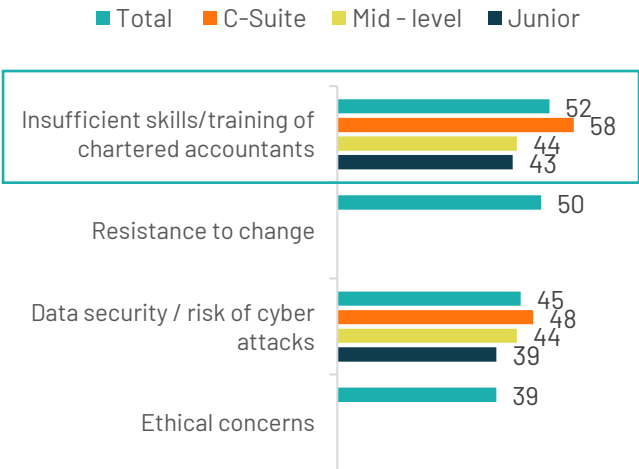**What do you need to consider?**

1. Where does the responsibility lie for upskilling the profession? Is it organisational change? Or is it the qualifications that need to be updated?

What are the main reasons that you aren't currently using AI on a more frequent basis?
(Top 4, %) | Base: Less frequent users = 523

Concerns about data security	30
I feel that I don't have the necessary skills due to a lack of training	26
The AI tools available do not adequately address my job needs	26
I don't have the time necessary to understand AI and be trained proficiently on it	25

Which of the following factors, if any, do you see as the biggest barriers to the adoption of AI by the accountancy profession as a whole? (Top 4,%)
Base: All = 2215, Mid-level = 319, Junior = 94

Legend: ■ Total ■ C-Suite ■ Mid - level ■ Junior

Insufficient skills/training of chartered accountants
- Total: 52
- C-Suite: 58
- Mid-level: 44
- Junior: 43

Resistance to change
- Total: 50

Data security / risk of cyber attacks
- Total: 45
- C-Suite: 48
- Mid-level: 44
- Junior: 39

Ethical concerns
- Total: 39

> " AI is not mature enough or reliable enough to place reliance on it within the next five years for important tasks. **People are buying the hype rather than the reality**. The liability issues of relying on AI decisions far outweigh the benefits in this time horizon. Longer term it will make a significant difference." *Executive*

Ipsos

2. The barriers to adoption
Exploring training, the skills shortage, and concerns on data security

Accountants stated they rely on 1) established tools, 2) strict procedure or 3) avoidance, to address security concerns

What you need to know…

- CAW members interviewed identify three primary approaches to AI adoption:
1. Integration based on trust in established, security-approved systems, such as Microsoft, which naturally extends to tools like Microsoft Co-Pilot.
2. Integration guided by unique internal approval processes, such as working forums focused on standards and governance.
3. Limited integration driven by caution, with hesitancy stemming from the increasing complexities of cross-national data security regulations.

Data security is more of a concern for senior roles

34% of C-suite respondents say reassurance about data security would make them use AI more in their role vs 24% of junior roles

36% of C-suite respondents say data security concerns are the main reason they don't use AI on a more frequent basis

What do you need to consider?

1. What steps are necessary to educate and reassure the profession about AI's potential while ensuring compliance with complex data security regulations?

Different approaches to dealing with security concerns became clear during the qualitative interviews…

Leaning on previously used and trusted platforms that incorporate AI allow simpler adoption than newer platforms, and reduce the administrative burden around further security assurances…

1 ❝ It's essentially an add on to the previous contract. Since we already know and use Microsoft accounts for all our shared drives, the Co-pilot feature is just embedded within each file. We rely on the initial security setup we have in place." – *Partner, ISCA Member*

One company has established internal frameworks, emphasising standards and governance, to ensure a rigorous approach involving multiple senior stakeholders and relevant expertise…

2 ❝ We've got an AI forum [that is] made-up of more senior people in our in our team, mostly the management and executive team, and take every single AI product that we use [through] our processes… We've got a 5-page document asking questions about the technology at hand. And you have to submit that to the AI forum, [which then goes] through a formalised approval process. [After that] the compliance team takes it through [their] whole process." – *Senior Manager, SAICA Member*

While others show reluctance to advance due to the growing complexities of trans-national regulations.

3 ❝ You've got private data there. You've got all of your customers names, all of the amounts they pay to you, all of their bank details, and all the kind of reference details, which is a sort of hackers dream… [and] for most customers [AI models] are not allowed to be trained on their data or custom, [so] the board says no, we don't want them seeing all that information." – *Manager, ICAS Member*

Findings taken from qualitative follow-up interviews

Given the reported lack of AI training from employers, skills shortages are unsurprising

What you need to know...

- Fewer employees have received AI training at work than are willing to participate in future programs, highlighting the need for organizations to improve their offerings.
- While most find AI training effective, some report they did not. Feedback on why training is not effective will inform content for the future to make sure it is relevant for the disparate roles that Chartered Accountants perform.

Key finding

Training is currently more effective in PAIP than PAIB. Business will struggle to offer the same specificity of training for finance employees as practice can, so it is likely the onus is on institutes to offer a way for PAIB to keep upskilling.

What do you need to consider?

1. How can organisations be encouraged or incentivised to offer effective AI training, particularly given its importance for modern Accountancy practices?

2. What steps should be taken to ensure training meets the needs of professionals in different functions and with different levels of seniority?
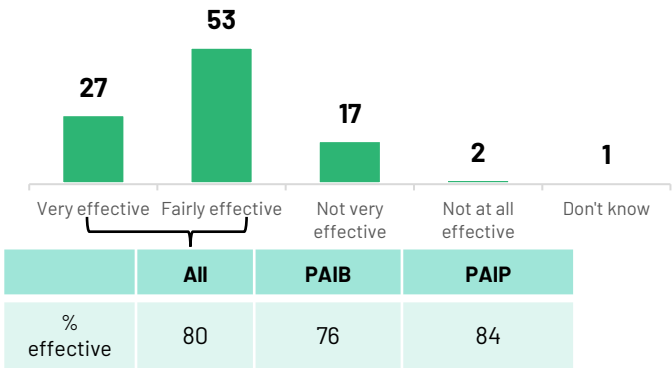
Workplace

Have you participated in any AI-related training programs offered through your organisation? (%)
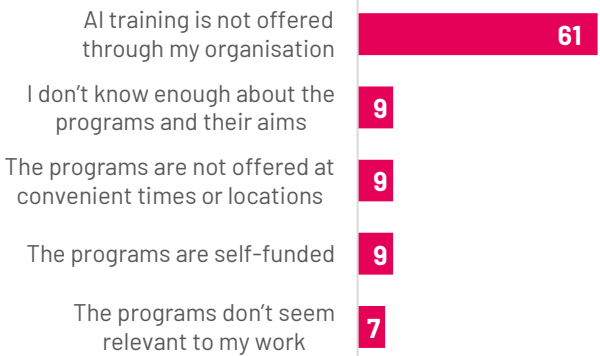Base: All = 2252

- Yes: 30
- No: 66
- Don't know: 4
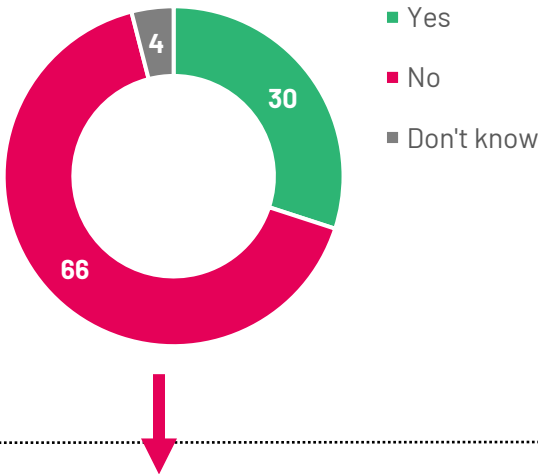
How effective, if at all, have you found the AI-training programs offered through your organisation? (%)
Base: Those who participated in training: All = 693, PAIB = 258, PAIP = 236

	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know
	27	53	17	2	1

	All	PAIB	PAIP
% effective	80	76	84

You said that you have not participated in any AI-related training programs offered through your organisation. Why is that? (Top 5.%) | Base, All who have not participated in training = 1581

AI training is not offered through my organisation	61
I don't know enough about the programs and their aims	9
The programs are not offered at convenient times or locations	9
The programs are self-funded	9
The programs don't seem relevant to my work	7

How likely are you to participate in future AI-related training programs offered by your organisation? (%)
Base, All = 2238

92% likely

Very likely	Fairly likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	Don't know
65	27	3	2	3
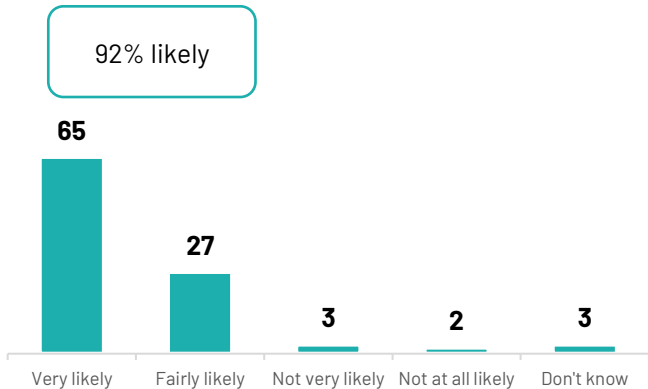
Professional institutes, rather than employers, are expected to provide training

What you need to know…

- Participants express the expectation that professional bodies should be providing training rather than employers. This stands true across all levels of seniority.
- There is little expectation that government funding should be directed towards upskilling the profession.
- Those who expect Accountancy bodies to provide training want to see the organisation involved in:
    1. Actively enhancing CPD with AI integration
    2. Create specialised AI courses,
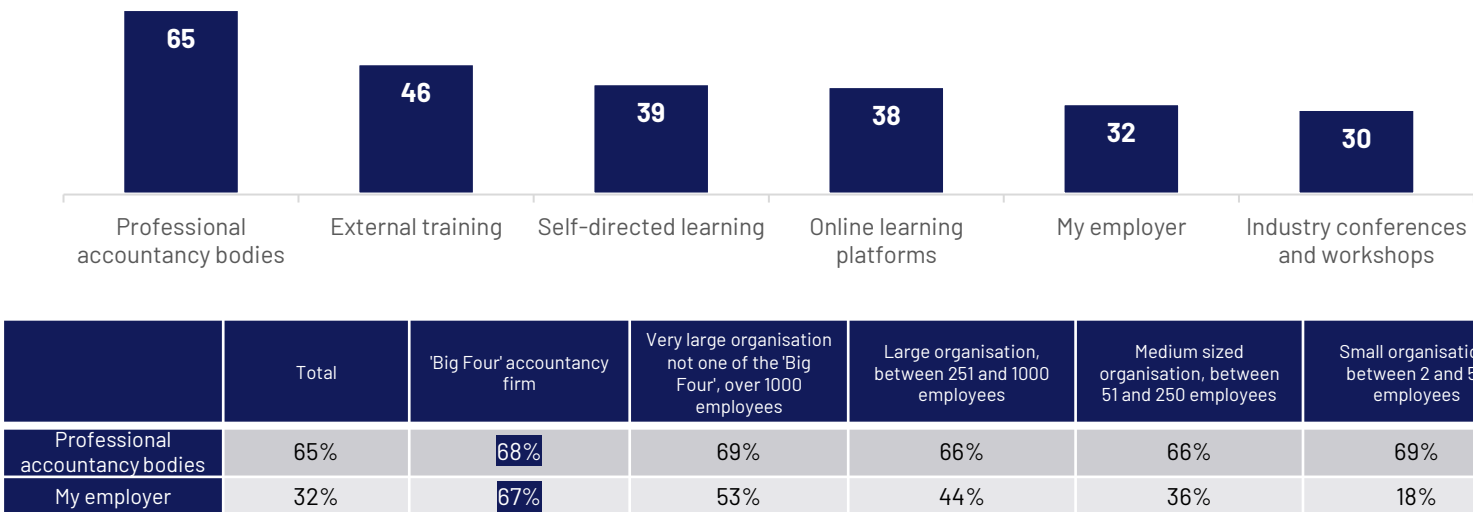   3. Provide a suite of AI learning resources.

Key findings

67%
of those identifying as the primary decision maker regarding AI technology in their organisation expect professional bodies to provide AI training.
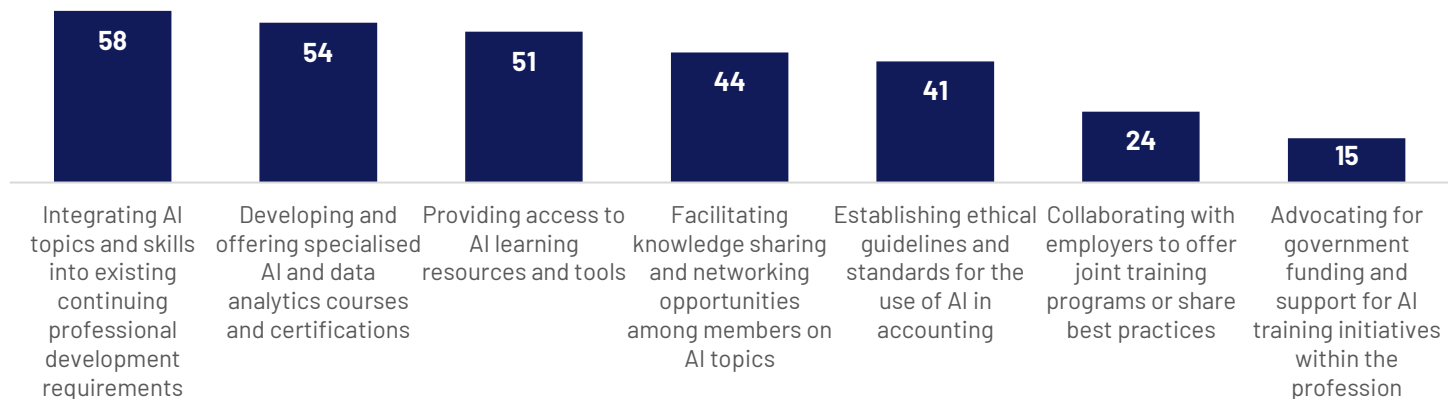
What do you need to consider?

1. How can CAW help individual country institutes to develop, deliver and co-ordinate AI education?

Where do you expect Chartered Accountants to receive training on AI and its application in their work? (%) | Base: All = 2257

| | 65 | 46 | 39 | 38 | 32 | 30 |
| Professional accountancy bodies | External training | Self-directed learning | Online learning platforms | My employer | Industry conferences and workshops |

	Total	'Big Four' accountancy firm	Very large organisation not one of the 'Big Four', over 1000 employees	Large organisation, between 251 and 1000 employees	Medium sized organisation, between 51 and 250 employees	Small organisation, between 2 and 50 employees
Professional accountancy bodies	65%	68%	69%	66%	66%	69%
My employer	32%	67%	53%	44%	36%	18%

How do you envision your professional body supporting Chartered Accountants in developing the necessary AI skills? (%) | Base: Those who expect Professional Accountancy bodies to provide training: 1540

| 58 | 54 | 51 | 44 | 41 | 24 | 15 |
| Integrating AI topics and skills into existing continuing professional development requirements | Developing and offering specialised AI and data analytics courses and certifications | Providing access to AI learning resources and tools | Facilitating knowledge sharing and networking opportunities among members on AI topics | Establishing ethical guidelines and standards for the use of AI in accounting | Collaborating with employers to offer joint training programs or share best practices | Advocating for government funding and support for AI training initiatives within the profession |

Ipsos

Critical thinking is considered more important than digital and data science skills in today's Accountancy training
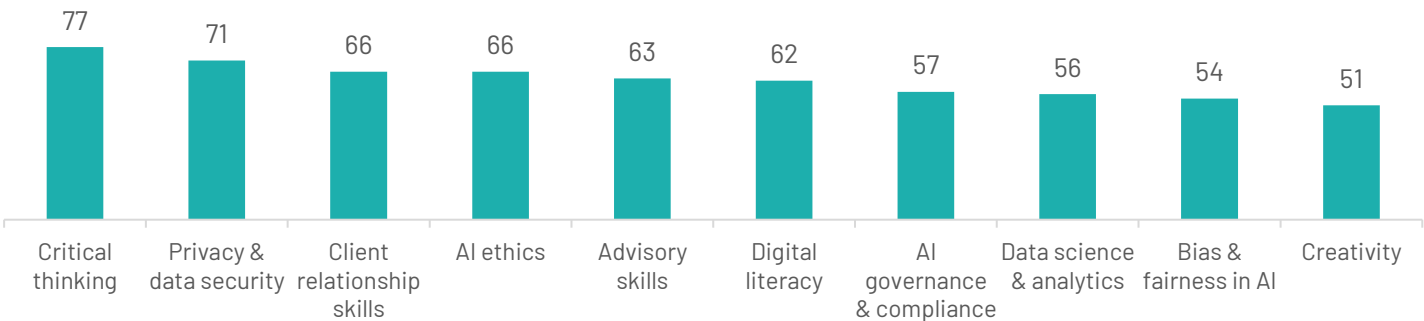
What you need to know…

- Continued emphasis on critical thinking aligns with the intention that AI works alongside the human intelligence of Chartered Accountants, and suggests these skills will be crucial in order to scrutinise and apply AI insights to provide effective advice to business/clients.
- Data privacy and security are top priorities in training. With increased AI use raising concerns about this, it's even more important to ensure structured, effective training to use technology ethically and protect data responsibly.
- There is anticipation of significant changes in training to accommodate digital skills, but those surveyed continue to believe that trainees still need to learn their role by doing hands-on technical work.
- However, from students, there is still a clear call to action for educational institutions to integrate more AI and digital skills content in the future.
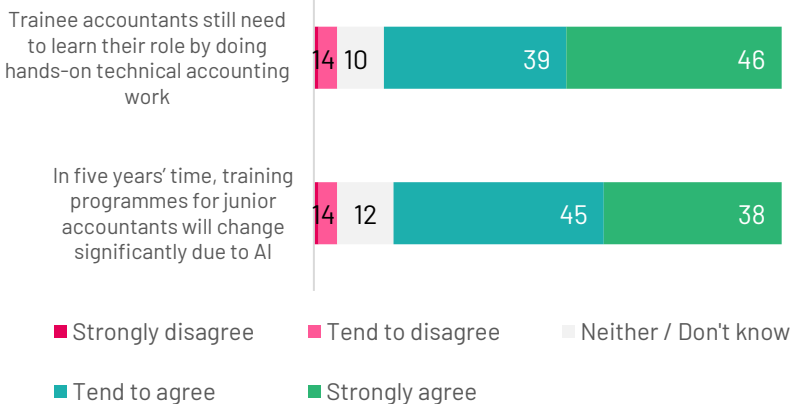
What do you need to consider?

1. How can CAW members ensure that the value of hands-on technical work is preserved and enhanced, while also integrating AI into training programs?

**How important, if at all, is it for today's Accountancy training to include (% Very Important)**
Base: All = 2297

Category	Value
Critical thinking	77
Privacy & data security	71
Client relationship skills	66
AI ethics	66
Advisory skills	63
Digital literacy	62
AI governance & compliance	57
Data science & analytics	56
Bias & fairness in AI	54
Creativity	51

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the present and future role of accountants? (%) | Base: All = 2387

Trainee accountants still need to learn their role by doing hands-on technical accounting work: 1 | 4 | 10 | 39 | 46

In five years' time, training programmes for junior accountants will change significantly due to AI: 1 | 4 | 12 | 45 | 38

- Strongly disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Neither / Don't know
- Tend to agree
- Strongly agree

Do you feel that the course you are currently studying has a sufficient focus on the digital skills that will be required in accounting roles in the future? (%) | Base: CAW students only = 188

- Yes: 49
- No: 41
- Don't know: 10
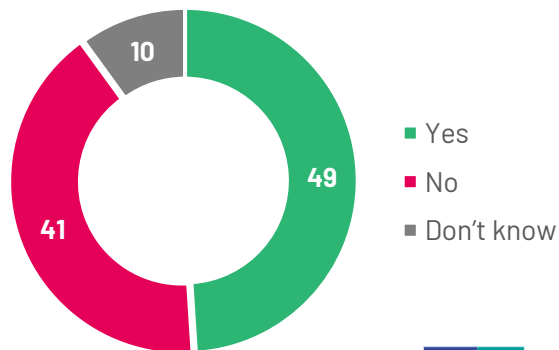
Integrating AI into existing tools and software is the most efficient way to achieve wider adoption

Key finding

51%

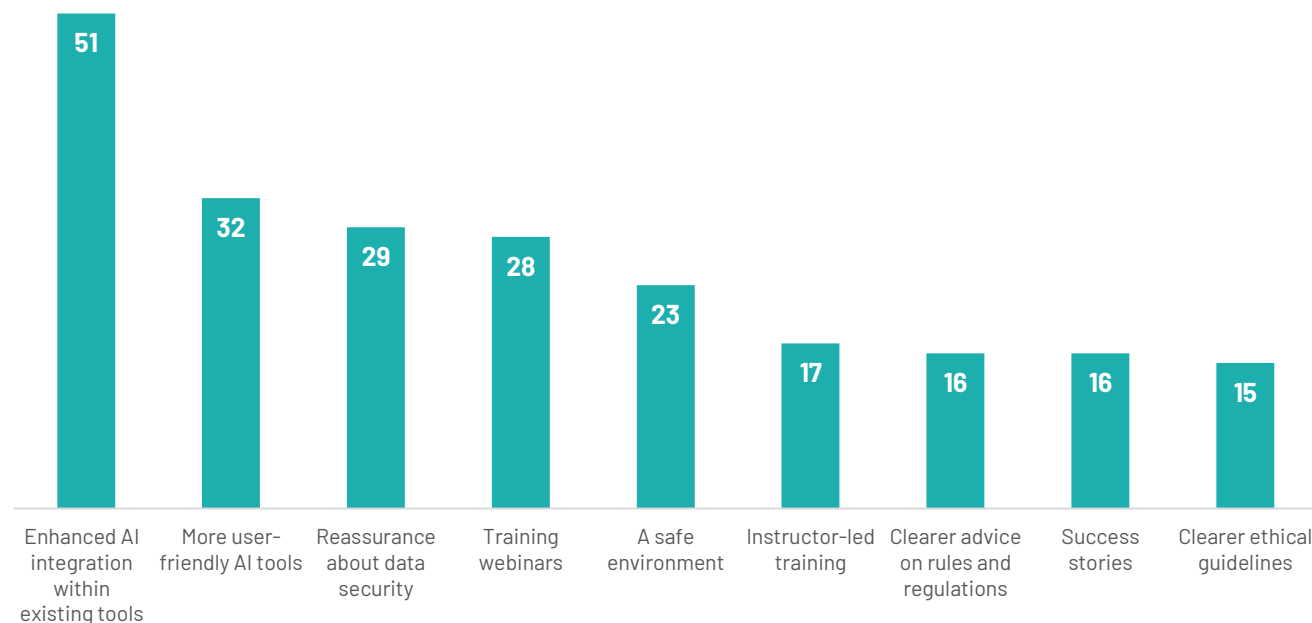of participants would use AI more often if it were integrated into their existing tools.

What you need to know…

- Participants call for AI to be integrated into existing tools.
- Accounting technology is a mature market, and many businesses/practices will be using tools/software that is deeply incorporated into their work, so individuals' adoption will need to either be led within these systems or introduced through large-scale transformation projects.
- Reassuring users by reducing the complexity of interfaces with AI and providing clear explanations of data security safeguards can allay some of the resistance to change and increase uptake.
- Lack of clarity on guidelines around usage and ethics does not appear to be a major barrier to increased usage.

What do you need to consider?

1. How can organisations and institutes work with accounting software providers to facilitate training on AI enabled software/tools?

Which of the following factors, if any, would make you use AI more in your day-to-day job?
Please select your top three options. (%) | Base: All = 2168

Enhanced AI integration within existing tools	More user-friendly AI tools	Reassurance about data security	Training webinars	A safe environment	Instructor-led training	Clearer advice on rules and regulations	Success stories	Clearer ethical guidelines
51	32	29	28	23	17	16	16	15

4. Future of the profession

What are the perceived risks and opportunities of AI for the future of profession?

And there is hope AI can free up accountants to focus on strategic advice

What you need to know...

- Wide agreement that AI proficiency will be key to progression in the future profession and allow the role to be more strategic.
- This correlates with the leading perceived areas of development all being 'task-focused' rather than the more creative aspects of the Chartered Accountant's role such as advisory and horizon-scanning

Key finding

56%

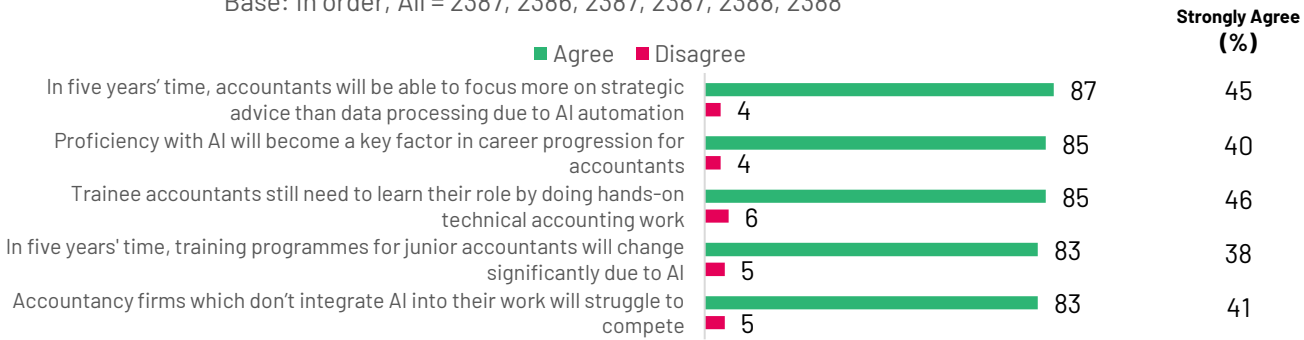agree incorporating AI makes Accountancy it more attractive as a career choice

What do you need to consider?

1. To best communicate the future benefits of AI in Accountancy, institutes should emphasise how AI empowers accountants to transition from routine tasks to strategic advisors. AI's ability to free up accountants' time for analysis and strategic planning positions accountants as key business partners who provide forward-looking guidance

The future of the Accountancy career

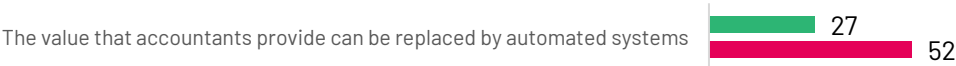**To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements** (Top 5, %)
Base: In order, All = 2387, 2386, 2387, 2387, 2388, 2388

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Disagree

Strongly Agree (%)

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree (%)
In five years' time, accountants will be able to focus more on strategic advice than data processing due to AI automation	87	4	45
Proficiency with AI will become a key factor in career progression for accountants	85	4	40
Trainee accountants still need to learn their role by doing hands-on technical accounting work	85	6	46
In five years' time, training programmes for junior accountants will change significantly due to AI	83	5	38
Accountancy firms which don't integrate AI into their work will struggle to compete	83	5	41

> Incorporating AI into Accountancy practices makes Accountancy more attractive as a career choice
>
> **56% agree / 16% disagree**

Top Disagree

Statement	Agree	Disagree
The value that accountants provide can be replaced by automated systems	27	52

AI Potential Areas of development (Top 6, (%))
Base: All = 2541

Area	%
Data entry	28
Financial reporting	27
General productivity	27
Budget and forecasting	23
Fraud detection	21
Reconciliation of...	21

Adoption of AI in business will make Accountancy increasingly important as 'guardians of data'

What you need to know...

- AI automation is expected to enhance strategic advisory by improving accountants' ability to interpret data and provide actionable, tailored recommendations for specific business needs.
- This will enable accountants to build stronger client relationships, acting as 'Data Guardians' for their partners; fostering trust, ensuring good governance and upholding professional standards.

Key finding

79%

agree that as AI is integrated more into business, the role of accountants as 'Data Guardians' will become increasingly important to organisations

What do you need to consider?

1. What does the profession need to consider regarding broader skillset training given the expected opportunities that will arise from AI tools taking over much of the 'process driven' functions of the role?

If AI is able to successfully automate the more manual, time-intensive tasks involved in the role of the Chartered Accountant, in which ways do you think accountants can most effectively add value to businesses and clients?

" It will help Chartered Accountants to think out of the box and give different ideas to the organizations for the betterment
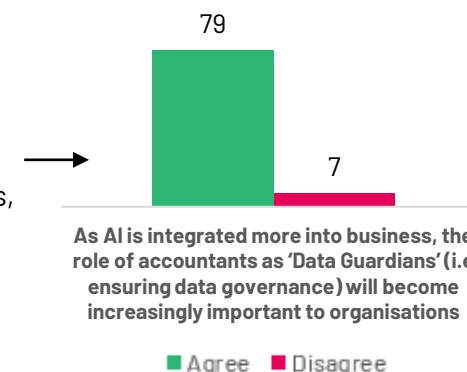
" Advisory and business partnering will become more prevalent. Accountants will work closely with leadership to shape and influence business strategy, investment decisions, and initiatives

" Accountants can use their expertise in complex problem-solving, particularly in scenarios that involve ambiguity or multifaceted issues, where human judgment is crucial.

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements (Top 5, %) | Base: All = 2386

79 — 7

As AI is integrated more into business, the role of accountants as 'Data Guardians' (i.e ensuring data governance) will become increasingly important to organisations

■ Agree   ■ Disagree

In your view, what is the biggest area of opportunity for human intelligence to remain within the profession?

" Even if AI systems can generate, say financial statements or tax computation, it would be inconceivable to just release the generated and adopt the output for use, without any human invention in reviewing it .... The human checking function is an aspect of human intelligence, which in my opinion cannot be replaced

" AI can automate many audit tasks like data collection, audit execution and reporting but areas like critical thinking, judgements and complex problem-solving skills humans can be leveraged on it