[Accountants](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/list-of-accounting-skills-2062348) ensure the accuracy of financial statements for individuals, companies, and organizations. They make sure that laws and procedures are followed, and taxes are correct and paid on time. Accountants prepare financial documentation and explains their findings to individuals or a company's or organization's management.

There are several types of accountants. Management accountants prepare financial information that is used internally by the companies that employ them. Public accountants who work for accounting firms or are self-employed perform audits and prepare financial documentation and tax forms for clients. Government accountants work with government agencies' financial records. They also audit businesses, organizations, and individuals that are subject to government regulation and taxation.

### Accountant Duties & Responsibilities

Typical job duties accountants need to be able to perform include:

* Prepare budgets
* Enter transactions and reconcile account balances
* Prepare accurate work papers, schedules, and reconciliations for audit purposes
* Send invoices to accounts
* Enforce payment terms with accounts
* Stay up to date on state and local tax laws
* Work with external auditors
* Record payments and disbursements

Accountants perform a wide range of duties depending on their employer and the specific focus of their work. Whether working with corporations, individuals, or government agencies, accountants need to be able to file legal financial documents, such as those that public companies must disclose to investors. In the case of individual clients, it might be something as basic as annual income tax forms.

Accountants working within businesses need to be able to analyze internal financial documents, make sure departments are complying with the law, and make budget recommendations.

### Accountant Skills & Competencies

In addition to formal education and a license, the soft skills necessary to be an accountant include:

* Customer service skills: Many accountants spend a lot of time working with customers, assessing their needs, and assisting them with their finances or taxes. This requires the speaking and listening skills that are part of customer service.
* Analytical thinking: Accountants need to be able to identify trends or problems when reviewing finances for individuals or businesses.
* Problem-solving: Working as an accountant often involves helping clients solve specific financial problems. In many cases, accountants discover problems and need to recommend solutions when this happens.
* Microsoft Office proficiency: Accountants will spend a lot of time working with standard software applications used for businesses, especially Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet software.
* Well organized: Tracking and analyzing finances requires a high level of organization in order to stay on top of revenues and expenses as they evolve.