

Hong Kong Institute of CPAs

Accounting for Hong Kong since 1973

1970s

- 1972 ❖ Enactment of Professional Accountants Ordinance paves way for the establishment of Hong Kong's first statutory professional accounting body – Hong Kong Society of Accountants.
- 1973 ❖ Official opening of the Society with temporary offices at Duddell Street and later initial headquarters at Leeloong Building.
- ❖ Gordon Macwhinnie, one of the main architects of the Professional Accountants Ordinance, becomes first president of the Society.
- ❖ The Society quickly makes its regional mark by sending a delegation to the Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants' conference in Bangkok.
- ❖ The stock market crash leads to the drafting of new legislation to protect investors and financial markets: the Securities Ordinance and the Protection of Investors Ordinance.
- 1975 ❖ First students from the Society's own professional exams graduate; a year later, Hong Kong Polytechnic begins offering a course based on the Society's syllabus.
- 1976 ❖ The Society hosts the CAPA conference in Hong Kong with 1,000 delegates from around the world.
- 1977 ❖ The Society sends a delegation to the 11th International Congress of Accountants and becomes a founding member of the International Federation of Accountants.
- 1978 ❖ Membership surpasses 1,000 given the growing popularity of and demand for accountants.



1980s

- 1980 ❖ The city's four stock exchanges agree to join forces and form the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong based on advice from accountants and other experts.
- 1981 ❖ Beginning of the Joint Examination Scheme with ACCA helps accelerate the growth of Society's membership.
- 1983 ❖ The Society moves its headquarters to Belgian House after purchasing office space in the building.
- ❖ Carrian Group's bankruptcy, the largest in Hong Kong history, reinforces the Society's determination to emphasize the professionalism of its members.
- 1984 ❖ Sino-British Joint Declaration opens up new opportunities of cooperation between Hong Kong and Mainland profession.
- 1985 ❖ The Society officially visits the Mainland for the first time, and positions itself as the bridge between China and the rest of the world.
- ❖ The collapse of Overseas Trust Bank spurs the accounting profession to re-evaluate its ethics policy and culture.
- 1987 ❖ Global stock market crash impacts Hong Kong and creates demand for accountants specializing in bankruptcies and insolvencies.
- 1988 ❖ Newsletter started in 1973 evolves into a full-fledged magazine, *The Hong Kong Accountant*.
- ❖ Accounting profession successfully earns itself a seat on Legislative Council and swears in its first representative, Peter Wong.
- 1989 ❖ The civil unrest in Beijing after 4 June aggravates the "brain drain" situation in Hong Kong.

1990s

- 1992 ❖ Practice review is introduced to increase public confidence in the accounting profession.
- ❖ The Society is elected to the council of the International Federation of Accountants, boosting its presence in the global accounting community.
 - ❖ First red chip, Mainland company incorporated and listed in Hong Kong, debuts after Society helps devise relevant accounting and auditing rules.
- 1993 ❖ First H-share, Mainland company incorporated in China and listed in Hong Kong, debuts after Society leads the development of relevant accounting regulations.
- 1994 ❖ Memorandum of cooperation signed with the Chinese Institute of CPAs encourages more exchange between the profession in both places.
- 1995 ❖ Membership reaches 10,000 as more women join the profession and the “brain gain” brings back the city’s brightest who left in 1980s.
- ❖ The Society issues first report on corporate governance to promote the notion that prevention of commercial fraud begins with company directors.
- 1996 ❖ Accountant Ambassador programme is launched as part of the Society’s community outreach and branding efforts.
- 1997 ❖ Handover of Hong Kong back to the Mainland signifies the end of the city’s colonial era and opens even more doors for the two accounting professions to collaborate.
- ❖ Asian financial crisis shakes Hong Kong; the government creates the Tracker Fund, with the help of accountants and other experts, to stabilize markets.
- 1998 ❖ Headquarters moved to Lippo Centre as Society purchases office space in the building.
- 1999 ❖ Qualification Programme, Hong Kong's first home-grown training and certification programme for accountants, is introduced.



2000s

- 2000** ❖ Best Corporate Governance Disclosure Awards inaugurated, one of the earliest and most prestigious accolade of its type in Hong Kong.
- 2001** ❖ First batch of QP-trained CPAs enter the work force; QP shortly becomes a government-reimbursable programme.
- 2002** ❖ The collapse of Enron and Arthur Andersen brings about Sarbanes-Oxley Act and Public Company Accounting Oversight Board in the U.S., impacting global capital markets and Hong Kong accounting profession.
- ❖ Sixteenth World Congress of Accountants is hosted by the Society, the first time ever it is held on Chinese soil, and attended by Premier Zhu Rongji.
- ❖ Seven reciprocal membership agreements are signed with global accounting bodies for mutual recognition of QP.
- 2003** ❖ SARS outbreak brings the profession up to scratch in disaster recovery and risk management.
- 2004** ❖ QP graduates gain paper exemptions from Chinese exams under a CEPA agreement; market restriction for the profession is further eased.
- ❖ Hong Kong Society of Accountants renames itself the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants; members are designated as Certified Public Accountants and entitled to use the initials “CPA” after their names.
- ❖ Regulatory reforms open the Institute’s governance structure by introducing lay members, giving further assurance to the public of transparency and independence.
- 2005** ❖ Complete international convergence of Hong Kong’s accounting, auditing and ethical standards.
- ❖ Institute develops a set of standards for application to SMEs to reduce their burden of following IFRS, which is mainly for listed and large companies.
- ❖ Global Accounting Alliance is founded by nine major accounting bodies from around the world, including the Institute, representing almost 700,000 accountants.
- ❖ “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” programme is launched, under which CPAs visit schools to teach children money values; *The May Moon Money-Wise Box Set* is later published for children and parents.



- 2005 ❖ Institute debuts QP in China to provide world-class accounting training in this fast growing economy.
- ❖ Official monthly journal is revamped to become *A Plus*, a business magazine acclaimed for its dynamic presentation and strong editorial content.
- 2006 ❖ Institute moves headquarters to Wu Chung House after purchasing 50,000 square feet of space with training and activity areas for members.
- ❖ Institute opens its office in Beijing to enhance support to members as more of them are working across the border.
- 2007 ❖ Institute signs joint declaration with Mainland counterparts on standards convergence, paving way for China's full adoption of international rules.
- 2008 ❖ Global financial crisis hits Hong Kong while its accounting profession is sought after to help companies in need.

2010 AND BEYOND

- 2010 ❖ Second storybook *May Moon Rescues the World Economy* is published to help children understand causes of the financial crisis.
- ❖ HKEx announces to accept Mainland accounting and auditing standards and Mainland audit firms for Mainland incorporated companies to increase market efficiency.
- 2011 ❖ Institute signs recognition agreement with U.S. counterpart, making Hong Kong CPA qualification accepted in all the world's important capital markets.
- 2012 ❖ Institute elects first female president ever, Susanna Chiu; female is set to become the majority membership as more of them are joining the profession.
- 2013 ❖ Institute membership surpasses 35,000 and student number exceeds 17,000.

