



Australian Government

Department of Finance

Department of Finance

APS Accounting and Finance Working Group

Capability Framework for
Accounting and Finance professionals
in the Australian Public Service



APS Finance and Accounting Profession

To establish and implement a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration, support and development of finance and accounting professionals within the APS.



Critical collaboration pathways



Intended outcome/s

- Collaboration across profession
- Shared training and development (where appropriate)
- Talent management
- Broadened pool of applicants
- Shared recruitment, including merit pools
- High performing workforce



4.7% of staff in the Commonwealth APS identify as 'accounting and finance'.¹



Diversity of staff in the Commonwealth APS ('accounting and finance' job family) 58.6% identify as female, 28.6% non English speaking background, 2.4% indigenous.¹



Locations 41.4% in Canberra, 58.6% other cities and regions.¹



Many accounting and finance staff are **professionally qualified**, including as a CA or CPA.



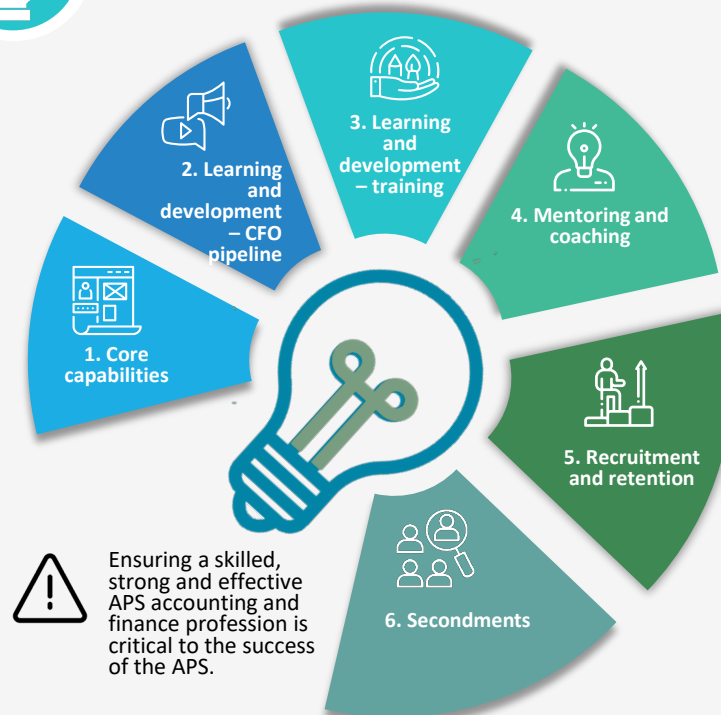
\$892.8 b assets \$1.5 t liabilities overseen and managed by the finance and accounting profession.²

APS Accounting and Finance Working Group

The Department of Finance is leading an APS Accounting and Finance Working Group to identify, prioritise and progress areas of initial focus.



Priorities – 6 areas of focus



Context

01

APS Workforce Strategy 2025 and State of Service Report

02

APS Professionalisation

03

APS Academy - Culture, leadership and capability

04

Partnering with CAANZ and CPA Australia

05

Leveraging external program providers

¹ Source: APS Employment Database June 2025

² Source: 2024-25 Final Budget Outcome

APS Accounting and Finance Profession Capability Framework



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Overview matrix

APS3/4 - Processing	Graduate	APS5	APS6	EL1	EL2	WLS considered
		Working towards CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	Working towards CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and extensive accounting experience	
Functional awareness of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	Introductory understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	Demonstrated introductory understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	Demonstrated intermediate understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the business area	Demonstrated advanced understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the business area	Demonstrated strategic oversight of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the entity and whole-of-government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS differences - Legislation
Functional awareness of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify routine non-compliance	Introductory understanding of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify routine non-compliance	Demonstrated introductory understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify and resolve routine non-compliance	Demonstrated intermediate understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to address non-compliance	Demonstrated advanced understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to address non-compliance	Demonstrated strategic oversight of financial procedures and policies and ability to address significant non-compliance and other organisational risks impacting the entity and whole-of-government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS Regulatory Functions
Prepare and communicate financial information specific to role	Demonstrated ability to analyse, report and communicate financial information specific to role	Demonstrated ability to analyse, report, advise and communicate financial information specific to role	Demonstrated ability to analyse, report, advise and communicate financial information specific to business area	Demonstrated ability to report and communicate financial information that contributes to the strategic direction of the business	Demonstrated ability to advise and communicate financial information to influence the strategic direction of the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS Job Context and Environment WLS Independence and Decision-making WLS Professional/Technical Functions WLS differences – advice WLS Service Delivery
Demonstrated ability to apply a functional understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	Demonstrated ability to apply an introductory understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	Demonstrated ability to apply an intermediate understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	Demonstrated ability to apply an advanced understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	Demonstrated ability to apply an advanced understanding and strategic awareness of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features	Demonstrated strategic understanding of financial analysis systems, options and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS differences - Knowledge
Under supervision apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve straightforward issues	Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve straightforward to moderately complex issues	Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve moderately complex issues	Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve complex issues	Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve complex issues impacting the entity and/or whole-of-government	Demonstrated ability to resolve and communicate complex and/or strategic issues impacting the entity and whole-of-government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS differences – Complexity WLS Professional/Technical Functions



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and extensive accounting experience	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Demonstrated strategic oversight of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the entity and whole-of-government	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated strategic oversight of financial procedures and policies and ability to address significant non-compliance and other organisational risks impacting the entity and whole-of-government	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to advise and communicate financial information to influence the strategic direction of the business	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated strategic understanding of financial analysis systems, options and features	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to resolve and communicate complex and/or strategic issues impacting the entity and whole-of-government	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	*	*				*		*	*	
Demonstrated advanced understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the business area	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated advanced understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to address non-compliance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to report and communicate financial information that contributes to the strategic direction of the business	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to apply an advanced understanding and strategic awareness of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve complex issues impacting the entity and/or whole-of-government	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
Working towards CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	*	*				*		*	*	
Demonstrated intermediate understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks impacting the business area	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated intermediate understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to address non-compliance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to analyse, report, advise and communicate financial information specific to business area	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to apply an advanced understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve complex issues	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
Working towards CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and accounting experience	*	*				*		*	*	
Demonstrated introductory understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated introductory understanding and application of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify and resolve routine non-compliance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to analyse, report, advise and communicate financial information specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to apply an intermediate understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve moderately complex issues	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
Introductory understanding of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Introductory understanding of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify routine non-compliance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to analyse, report and communicate financial information specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to apply an introductory understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to research, interpret and apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve straightforward to moderately complex issues	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*



Finance technical skills / experience / qualifications	Financial statement preparation and reporting	Audit and assurance	Financial policy	Finance business partner / management accountant	Internal / external budgeting	Taxation accountant	Financial compliance officer	Asset management and reporting	Systems accountant	Charging management and reporting
Functional awareness of Commonwealth financial compliance and legislative frameworks specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Functional awareness of financial procedures and policies and ability to identify routine non-compliance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Prepare and communicate financial information specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demonstrated ability to apply a functional understanding of financial analysis tools, systems, options and features specific to role	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Under supervision apply legislative requirements including accounting standards to resolve straightforward issues	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*

Finance and leadership	Shapes and manages strategy	Achieves results	Communicates and influences effectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ CA, CPA or equivalent qualification and significant demonstrable expertise and leadership in financial management, or equivalent qualification and experience. ❖ Demonstrated ability to lead, influence and oversee the internal and external financial reporting and budget processes within their entity and at a whole-of-government level. ❖ Demonstrated ability to lead, influence, and oversee the day-to-day financial management functions of their entity and at a whole-of-government level. ❖ Demonstrated understanding and ability to identify risk and apply the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to their entity. ❖ Commitment to personal development, for self and others, and undertaking of appropriate training to remain cognisant of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major technical accounting changes • emerging technology that will impact the entity and the entities' operating environment (eg. data management and artificial intelligence) • changes in organisational management practices within the accounting profession or the Australian Public Service (APS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrated ability to influence outcomes at the Board / Executive Committee level, including explaining and distilling complex financial information in a way that is understood by decision makers. ❖ Demonstrated understanding of the key drivers of the entity's business, operations and culture, operates as a business partner, and leads by example in how the finance function can positively influence the achievement of the entities objectives. ❖ Provides strong stewardship of financial management and good governance, providing leadership to accounting and financial professionals, at an organisational and whole-of-government level. ❖ Demonstrated ability and experience in business planning and ability to advise and communicate financial information to influence the strategic direction of the business. ❖ Demonstrated leadership contemporary and modern accounting and finance function including in the transition to a digital, data driven, and decentralised workforce. ❖ Ability to identify and harness opportunities and manage risks to the entity from emerging changes in technology, the entities' operating environment, legal environment and the accounting and finance profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provides influential advice to the Accountable Authority / Chief Executive on financial sustainability and leads the organisation to achieve the efficient and effective financial management and ongoing financial sustainability. ❖ Leads the implementation of appropriate financial management frameworks and risk management within the entity to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth Resource Management framework. ❖ Ensures that key stakeholders' (such as ministers, internal committees and the senior executive) needs for financial information and unbiased trustworthy advice are met. ❖ Makes sound judgements under pressure, anticipates and manages risk, considers alternative courses of action, devises action plans and advocates new approaches. ❖ Provides leadership and oversight of financial procedures and policies and ability to address significant non-compliance and other organisational risks impacting the entity and whole-of-government. ❖ Contributes to strong corporate governance and risk management within their entity and at a whole-of-government level. ❖ Demonstrated strategic understanding of financial management and analysis systems, options and features. ❖ Demonstrated ability to strategically and proactively coach, develop and mentor staff, and manage talent. ❖ Structures roles to better meet the interests and priorities of staff to aid in staff retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrated ability to present financial and related information in a way that is persuasive and easily understood by the audience. ❖ Demonstrated ability to advise and communicate financial information to influence the strategic direction of the organisation, including to the Chief Executive / Accountable Authority. ❖ Builds and maintains a strong network of relationships across the APS and the accounting and finance profession. ❖ Actively builds and uses their network to encourage whole of government coordination and collaboration. ❖ Demonstrated ability to negotiate effectively to achieve mutually positive outcomes with internal and external stakeholders. ❖ Demonstrated ability to advocate effectively with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that new ideas are appropriately considered and the interests of the entity are protected. ❖ Communicates and demonstrates to staff their individual and collective value to the organisation and their career pathways in the organisation and APS more broadly.

¹ To be read and applied in conjunction with the applicable level requirements within the Integrated Leadership System, available at www.apsc.gov.au

CFO Career Pathway

- Soft Skills
- Technical Skills
- Additional Considerations

Undertake management training.

Consider program delivery or policy roles to build different skillsets and experiences.

Accept opportunities such as acting in a higher position, working on projects or secondments.

Strengthen leadership, managerial, risk management and communicating with influence skills.

Develop an understanding of the organisation's business objectives, strategic priorities and risks, and technological challenges and opportunities.

Begin studying for a relevant professional qualification such as CA or CPA.

Develop technical accounting and finance skills. This could be through a number of roles.

Further develop soft skills such as critical thinking, decision making, adaptability, innovation and leadership.

Complete studies, for example, undergraduate degree focused around Commerce, Finance, Economics or Accounting.

Gain an understanding of how the organisation operates and its objectives.

Develop basic soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, time management and organisation.

Gain an understanding of how the organisation works and related frameworks as well as the area's responsibilities under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Contribute to whole of organisation strategic planning and change initiatives. Driving innovation in finance areas. Leading teams through high pressure environments and uncertainty.

Develop the ability to present financial information to a variety of audiences. This will require consideration on who is the target audience and what do they need or want to hear as well as how this will be presented..

Roles:

Financial Reporting:

- Provides experience in effective operations of control in an organisation.
- An understanding of the accounting standards and audit and reporting requirements.

External or Internal Budget:

- Provides an understanding of how the Government operates and the unique nature of the funding, reporting and management requirements.
- Provides experience on advising on budget performance, fiscal outlook and broader fiscal strategy.

Audit:

- Provides a strong skillset in accounting and analytical thinking with an enquiring mind.
- Allows one to be exposed to the end to end finances in an organisation, complex financial issues and the role of auditors.

Management Accounting:

- Establishes relationships across the organisation.
- Exposes one to external and internal budgeting as well as financial statements, procurement support and financial policy support.

Treasury:

- Provides a thorough understanding of the cash management function in an organisation.

Private Sector:

- Develops technical skills in areas such as taxation services, financial reporting, and audit or business consultancy.



Chief Financial Officer of a Commonwealth Entity – Graduate Recruit

Indicative Timeline	Milestone
Prior	Graduate from university with a Bachelor of Commence or equivalent degree.
Year 0	Join a government entity through a Graduate Recruitment Program.
Years 1-3	Develop technical skills in a core area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Complete professional qualifications (CA Program or CPA Program)
Years 4-5	Develop technical skills in a second core area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Develop managerial, risk management and soft skills.
Years 6-10	Strengthen leadership, managerial, risk management and soft skills in a number of roles such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Develop an understanding of the organisation's business, strategic priorities and risks, and technological challenges and opportunities. Undertake internal management training or other postgraduate education. Consider a placement in a non-finance role (such as a policy or program role) to broaden skills and experience. Contribute strongly to whole of organisation or corporate planning, change initiatives and major procurements.
Year 11	Commence as Chief Financial Officer.

Chief Financial Officer of a Commonwealth Entity – Intermediate Level Entry

Indicative Timeline	Milestone
Prior	Graduate from university with a Bachelor of Commence or equivalent degree.
Year 0	Join a private sector employer (such as a large accounting firm) through a Graduate Recruitment or other Entry Level Program.
Years 1-3	Develop technical skills working for that employer in an area such as taxation services, financial reporting, and audit or business consultancy. Complete professional qualifications (CA Program or CPA Program).
Years 4-5	Join the Australian Public Service as technical specialist as an APS or Executive Level 1 staff member and develop more technical skills in the APS Context in an area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting.
Years 6-10	Develop managerial and risk management skills in a number roles such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Undertake internal management training or other postgraduate education. Consider a placement in a non-finance role (such as a policy or program role) to broaden skills and experience. Contribute strongly to whole of organisation or corporate change initiatives and major procurements.
Year 11	Commence as Chief Financial Officer.

Career Pathway

Australian Government

Chief Financial Officer of a Commonwealth Entity – Career Starter

Department of Finance

Indicative Timeline	Milestone
Year 0	Join a government entity, possibly through an entry level program or in an administrative or processing role.
Years 1-2	Develop on the job skills through the processing of accounts or in a policy area. Commence part-time study of a Bachelor of Commerce Degree at university.
Years 3-5	Develop relevant accounting skills as a junior in a core area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Complete part-time study of a Bachelor of Commerce Degree at university.
Years 6-7	Develop technical skills in a core area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Complete professional qualifications (CA Program or CPA Program).
Years 8-12	Develop managerial and risk management skills in a number of roles such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Undertake internal management training or other postgraduate education. Consider a placement in a non-finance role (such as a policy or program role) to broaden skills and experience. Contribute strongly to whole of organisation or corporate change initiatives and major procurements.
Year 13+	Commence as Chief Financial Officer.

Chief Financial Officer of a Commonwealth Entity – Non-financial background

Indicative Timeline	Milestone
Prior	Graduate from university with a bachelor degree.
Year 0	Join a government entity through a Graduate Recruitment Program.
Years 1-3	Develop technical skills in a non-financial area such as program delivery, corporate service or information technology and develop relevant skills in that field.
Years 4-5	Continue to develop technical skills in a non-financial area such as program delivery, corporate service or information technology and develop relevant skills while developing managerial, risk management and soft skills in a non-financial area. Undertake internal management training or other postgraduate education.
Years 6-7	Transfer into a financial area and develop technical financial skills such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting while further developing managerial and risk management skills Undertake a postgraduate accounting course recognised by the professional accounting bodies.
Years 8-10	Develop technical skills in a second core area such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Strengthen leadership, managerial, risk management and soft skills in a number of roles such as financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management or internal management reporting or budgeting. Develop an understanding of the organisation's business, strategic priorities and risks, and technological challenges and opportunities. Complete professional qualifications (CA Program or CPA Program).
Year 11+	Commence as Chief Financial Officer.