

FUTURE PROFESSIONAL


The Journey

A CALL FOR BROADER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

www.AuditFutures.org

The AuditFutures thought-leadership and innovation programme of ICAEW is an open inquiry into what is possible.

As part of our initiatives to reimagine the profession, we have actively engaged with a number of leading universities and professional services firms, where we have developed successful educational initiatives. Our projects have aimed to integrate liberal learning within accounting education and training, and to support the development of capacities for the future and attitudes for lifelong learning.



We are promoting a broader professional curriculum that contextualises technical content within its social purpose, and emphasises the importance of reflective and dialectic thinking in professionals.

Through research and workshops focusing on approaches to teaching and learning, we have advanced a notion of holistic education experience, which impacts personal development, emotional sensibility and moral motivation in learners.

With this publication, we hope to prompt new discussions about the role of education in fostering the future professional. It is a reflection on the insights gathered from the AuditFutures educational initiatives. Here we aim to create a more powerful narrative for the future of education and to engage progressive educators in a constructive dialogue.

We would like to thank Plamena Pehlivanova of UCL Institute of Education for her contribution in developing this report.



New Horizons for Education

HOW IS THE WORLD OF BUSINESS CHANGING?

The role of accountancy is becoming increasingly complex and even more important within our contemporary society. Business is facing new challenges in areas such as fin-tech and bio-tech, cyber security and data privacy, and needs to answer to issues related to human rights and equality, globalisation, environmental degradation, and development policy in emerging economies.

Uncertainties presented by the changing nature of work, the threat of automation and the cultural shifts resulting from globalisation are increasingly challenging the role of professions and calling for education that advances skills of resilience and adaptability. As accounting and finance becomes more automated, there will be greater demand for advanced technology and data skills that are not isolated but well informed by the ethic within the specific field of business. Novice professionals are increasingly seeking 'purposeful' work and opportunities to grow into alternative career paths, requiring companies and education providers to rethink how to invest in human capital.

These challenges raise further concerns about the relevance of professional bodies in areas such as accountancy, medicine and law, and their ethical obligations and role within society. There is a reported decline in perceived trust toward the learned professions, which could partially be associated with the shift toward technical excellence and economic efficiency, and the diminished expression of moral responsibility. As such, it is important to ascertain the complex factors that impact the development of the individual along their professional journey and the broader social responsibility that is at the core of professionalism.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

Employees in the millennial generation seem to value variation in experiences, developmental opportunities and more rapid promotion opportunities.

The emerging demands that create a new business context are several: the need for an ethically responsive business in a globalised world; the importance of critical thinking skills in the growing knowledge economy; and the challenges imposed by information technology and cyber-ethics. These

factors require our attention and call for a more systemic approach to this new business context.

When considering what the profession needs in the future and how to equip it with the capacities to respond to these needs, it is essential to understand the role of education and training. The complexity of the business context poses new challenges to the structure and process of education, and raises the importance of investing in knowledge, skills and habits of mind that could improve individual lifelong learning prospects, resilience and adaptability. Furthermore, it is important to understand what conditions could ensure that professionalism is developed and ethical standards internalised, so that they have a lasting impact on attitudes and behaviour in the workplace.

In 2016, AuditFutures ran an exploratory project on the future of professional service firms to think about how the profession can evolve, given the changes in society, business, technology and culture. Our research clearly demonstrates that employee expectations and motivations directly affect the values and ethical culture within organisations.

Traditionally, the hierarchical structure has framed career opportunities within firms, and most employees have been motivated by the prospect of becoming a partner. But today more employees are seeing better opportunities in other sectors and are less likely than before to patiently work their way up the company ladder. They are exhibiting more interest in business services and seeking opportunities to grow into alternative career paths, and there is a sense that the current positions and role expectations are not maximising the full potential of young people (eg their fluency with technology).

Younger generations expect more alternatives than just a path to partnership, and sometimes are regarded as having a sense of entitlement when they join the firms, both of which mean there can be a widening gap between their expectations and what firms need from them. As a result, there is a high level of turnover of staff, which could be explained by the perceived unattractiveness of work-life balance and inadequate remuneration when compared to similar roles in the industry. Employees in the millennial generation seem to value variation in experiences, developmental opportunities and more rapid promotion opportunities.

The development of expertise and ethical orientation is fundamental to becoming a professional. Beyond the foundation that education provides, the individual responds to the context and opportunities provided by the professional practice they enter. The organisational and professional contexts provide powerful norms, language and values to which the individual responds. This points to the important reciprocity between the development of professional identity and the context that enables it. We find it particularly important to emphasise the role of ethos and purpose that guides the development of professional excellence, ethical outlook and engagement in practice.

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BROADER SKILLS FOR A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Individuals will need to expand their technical knowledge to include broader understanding of the changing business landscape, requiring social and creative intelligence.

There is a growing interest and increased research into future skills and lifelong learning. This has led us to reassess what we understand by expert knowledge and points to the importance of creative and social intelligence in response to automation. The question of 'what future skills are needed and how to improve lifelong learning' has most recently been investigated by the UK Government Office for Science, the OECD and the Economist Intelligence Unit. ICAEW has recently reviewed the professional skills element of the ACA qualification to ensure its continuing relevance for students and employers (given the technological, regulatory and demographic changes affecting the accountancy profession). As a foresight project looking into the future of the profession, ICAEW's AuditFutures has developed multiple ambitious projects that engage and challenge academia, practice and policy in developing holistic educational approaches.

Employers are increasingly considering different skills, in particular those that have had traditionally more technical profiles. To qualify as a lawyer or an accountant, a person needs to obtain certain hours of narrow training, whereas the time might be better invested in building a broader skill set. Most companies are looking for individuals who are charismatic, influential and good communicators,

who can be client-facing, and can sell and operate in a new environment of networked teams. At the same time, they are also looking for tech-savvy people who can implement technology and design and optimise business processes.

As such, individuals will need to expand their technical knowledge to include broader understanding of the changing business landscape, and invest in building social and creative intelligence.

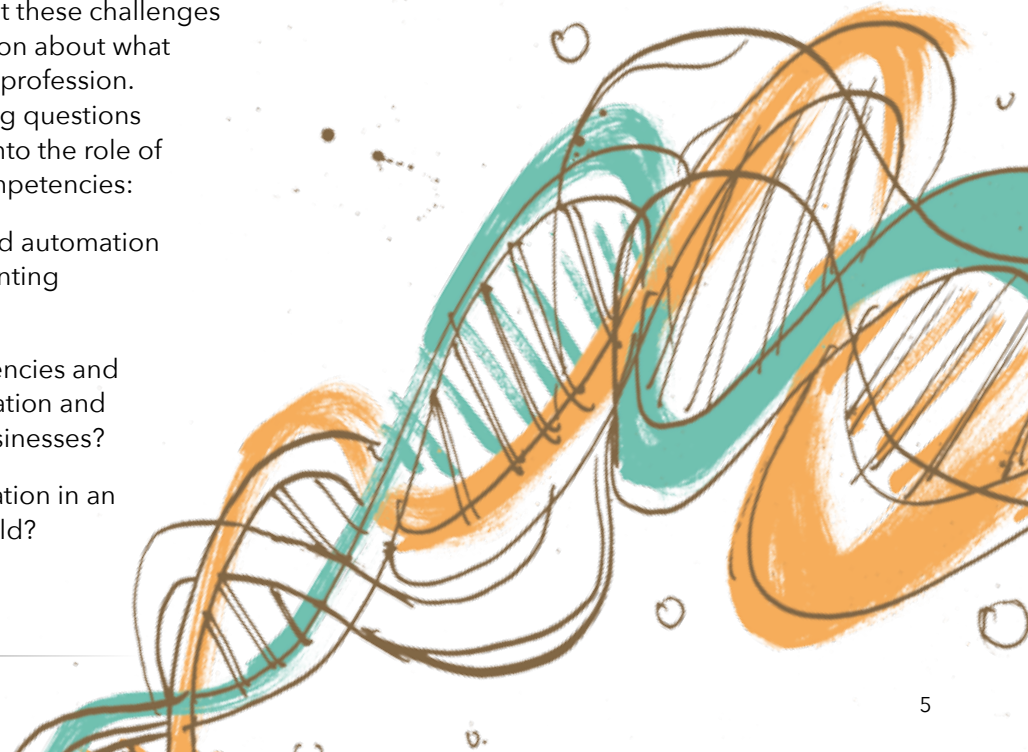
The changing nature of work, with its structural complexities and the need to cater to different demands within practice, may have an impact on the moral awareness and ethical behaviour of professionals. There is a danger that the move to a global, service-oriented economy and disruptions of new technologies might dilute the value of professional services, and their ethical commitments to the broader aspect of public interest and the public good. Therefore, 'professional expertise' must be augmented and contextualised in response.

EDUCATING THE FUTURE PROFESSIONAL

As the accountancy profession expands its global services and its intake diversifies, it faces significant challenges to the previously shared values, educational experiences and overall ethos of the profession. Similarly, these shifts question the value of accounting degrees and the role of university education in equipping professionals for the future. With this report, we aim to bring out these challenges and engage in a deeper conversation about what future capacities are needed in the profession. Here we outline some of the guiding questions that inform our foresight research into the role of education in developing future competencies:


- What is the relevance of projected automation to the current structures in accounting practice and future education?
- What are the key critical competencies and qualities needed in the diversification and expansion of future firms and businesses?
- What should be the role of education in an increasingly service-oriented world?

- Is education engaging individuals to develop a deeper interest and understanding in the role of accountancy and in its growing global role?
- How do we attract and motivate young people to the profession? How can we develop conditions, which foster the right set of values, skills and characteristics in individuals?



The future professional

Accountancy is a social science discipline and a creative practice that is informed by, and contributes to, key issues within business, political economy, human rights, ethics and sustainable development. As such, it calls for professionals with a moral orientation, socio-emotional intelligence and creative vision for innovating services and solving problems. To help orientate, motivate and engage novice professionals, AuditFutures aims to work and engage with firms, businesses and educational institutions to develop these critical capacities.



We will paint a more holistic vision of the future professional — by looking at the key skills, knowledge, values and characteristics that are needed, but also why they are needed beyond the ends of economic consumption.

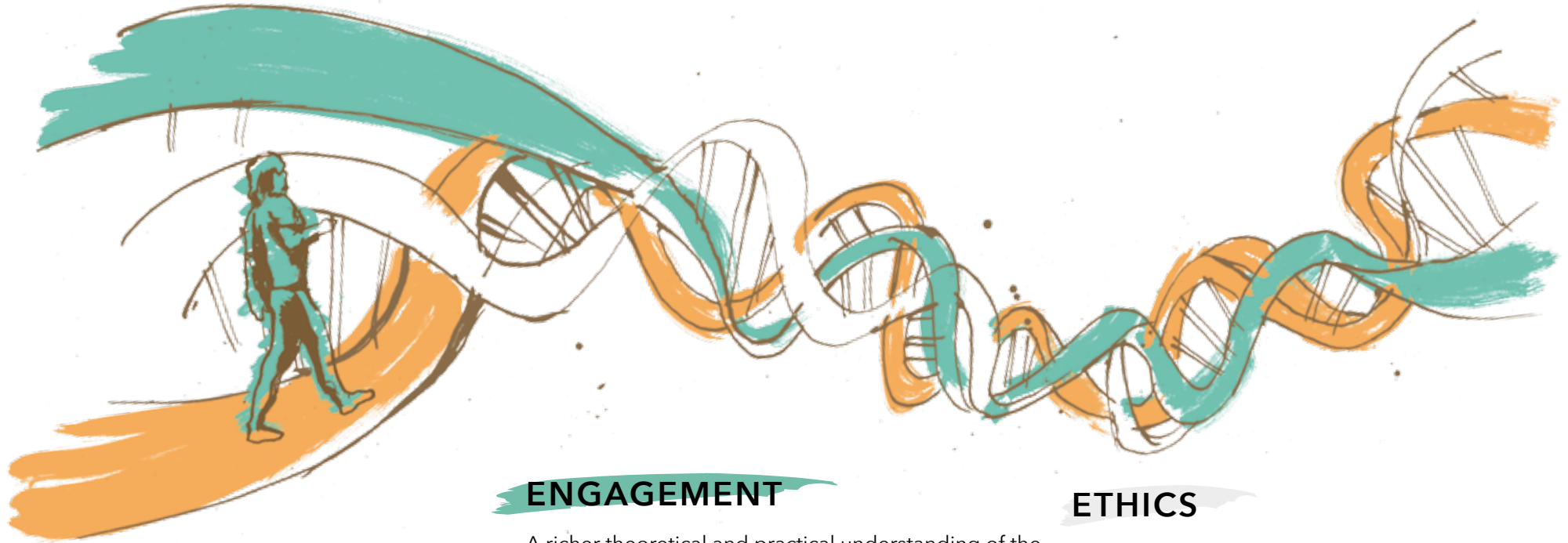
Known as one of the founders of sociology of professions, the American scholar Eliot Freidson (1923–2005) defines a profession as ‘an ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to economic gain and to the quality rather than

the economic efficiency of work ...’ The ideology of professionalism claims that work is more for the satisfaction gained in performing the work well than in providing a good living. What he means is that satisfaction is gained from performing and engaging with the work, which is interesting and challenging because of its complexity and the need to exercise discretion and judgement. Commitment to that kind of work is part of what C. Wright Mills calls ‘the ethic of craftsmanship ...’ The German sociologist, Max Weber (1864 – 1920) similarly argues that work has ends beyond economic consumption, by explaining this through the role of Protestantism in motivating the activities of entrepreneurs and workers during development of capitalism.

Thus, becoming and being a good professional requires a number of interwoven components, where discretion and judgement are key. Through our engagements and research within education, we emphasise the importance of ethos as the guiding compass that informs judgement and orients the technical and professional knowledge toward its wider social purpose. Furthermore, we explore how context and culture impact individuals, and how institutions can foster the enabling conditions to promote and develop certain ethical behaviours

and dispositions. Drawing on the influential theory of professional practice by the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) and the Harvard psychology professor Howard Gardner’s Good Work project, we are proposing a broader framework that defines the future professional. As Gardner writes, ‘If you want to be a good worker, you can’t just be excellent, you can’t just be engaged, and you can’t just be ethical. You need to have those intertwined strands of DNA.’

Since there are particular individual characteristics (such as integrity and moral judgement) that can be fostered through the help of institutional conditions (culture and ethos), we make a strong case for designing ‘ethical systems’ within education and practice that could immerse individuals in the conditions where these qualities could flourish. We further examine the conditions that education can create to enable or trigger the expression and development of these components.



EXCELLENCE

Professionalism should be first and foremost a pursuit of a good that is internal to the practice, such as improving the knowledge, the practice and the individual. It should not be defined around the pursuit of purely economic efficiency. It is important to think about what excellence means for the accounting profession – the nature of its technical expertise, its role in providing trust to society or its role in furthering a particular market economy.

ENGAGEMENT

A richer theoretical and practical understanding of the profession and its impact on society could increase the motivation and commitment to work. As such, a broader education and training should contextualise the technical aspect of professional practice by emphasising its impact on society and environment. Similarly, we have to be conscious of the power that professional practice (mainly referring to professional service firms) has in promoting certain culture, through narratives and incentives, which consequentially attracts particular talent.

ETHICS

Ethicality usually defines what is the right conduct or practice, especially pertaining to the standards of a profession. These standards are the principles that the profession sets in order to achieve a particular goal, which then helps define the qualities that a professional should have in order to achieve this goal.

However, we would like to broaden this definition by placing emphasis on the being rather than doing, where being ethical stems from the identity and/or character of the professional, rather than just being a reflection of his/her actions. Ethicality should be understood by the motivations, and judgments, as well as the actions of the professional.

Future Professional

Excellence

In order to achieve excellence, these elements are key

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification gained through professional education and professional examinations are required for entrance to the profession.

DISCRETION

Discretion is the ability to exercise judgement in a way that has potential for creativity and innovation.

FORMAL KNOWLEDGE

It is the specialised professional expertise, which cannot be acquired simply from experience.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Practical and technical knowledge is never value neutral but always guided by theory.

Ethics

Ethics requires and can be described by the following elements

ETHICAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

The emotional skills, the abilities to identify and reason through ethical issues.

ETHOS

The professional community as manifested in its attitudes, commitments and aspirations.

VIRTUES AND MORALITY

They are defined and have meaning in the context of a specific profession: they require a shared goal, shared rules, and shared standards of evaluation.

COMMON GOOD

What is shared and beneficial for members of a given community.

Engagement

To engage and motivate individuals, we must take account of the following

NARRATIVE

Powerful texts, metaphors and aphorisms that develop moral motivation and understanding.

MORAL SENSITIVITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The ability to perceive situations, empathise, connect and take action.

CONTEXTUALISED KNOWLEDGE AND MORAL CLOSENESS

Knowledge contextualised by engaging with the social and political aspects of the profession.

COMMUNITY

Professional education and practice should be seen as a community of inquiry into the nature and role of the profession.

The structure of the DNA and the theory of epigenetics (how organisms change due to external triggers on gene expression), present a powerful metaphor for the dynamic between the internal components and external conditions that enable the development of the future professional.

Excellence

DISCRETION

Discretion is a key element of professionalism – being trusted, being committed, being morally involved in one's work. Professionalism emphasises the understanding of theory and abstract concepts so as to enable the development of discretionary judgement rather than the routine application of a limited number of mechanical techniques. In other words, discretion is the ability to exercise judgement in a way that has potential for creativity and innovation. It is this element of discretion that still gives professionals supremacy over artificial intelligence.

FORMAL KNOWLEDGE

All forms of work require both everyday and practical knowledge, but only some require a specialised professional expertise, which cannot be acquired simply from experience. According to Eliot Freidson, this formal knowledge is mainly mental because it is grounded in abstract concepts and theories that are gained through specialised professional education, not practice. This richer conceptual knowledge provides the individual with the ability to analyse situations, to judge critically, and to react creatively to new situations. It provides context and critical capacities

to understanding procedures and techniques engaged in practice. This form of knowledge is more powerful as it prepares the individual for actual tasks required by the specialisation, by enhancing the individual's critical judgement and discretion.

QUALIFICATIONS

Professional schooling has been previously seen as the primary source of the status of professionals and their personal, public and official identities. It also contributes to the development of commitment to the occupation and to a shared identity, experience, and a feeling of community or solidarity among all those who have acquired the status that a shared qualification brings.

While professional qualifications remain essential, the value of relevant (accounting) degrees is being challenged by the democratisation and diversification of entrance to professional service firms, as well as the changing demand for higher digital and analytical skills.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Technical knowledge should not be seen as a value neutral objective activity, but always informed by an underlying theory and philosophy. Similarly, financial tools used within accounting practice are never neutral, objective techniques but are driven by theoretical foundations that support particular types of market economy, social structures and public good. We argue that the practical and technical knowledge is always guided by theory, which needs to be addressed and critically understood by the professional who engages in practice. This requires the professional to have the capacity of judgement and an ethical compass to act in the most appropriate way. A 'professional' is meant to be more than a technical expert. Instead, he/she is expected to be a practically wise and motivated individual whose orientation is to doing good work with perceived purpose.

Ethics

ETHICAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Ethical awareness and sensitivity could be described as emotional skills and the abilities to identify, engage with and reason through ethical issues. An individual must be sensitive to ethical issues before he/she can engage in moral reasoning or reflection. Ethical awareness and sensitivity are just components of what leads to ethical behaviour, but they are fundamental to the ability to judge or act. Due to the perceivably 'technical' nature of accounting, introducing emotion into accounting may lead to an improved sense of moral obligation and ultimately to rehumanising the profession.

VIRTUES AND MORALITY

Virtue could be described as a quality that is deemed to be morally good and is valued as a foundation of good moral being. Virtues and morality have lost their richer meaning in modern practice and are important concepts to bring forward to inform a more holistic vision of the accounting professionals – in considering their qualities, values and capacities. We draw on the philosophy of Aristotle, where virtue is defined around the excellence at being human. Virtues are important to understand the nature of

professionals, as they are defined and have meaning in the context of a specific profession: they require a shared goal, shared rules, and shared standards of evaluation. The virtues are those goods by reference to which we define our relationships to other professionals with whom we share the same kind of purposes and standards, which inform practice.

COMMON GOOD AND PUBLIC INTEREST

The term 'common good' mainly refers to what is shared and beneficial for members of a given community. The concept differs significantly among philosophical doctrines and is difficult to define within the framework of professional practices where serving the clients is equated to serving the public good. In essence, professional practices are mechanisms for collectively providing society with the goods needed (ie health, justice, peace). However, the complex nature of accountancy and audit makes the term 'common good' quite ambiguous. We want to revitalise the importance of accounting within society by developing a richer understanding of the common good it provides and its direct impact on society and environment. It is the public interest, which the profession pursues, that determines the obligations and virtues a professional should have.

ETHOS

The socio-cultural environment in which a professional develops informs his/her values and principles. We believe that professional ethos is informed by the feedback-loop relationship between the aspirations that the profession holds, the incentives communicated by practice, and the beliefs that education fosters within young professionals. As a novice professional, the individual ultimately responds to the ethos promoted by the profession and the institution of work, where the personal and the organisational values could also be in tension. Therefore, it is important to develop a critical understanding of one's own values and the forces that impact decision-making.

Engagement

NARRATIVE

Education creates the moral orientation and intellectual foundations in individuals before they enter the profession. Through using language, metaphors, aphorisms, individuals could develop deeper understanding and personal motivation to their work. The power of moral narratives, such as in text from Buddha and Confucius, could motivate and guide people in adopting particular orientation to their work and decisionmaking. It has been pointed out that accountancy needs role models and richer narratives to humanise and raise the importance of the profession within society. Thus, we want to emphasise the importance of rich narratives within education and training that engage accounting students in developing a sense of purpose and enthusiasm for their role within the profession.

CONTEXTUALISED KNOWLEDGE AND MORAL CLOSENESS

A powerful education experience is one that develops a sense of liberation, curiosity and commitment in the individual. A richer understanding of the complexities of the business context and the impact of accounting practice on individuals and society enhances individual's critical thinking skills, commitment and moral closeness. It is important for professional education to contextualise technical knowledge within its socio-political environment and to engage students in the complexities of real-world cases. In order to develop professional judgement, individuals need to engage in deeper philosophical analysis of political, economic and social nature before they enter practice.

MORAL SENSITIVITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

These are the key elements that enable an individual to perceive situations, empathise, connect and take action in problematic situations. Understanding standards and rules does not motivate an individual to act, unless he/she is emotionally engaged and sensitised to respond.

COMMUNITY

The role of professional education should be to strengthen an individual's commitment to and identification with their occupation. The sense of community or solidarity among those trained at professional schools is strengthened by the common problems they confront in the course of their work. We propose that community of inquiry is essential in the context of education and later practice, in order to improve cohesion, motivation and engagement of professionals.



A virtuous professional is not simply competent technician who follows professional rules, but a person of moral and intellectual qualities that enable them to achieve the public good that they have committed to in their role.



The Journey

The development of a professional could be mapped out as a continuous journey. As such, we emphasize the need to explore in depth the interdependent elements and processes that interact to develop one's identity, professional culture and ethos. An individual's identity should not be looked at in a vacuum, but understood through the conditions and environment, which as Aristotle argues, affect the self-perception, choice and actions. Individuals are not blank slates when they enter education or practice; they bring with them morality socialized in a certain cultural community and environment. So a novice professional comes into practice with certain values and beliefs, which are then reshaped and challenged through institutional culture and the ethos that guides practice. It is the cultivation of character in the professional, but it is also the ethos of the profession, which enables, attracts and rewards certain values, behaviours and choices. Thus, understanding and promoting a more critical outlook toward the feedback-loop relationship between profession, practice and education is an important aspect of our thought leadership programme.

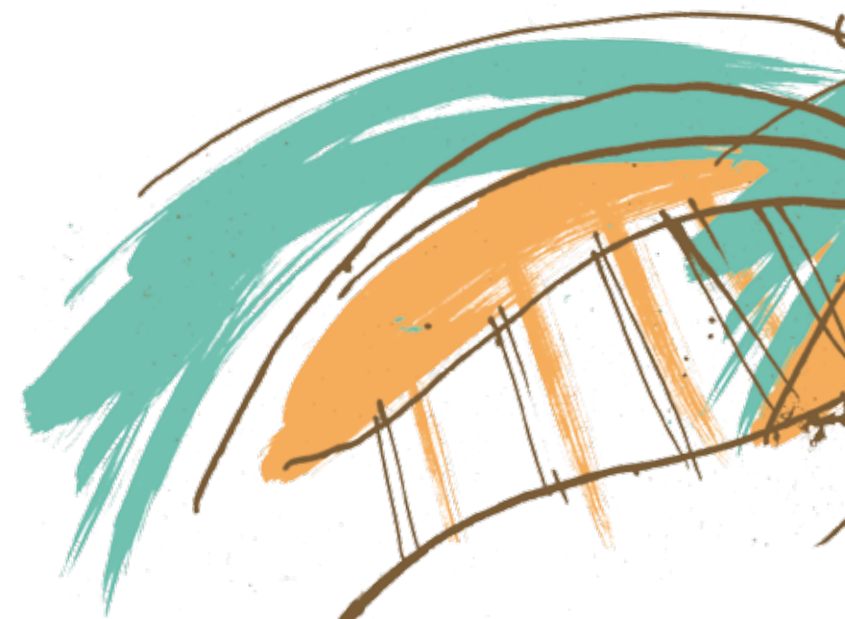
Furthermore, the judgments that a professional makes are not made in a vacuum, but are responsive to the signals of the wider institutional and professional ethos - culture, environment and incentives. The values that an individual brings and develops during his/her development are in response to those values and narrative provided as part of the culture and conditions within education and practice. We particularly draw attention to the role of university education in its power to disrupt students' ethical perceptions, and to foster the capacities of critical judgment and social intelligence.

We see the journey of a professional as dependent and responsive to these key elements:

- the individuals and their values;
- the values of the cultural and institutional domain;
- the commercial pressures from the field of work; and
- the signals from the wider society.

The work of AuditFutures aims to create a powerful narrative about the profession and its role in contemporary society, by targeting key stages of the professional journey – from early perceptions,

foundational and lifelong education, qualifications and practice. This is becoming very relevant as more firms offer various schemes to open access to the profession to anybody with the potential to succeed. Increasing diversification of trainee intake requires rethinking current training and educational approaches.



MOTIVATING THE PROFESSIONAL AS A 'MORAL AGENT'

Professionals should view themselves as moral agents, whose sensitivity and motivation comes with the ability to reason independently, and judge the normative standards guiding their work.

INITIATING INDIVIDUALS INTO PRACTICE AND AN ORGANISATIONAL ETHOS

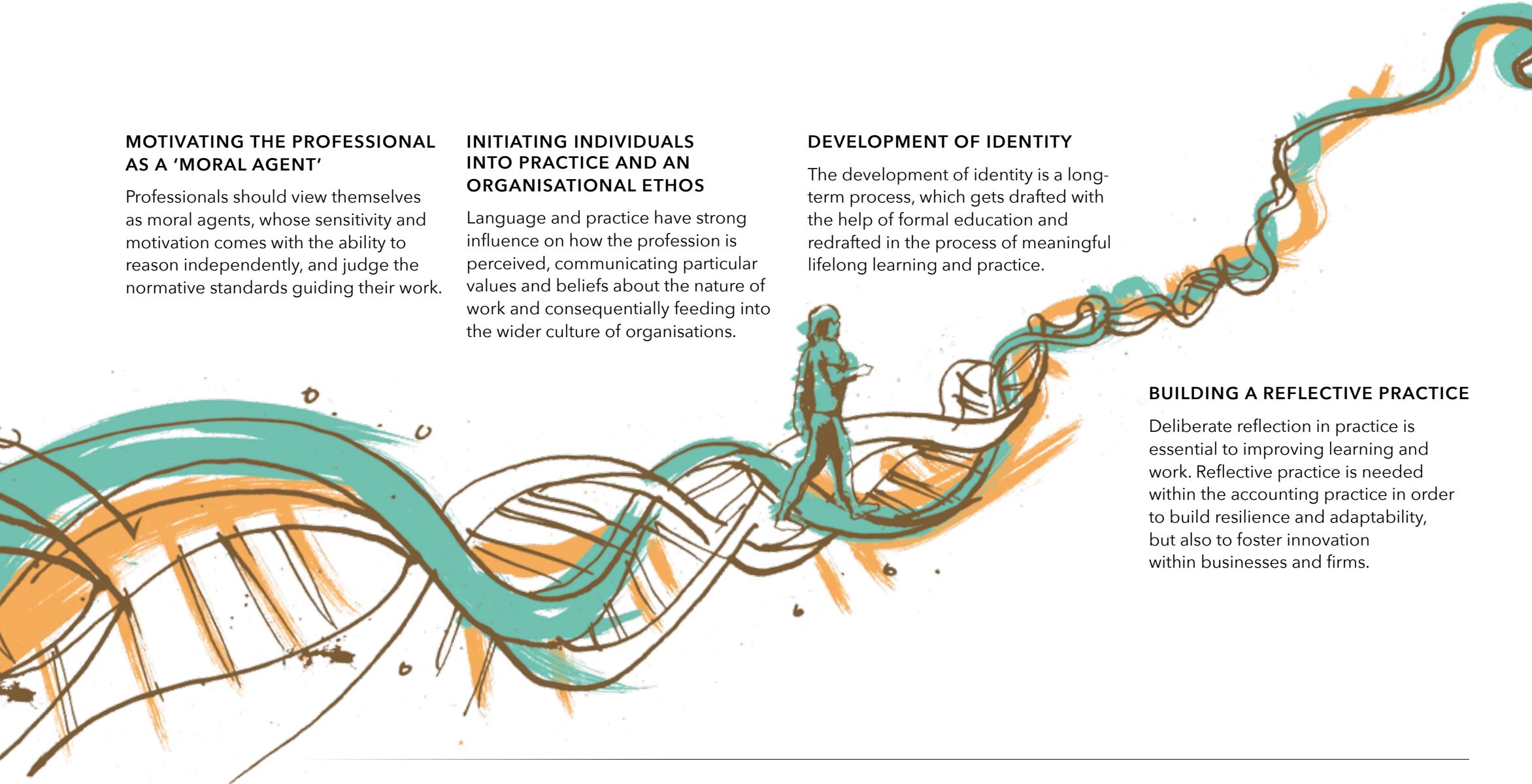
Language and practice have strong influence on how the profession is perceived, communicating particular values and beliefs about the nature of work and consequentially feeding into the wider culture of organisations.

DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY

The development of identity is a long-term process, which gets drafted with the help of formal education and redrafted in the process of meaningful lifelong learning and practice.

BUILDING A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Deliberate reflection in practice is essential to improving learning and work. Reflective practice is needed within the accounting practice in order to build resilience and adaptability, but also to foster innovation within businesses and firms.



The Journey

MOTIVATING THE PROFESSIONAL AS A 'MORAL AGENT'

Understanding and being motivated by the higher purpose of the professional practice is what drives a professional to engage and excel along the journey. As part of the journey, professionals should develop moral sensitivity and the ability to critically recognise themselves as responsible individuals. As professional people, they should recognise that their actions have a direct impact on society and the power and trust vested in them by society contribute toward a specific public good. The philosopher Alastair MacIntyre points out that professionals should have a critical view of themselves as moral agents, whose sensitivity and motivation comes with the ability to reason independently, and who also have the capacity to recognise that they have the ability and good reason to judge the normative standards guiding their work. Simply said, professionals should have the ability to make independent decisions, by being critical toward their own biases as individuals and the professional standards that they follow.

INITIATING INDIVIDUALS INTO PRACTICE AND AN ORGANISATIONAL ETHOS

Language is crucial in informing learners about the essence of the profession and in forming their early perceptions of the organisational culture and values. The essence and nature of the profession is categorised and communicated to students even before they reach university or practice. Our research tells us that there are crucial practices within schools that expose students to the field of accountancy, in a way that mostly categorise the profession as 'vocational and technical'. Such concepts influence an impoverished perception of practice, forming particularly instrumental values and beliefs about the nature of work and consequentially feeding into the wider culture of organisations. As early as secondary education, we need to rethink the narrative that describes the profession and the one that influences the motivation and interest of students.


DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY

Professionals are expected to have a shared sense of purpose and personal commitment to ensure their ethical responsibility to the client and society. It could be argued that individual identity is activated when people get involved in work that has a greater purpose and in which they can see their impact. This ownership builds intrinsic motivation and decreases the risk of ethical violation. We appreciate that the development of identity is a long-term process, which gets drafted with the help of formal education and redrafted in the process of meaningful lifelong learning and practice.



BUILDING A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Engaging in reflective practice has been defined by the American philosopher Donald Schon (1983) as the most important source of lifelong professional development and improvement. Experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning; however, deliberate reflection on experience is essential to learning and improving. People who reflect throughout their practice are not just looking back on experiences, but are taking a conscious look at their emotions, actions, and responses. In doing so, they use that information to add to their existing repertoire of knowledge and reach a higher level of understanding practice beyond following technical procedures. Reflective learning is essential to the idea of organisational learning, through which organisations don't just innovate their operations to keep apace with changing market conditions and but create of new and better ways of achieving business goals. We believe that more reflective practice is needed within the accounting profession in order to build resilience and adaptability, but also to foster innovation within businesses and firms.



Ethos is an important guiding principle for the young professional on their journey, as they learn, develop knowledge and skills, and build experience. People develop their professional identity as they gain experience but their beliefs and attitudes are shaped by the existing ethos within the profession and within practice.

Educating for the future

We promote a powerful education experience that develops a sense of liberation, curiosity and commitment in aspiring professionals.

The changing nature of the accountancy profession calls for critical education and training that broadens the perspective of learners beyond the required excellence through technical knowledge and skills, but proactively guides them to develop understanding of higher purpose, values, public good, and ethical leadership.

We have explored research within the learning sciences to develop an argument for designing approaches and methods that enable deeper and effective learning. We see constructivist pedagogical methods, democratic conditions and richer philosophical content as the foundations for powerful education experience in accountancy. We want to enrich the field of accountancy education by testing out new tools and methods for deeper learning, knowledge construction and identity formation.

A powerful education requires a holistic vision about the formal and informal components that contribute to students' learning and experience. The work of AuditFutures has piloted and tested

the normative method of 'community of inquiry' to emphasise the importance of critical thinking, habits of mind and character building in the context of accountancy degrees. The liberal arts component and the emphasis on critical inquiry have been used to make sense of professional standards and in fostering discretion instead of compliance.

The university initiatives led by AuditFutures have investigated and designed educational practices and culture that could foster the conditions for the promotion of excellence, ethics and engagement in aspiring professionals. Recent findings in the learning sciences research tell us that moral judgement in professionals should be developed as an interpersonal process, and not as a private reasoning process done by individuals.

- Ethics content should be seen as integrated in the curriculum and mission, communicated through the culture, language, narratives and role models of the faculty; and through the shared experiences that extracurricular activities and group research projects foster.
- Individual and group identity should be leveraged as part of the education experience.

A course that changes how an individual thinks of herself, and of her classmates/co-workers, has a greater chance of success than one that simply tries to educate the learner/practitioner and impart knowledge and skills.

- The concept of 'professionalism' should be taught intentionally and discussed critically (through integrating narratives, experience and philosophy) with the objective of humanising the technical content and helping shape perceptions, responsiveness, emotions and intuitions as part of the professional identity.
- Problem-based learning has been shown to improve group cohesion and learning triggered by solving problems, which is of particular importance to developing socio-emotional intelligence, communication, management, and motivation in professionals.

Our initiatives and programmes

PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY

An integrated university programme looking to expand, contextualise and humanise accountancy education.

AUDITFUTURES UNIVERSITY

A thematic initiative aiming to connect the profession to future complex global problems and to build capacity in students and professionals.

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

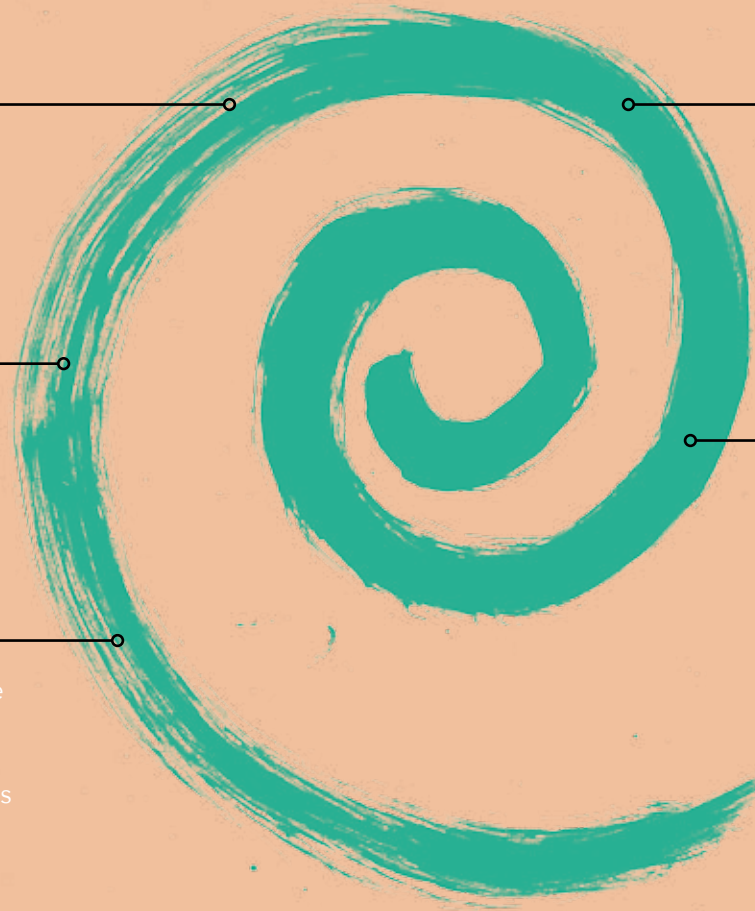
Our work aims to bridge academia and practice by engaging individuals in collective research to solve global problems and build social and creative capacities in professionals. This includes integration of design thinking, future scenarios, group field research and research posters.

PROFESSIONALS XXI

An initiative to support accounting firms in developing and retaining talent by engaging and supporting novice professionals in building their capacity and commitment to the profession.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS

Bespoke training programmes aimed at building capacity in leading educators and faculties who are interested in developing approaches to improve students' critical thinking skills, professional judgement and motivation.



The relationship between practice and education is a complex reciprocal one, where education fosters the foundations, which are simultaneously informed by existing social structures, norms and narratives. Our initiatives aim to foster the conditions that could develop a personal values and commitments by engaging and reflecting on the wider professional ethos.

University Engagements

PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY

Philosophy for Accountancy (P4A) is a successful university intervention that we have developed as part of leading accountancy degree programmes in the UK. Over the past three years, we have engaged students in active seminars that use constructivist methods of learning in order to improve their critical and creative thinking. Through the integrated philosophy seminars and curriculum planning, we have expanded and humanised the understanding of financial tools, procedures and regulations. By creating a normative culture of community-of-inquiry, our aim has been to 1) inform students' moral beliefs about the profession, 2) challenge their pre-existing, culturally-informed values and 3) motivate them by engaging them in a socialised, problem-based learning project.

By investing in group cohesion, dialogic thinking, personal reflections and proactive responses to future global trends, P4A initiatives have successfully contributed to the development of informed professional identity, critical outlook and reflective attitudes. Investing in the development of the character and individual ethos – beyond skills and knowledge – has developed personal

understanding and commitment, passion and intuition for ethical behaviour and moral responsibilities.

In addition, emphasising interdisciplinary competencies and professional judgement within accountancy better reflects the existing needs that require education beyond single-track specialisation and narrow expert technical knowledge.

The sessions orientate and supplement the existing curriculum by broadening students' understanding of the topics of social purpose, ethos, complexity of decision-making and global problems. By liberating the technical content and contextualising it within a larger social frame, we have enabled aspiring professionals to develop a moral compass and higher motivation.

AUDITFUTURES UNIVERSITY

In order to provoke creative and proactive thinking and connect the profession to future complex and global problems, we have conducted shorter catalyst sessions in schools, universities and practice. These sessions have both informed and inspired practice and learning by challenging the role, relevance and future needs of accountancy and finance practice. Topics that have become pivotal are 1) the rising threat of automation, and 2) the role of accountancy in global sustainability goals and human development.



PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Problem-based learning aids first-hand understanding of complex concepts, testing of hypotheses, and creatively generating new ideas, theories and products. This allows for critical, creative and collaborative thinking.

There is a great deal of research that has shown the rising importance of skills in solving complex problems, and working with other people as well as machines to solve them. In 2017, the OECD will publish its first country rankings for collaborative problem solving. Similarly, the recent Nesta report on Collaborative Problem-Solving (2017) claims that such skills look to be increasingly relevant not just to many of the jobs that will survive new waves of automation, but also to our ability to cope in everyday life.

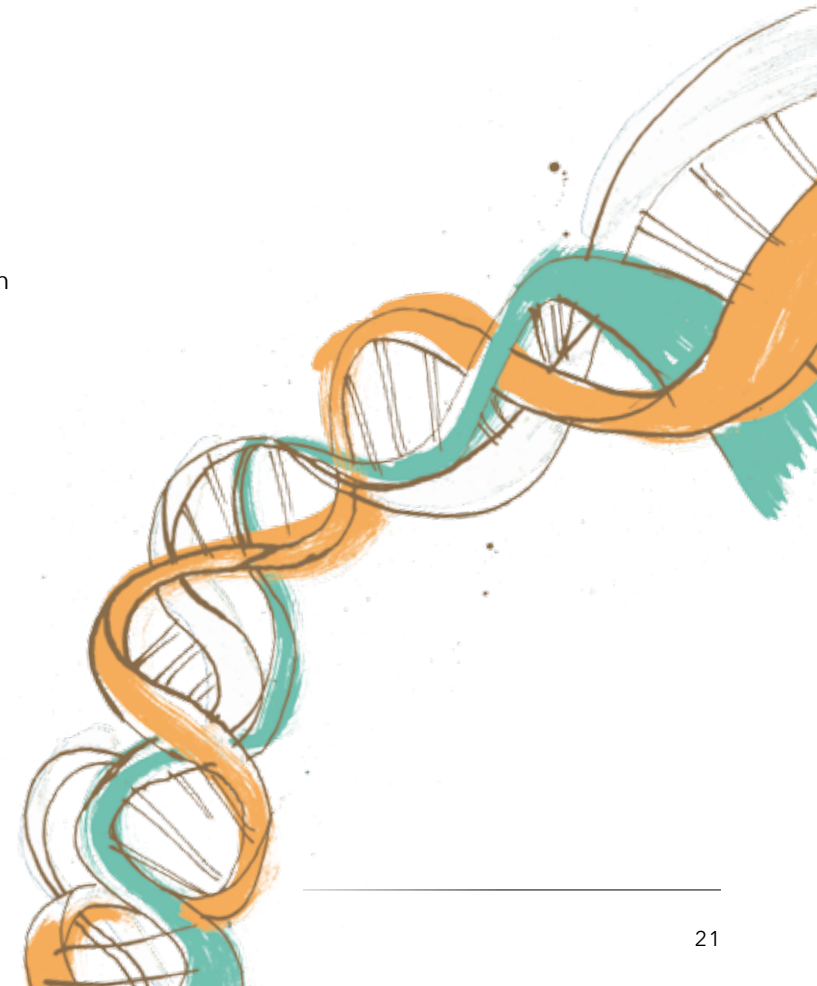
Collaborative problem-solving, also known as Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and Project-Based Learning (PjBL), sits at the intersection of non-routine problem-solving and social intelligence. Problem-based learning is shown to improve group cohesion and learning triggered by solving problems, which is of particular importance to professional education. AuditFutures has engaged

with leading business schools to develop the space for problem-based learning where students challenge existing notions and explore solutions for future issues in the field of accountancy. The 'Future Accountant' project has engaged accounting students to actively take part in research, build on philosophical concepts fundamental to the essence of professionalism, and develop critical perspectives and ideas about the role of accountancy.

In the case of accountancy, we draw on both problem and project-based approaches to learning, to create 'authentic contexts' of learning, such as case studies, scenario building, and design thinking, in which students engage with real-life dilemmas/situations and work in groups to resolve problems or create new solutions. Learners are given the chance to work through real complex problems and derive new conclusions, instead of simply memorising textbook materials (although they are encouraged to challenge and build on such materials).

universities to build capacities in their teaching staff and provide induction sessions into the culture and pedagogical methods of the programme. We have conducted multiple training sessions and curriculum consultations with leading UK business schools

who have successfully integrated our theory and approach within their coursework and curriculum.



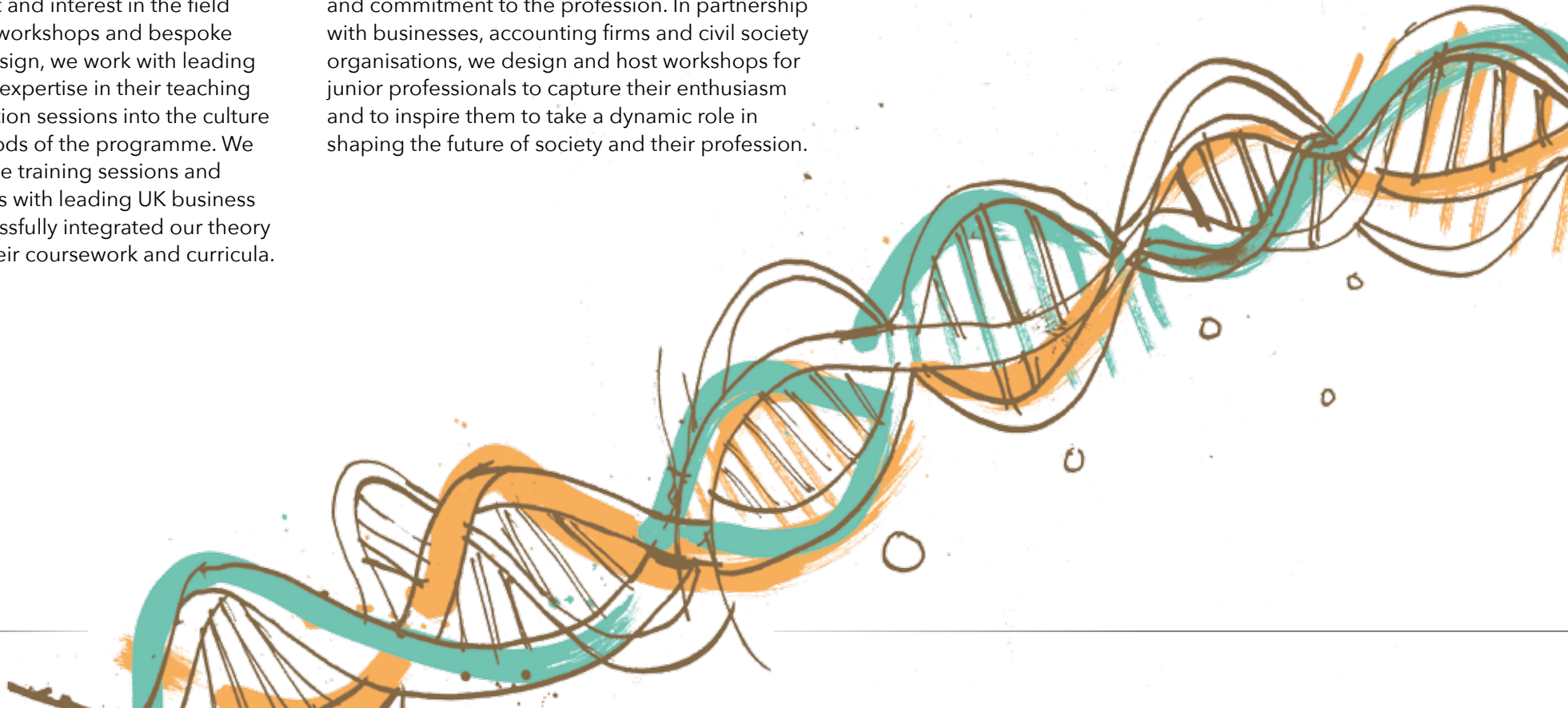
Lifelong Learning

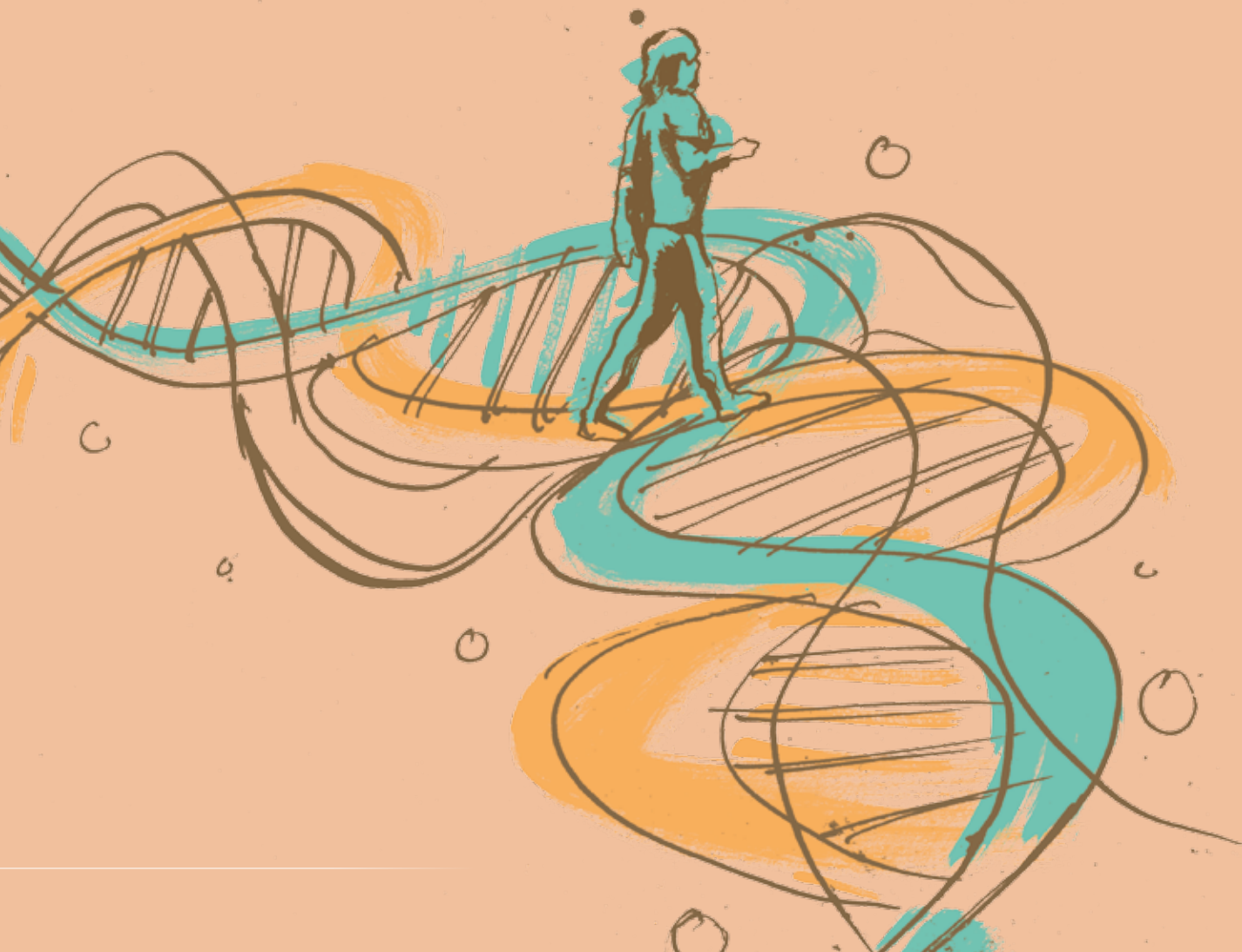
CPD FOR EDUCATORS

We are currently collaborating and building capacity in leading academics in the field who are interested in developing students' critical thinking skills, professional judgement and interest in the field of study. Through CPD workshops and bespoke curriculum planning/design, we work with leading universities to enhance expertise in their teaching staff and provide induction sessions into the culture and pedagogical methods of the programme. We have conducted multiple training sessions and curriculum consultations with leading UK business schools that have successfully integrated our theory and approach within their coursework and curricula.

PROFESSIONALS XXI

We support lifelong learning in practice to help develop and retain talent by engaging and supporting novice professionals to enhance their capacity and commitment to the profession. In partnership with businesses, accounting firms and civil society organisations, we design and host workshops for junior professionals to capture their enthusiasm and to inspire them to take a dynamic role in shaping the future of society and their profession.





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AuditFutures

AuditFutures is an opportunity for you to share your ideas and passion and to learn and contribute to shaping the future of the profession.

We have mobilised a movement and have developed a comprehensive programme to reimagine the future of the profession. Our collective ambition depends on collaboration with others. We invite you to bring your passion, experience and commitment to achieving something bigger together.

[**www.AuditFutures.org**](http://www.AuditFutures.org)

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 - Speaking with us over the phone or in person.
 - Everyone and all perspectives are welcome!
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