



Annual Review 2023



Welcome from the CEO

As the impact of Covid-19 started to ease for most businesses, and we found our new normal, 2022 was the year that we took stock at ICAS of who we are and where and what we wanted to be in the future. The world is changing at an ever-growing pace, and whilst we adapt to the world around us, we also needed to set a long-term vision for the organisation to make sure we positively embrace change. We need to ensure that we remain resilient and that we continue to add value to our members and students and wider society.



2023 was the year that we started to bring this to life with the publication of a renewed vision, purpose, look and feel for ICAS. We launched our 2030 strategy, 'together, we will', which sets out our ambitious growth strategy which aims to make sure that the organisation, and by association our members and students, thrive.

In April, we launched a new brand, including a new visual identity. We wanted a bold and visionary brand that matched our ambitions for the future, and to also ensure that our visual identity was confident, digital-enabled and reflected our heritage. Increasing awareness and recognition of our brand will help us drive new business, improve business partnerships, set us apart as industry experts and attract new talent to work at ICAS. All of this is central to delivering the objectives in the new ICAS strategy which will take us up to 2030.



2023 was the year we brought our thinking to life with a renewed vision, purpose, look and feel for ICAS.



By adding 'Ethical leadership since 1854' to our visual identity, we are making a clear statement about who we are and what our members stand for. Ethics are core to the CA qualification and to ongoing membership of ICAS and we will continue to champion doing the right thing, by using our voice and influence to speak out on the issues that matter to our members and the public.

We set out our stall to students with the launch of a new student experience focused heavily on making the best use of digital. This included the introduction of CA Advantage – our interactive platform for our students on their journey to membership, and we addressed the perennial concerns about the traditional logbook by implementing a completely revised digital version.

At the time of publishing this report, we will have launched our new syllabus CA24, which is probably the biggest remake in our 170 year history. The degree of competency required to gain the qualification does not change, but we hope the flexibility in approach to learning will make the journey more appealing and less arduous.

I was delighted to sign the [HM Treasury's Women in Finance Charter in April](#) this year as an employer – a charter dedicated to supporting the progression of women into senior roles in the financial services sector. The charter is a commitment by HM Treasury and signatory firms to work together to build a more balanced and fair industry.

Becoming a signatory demonstrates ICAS' commitment to developing and harnessing female talent in the finance and accountancy professions.

Throughout 2023, we continued to work with UK Governments to shape and influence policy. The audit and corporate governance reform agenda remains very much alive, and we continue to actively contribute to that debate and on wider corporate reporting requirements as they also evolve. We expressed our disappointment that measures to help Scottish business were not taken in the Scottish Budget in December. We called upon the Scottish and UK governments to use the tenth anniversary of the Smith Commission in 2024, to review the implementation of Scotland's devolved tax powers.

We have a significant part to play in promoting the development and implementation of the sustainability agenda, and the importance of assurance supporting that agenda. We will do this by working closely with other bodies who share our passion for getting this right. No agenda can be more important right now, and we would ask all our members to raise their voices and be heard within their own organisations and countries of residence.

Bruce Cartwright CA
ICAS CEO

President welcome

ICAS was founded in 1854 by Royal Charter. Together with our commitment to act in the public interest and set standards for the profession, we are also required to ensure *‘that the course of education be pursued’*.



In 2023 we continued our strong focus on social mobility, ensuring that we do more to attract talent to the profession...



Students are the lifeblood of our profession and our organisation. By attracting and developing talent in the accountancy sector, we play a pivotal role in supporting businesses and the economy. Business needs Chartered Accountants, and we have a duty to ensure that we continue to develop and train the next generation of CAs. In 2023 we continued our strong focus on social mobility, ensuring that we do more to attract talent to the profession from a diverse range of backgrounds. This important work was delivered through our partnerships with the ICAS Foundation and [Rise](#).

I am a passionate supporter of young talent and know what fantastic career prospects a career in Chartered Accountancy can bring. That is why I was delighted that the transformation of our student learning experience was delivered in 2023.

The [new delivery model](#) for the CA qualification is a best-in-class experience, focused on simplicity, control and giving students the advantage, they need to succeed. Our new digital-first courses, supported by in-centre tutorials and interactive workshops embed understanding and improve learning outcomes. The new flexibility of delivery means students can study how, when and where they like, and with a three-year term schedule, it allows training offices greater flexibility.

This year, we've also simplified the logbook, making it easier to complete and have built a new home for everything, so that students can find all the information they need at the touch of a button. These changes to our learning delivery model will ensure that ICAS continues to create a pull for our qualification and will build a strong pipeline of talent into our profession.

It was also my pleasure to host the [annual Admissions Ceremony](#) where we welcomed 704 newly qualified members to ICAS and to our profession. To celebrate this momentous occasion with our new members and their families was an experience I will never forget.

ICAS has also been working hard to ensure that our members are supported and that they gain value from their CA designation. In 2023 we ran over 70 free events, 27 of which were webinars which are [on demand on ICAS.com](#) as well as 44 in-person networking events stretching from Inverness to London, Sydney and beyond.

ICAS held its first Sustainability summit which brought global experts together to discuss the [future of sustainability reporting](#) and launched ICAS' inaugural [Digital Practice Conference](#), aimed at helping our practice members embrace a digital future.

We also published several articles and guides, [including seven tips for tech adoption](#) and [profiling practices who are embracing tech](#). Earlier this year, we launched our [Cyber Security Hub](#) which contains guidance and signposting for advisers and SMEs and we further supported our Practice firms by introducing a free, [confidential wellbeing helpline](#) where members and their staff can access advice and wellbeing support.

It has been my honour and privilege to serve as ICAS President for the term 2023/24 and I would like to thank my fellow Office Bearers, ICAS Council, the CEO and Executive team, and all colleagues at ICAS for their unwavering support, guidance, and good humour.

I leave the organisation in good shape, and I will continue to watch with pride as the 2030 strategy continues to be delivered.

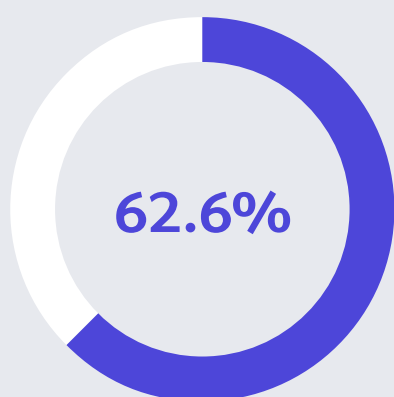
Clive Bellingham CA
ICAS President 2023/24

Who we are

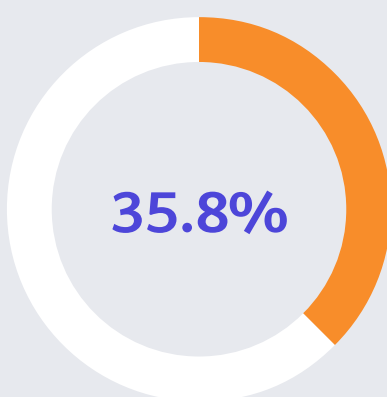
23,952
members

172
mentors

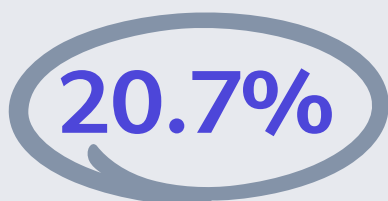
236
mentees



male
members



female
members



with membership over
40 years



11,157
members in business



5,838
members in practice

10 new committee members to our Area Networks
and 4 newly appointed International Ambassadors



2,823
regulatory licences

62

members' stories
featured in CA Mag



1.25m

impressions across all
social channels

17,149

engagements across all
social channels



68,709

clicks on social
media posts

37,720

social media followers
across all channels

44

total number of
conferences and events

27

total number of
webinars/online events

4,825

delegates attending
events (including
webinars)



located in Scotland



located rest of UK



working overseas

Contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



ICAS continues to report on how we contribute towards the achievement of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals represent the framework for achieving a better and more sustainable future.

Each year we review our progress to ensure we are reporting against those that are most relevant. For 2023, our activities align with 9 SDGs:





Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Goal 4 – Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Goal 5 – Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Goal 13 – Climate Action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Taking regulatory action and upholding ethical behaviour.



Goal 17 – Partnerships

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Our vision, purpose, and values

ICAS has a long history throughout which the relevance of our Royal Charter has endured to shape our purpose in a modern context. We exist to serve our stakeholders in the public interest.

Looking forward, our new vision re-enforces our commitment to serve the future of the profession and our purpose articulates how we'll deliver value through our activities – to all stakeholder groups. Our values provide a solid core to our approach, underpinning our purpose and defining how we seek to behave in everything we do.

Vision:

To empower trusted professionals to create a better tomorrow



Our members perform at the forefront of ethical and sustainable business. Educated, regulated, and led by the highest standards of ethical leadership, they are at the top of their game. Trusted professionals, they transform business and support one another, for the greater good.



Namasiku Liandu
Subject Matter Expert, ICAS

Purpose:


**Uphold Ethics.
Cultivate Trust**



As the world changes, the importance of doing the right thing does not. We 'seek the truth' and have been since 1854. As ethical leaders, the business community looks to us and our members to uphold standards. To cultivate trust in everything we do.

Customer Value Proposition:


Our CVP will unify and connect our membership, to us and to each other. It's underpinned by our commitment to ethics, sustainability and inclusion.



Values:

We've identified the three values that align with our actions. They'll drive our brand and shape our culture.

We'll live these values through all interactions and be:



1

Team spirited:

Hold people in high regard.
Trust and be trusted. Be kind.

2

Smart working:

Innovate with purpose.
Embrace change. Be responsible.

3

Proudly committed:

Give our best. Do the right thing.
Be proud to care.

2030 Strategy



In April, we launched a new strategy which sets out an ambitious vision to create a bold future for ICAS. We've redefined who we are and what we stand for, allowing us to navigate challenges and embrace opportunities. We will continue to adapt and embrace positive change, with a renewed focus on always delivering value for our membership and wider society. Our new strategy, '*ICAS 2030: Together we will...*' is our roadmap for delivering this exciting and ambitious future for ICAS and our members and students.

Our strategy will help us to respond in extraordinary times, and to meet the evolving needs of our members, firms and students. Together, we will deliver greater value, empower each other and be a force for good. Through this strategy, we're leading by example to create a better tomorrow. '*ICAS 2030: Together we will...*' will enable us to prosper as a professional body, regulator, educator, awarding body and employer. Essentially, it will make us fit for the future.

We've identified the five strategic pillars that will deliver our vision, bring our brand themes to life, and fulfil the purpose of ICAS.

ICAS Advantage

By delivering a new, enhanced CA syllabus we'll address the war for talent. With electives and alternative pathways, it will keep pace with advances in tech, data and sustainability. By embracing digital technology we'll deliver flexible, careerlong learning opportunities for our students and members. We'll inspire the next generation and encourage diversity in our student intake. Our high-quality teaching will equip our students for future success. And by developing new qualifications and creating opportunities for social change, we'll create new opportunities to diversify our membership base.

Sustainability at our core:

We'll lead on key sustainability issues within the profession and embed sustainability across our syllabus and training courses, including new electives and new continuing professional development (CPD). We'll embrace our net zero future and place equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We'll drive social change in the profession, by supporting talent from less-advantaged backgrounds and growing the reach and capability of the ICAS Foundation. We'll create a sustainable, future-looking, 21st century professional body that continues to invest in our vision and the profession.

Leading-edge customer experience: Whether they're in practice, business or industry, we'll delight and inspire our members to be proud of their ICAS membership and to recognise the value of their qualification. We'll create strong and sustainable relationships and networks for our members to help them thrive. By listening to our members and students we'll deliver the products and services they want and need. We'll support our membership from studying through to retirement, providing a career-lifespan of connections, support, value and assistance. And we'll revolutionise the student experience, creating a single touchpoint with ICAS.

Trusted regulation:

We'll promote trust in the profession through excellence in regulation and by fulfilling our Royal Charter obligations to act in the public interest. We'll continue to demand the highest standards of those we regulate. Our regulatory processes will evolve and become more efficient through better use of technology, without sacrificing their effectiveness, and always ensuring that our focus is risk-based and proportionate. Through thought leadership and influence, we'll shape the future regulation of the profession. And we'll do so across all regulatory frameworks, ensuring that oversight arrangements are proportionate, sustainable, future-ready and reflect the principles of modern regulation.

Ethical Leadership:

We'll be bold in our influence and ensure that our voice is strong, respected, valued and sought by stakeholders. Everything we do will be in the public interest and deliver on the commitments defined by our Royal Charter obligations. We'll continue to build a strong and valued brand for ICAS and our CA qualification. We'll ensure that we're globally trusted to set and enforce consistent standards for the profession. And by speaking out on the issues that matter to our members, we'll champion positive change.

Successful delivery of the 2030 strategy requires significant investment by ICAS over the next seven years. To ensure effective delivery of the strategic projects and spend, ICAS established a Strategic Governance Group (SGG) in 2022. This group is chaired by the ICAS President and has representation from members of Council as well as a Public Interest Member (PIM) on the group, which provides governance over the multiple project delivery streams. The group meets regularly with the ICAS Executive Team to review progress, to provide challenge and to ensure that effective and robust measures remain in place to monitor delivery and budget. We've also set robust KPIs to monitor the delivery and impact of the strategy and built a five-year business plan to allow us to deliver on our ambitious goals, all of which are monitored and scrutinised by ICAS Council and Oversight Board.

You can read more about our strategy and vision, purpose, and values [here](#).

2023 highlights at a glance


2023 has been a busy year at ICAS. Whilst we delivered on our business-as-usual activity we also deployed several large strategic projects. We're committed to delivering value and support to our members and students and have demonstrated that commitment by delivering the following in 2023:



Launched a new, **digitally-enabled** brand to support the 2030 strategy delivery



Launched a new student experience – Advantage – a home for everything





Increased the CA student intake by **3.5%**




Increased the target number of ATOs by **110%**



Streamlined our student registration process, lead-time from **2 weeks to 20 mins** to onboard new students



Simplified and launched a new **student logbook**



Launched new **pathways** and qualifications

Grew our voice by commenting on **audit reform, taxation, the Autumn statement and the Scottish budget**



Delivered
70 free events
to over **4,825**
members

Launched our free
on-demand tax webinars



Responded
to **56 policy**
consultations

Delivered our first Digital Practice Conference and held
bespoke conferences on sustainability and insolvency



We put more focus on the ICAS Foundation
as our vehicle to address social mobility
and supported **28 student bursaries**



Increased our regulatory
activity, including more
monitoring visits and we
created a regulation strategy

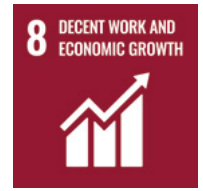


Increased our
media mentions
by **30%**



Responded to over
30,000 member enquiries

ICAS Advantage



Targeted investment

We intelligently target our investments to ensure they're focused on areas of greatest need, and to help achieve the greatest-possible return on investment. A 2022 ICAS survey revealed that issues with the Relevant Practical Experience (RPE) logbook were the number-one concern most of our students had with their overall ICAS experience.

The logbook is where students record and evidence the 450 days of RPE that help set them up for professional success, and without which they're unable to qualify as a CA. Given that importance, and the concern shown by our students, improvements in this area were understandably at the top of our agenda for 2023.

A new, simplified logbook

With previous versions of our logbook, students encountered issues with basic functions such as recording their workplace activity. They also often struggled with managing and understanding their progress or lack thereof. The new and improved logbook that we launched in August 2023 removes these issues by placing simplicity and user-friendly functionality at its heart.

Students now access their logbook through a dashboard that shows at-a-glance where they've made progress, what needs to be done next, and which issues require immediate attention. They can also easily track and manage their days

in employment, pause for any long-term absence, and manage their designated reviewer and counselling member.

To help further simplify the process, we streamlined the professional competencies students are asked to demonstrate and record within the logbook, down from 1200 to just 39. The competencies were carefully aligned with the specific technical skills students will need for their CA careers and with the essential enabling skills that are key to success in the workplace.

An improved employer experience

We extended that improved logbook experience to students' employers, where the designated counselling member, reviewer and training principal all play pivotal roles in monitoring practical training. The people in those positions know their students and their work better than we do, which is why our new process handed control over logbook review and sign-off to them.

To enable those activities, employers also have access to a dedicated dashboard which gives a snapshot of overall progress and highlights any students who require attention.

Initial feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we feel confident that future surveys will show that our investment in this area has indeed been well targeted.



Anna Logan CA

Learning

In 2023 we set about redefining our learning experience with new developments that would give our students and their employers the ICAS advantage and differentiate us through the delivery of high quality, flexible and accessible training.

We began the process of refreshing our CA qualification and its syllabus. We designed a new delivery model that hands greater control to the customer. And we opened new pathways to the profession to encourage diversity and drive social mobility in all target groups, from school leavers to professional entrants.

These developments have already borne fruit: during the year we saw a steady growth in student intake, up 3.5% on the previous year's significant growth.

A refreshed and future fit syllabus

Our CA syllabus sits at the very heart of our student experience and throughout 2023 we were busy developing a new version.

This refreshed syllabus, which will launch in March 2024, has been updated to ensure that it keeps pace with advances in technology, data and sustainability – three issues that will feature heavily in the careers of CAs and which will test and challenge the organisations they work for.

Ethics is another key element of the CA qualification. It's featured at each level and within each technical course of the refreshed syllabus and through the dedicated ethics courses which bookend a student's learning journey.

Customer-centric organisation



Putting our members first is central to our delivery model, and in 2023 things were no different. We supported members by answering 30,238 questions via our helpline support service and 4,744 members benefitted from our self-service Help Centre on our website ICAS.com

In learning, we enrolled 4,480 students and facilitated 17,026 exams.

A future-fit student experience

In 2020, to overcome the pandemic's immediate challenges, we adapted what was then an almost entirely analogue student experience to ensure that our CA training and assessments could continue in the new, hurriedly hybrid world. However, that adaptation was a short-term solution and one that didn't meet the high expectations of our 'digital native' students. Rather than attempting to fix the issues, in 2023 we began building an entirely new and truly digital-first version. As part of this, and as detailed in the Customer Experience section, in June we launched Advantage, our new, intuitive online home for everything students need throughout their training – including courses and learning materials, tutor discussions, communications and updates, guidance modules, wellbeing assistance, our online assessment platform, and their assessment results. We also launched a new, simplified logbook that makes it easier for students to record their vital Relevant Practical Experience (RPE), and for them and their employers to monitor progress.

Mentoring programme

Following a targeted campaign for our business members, we saw a year-on-year increase in both mentors and mentees, with a 71% increase in mentees registering on the platform, and a 41% increase in mentors.

International communities

We worked in partnership with the Professional Accountants in Europe (PAE) and Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW) to concentrate activity in our main international territories. ICAS ran 22 International Events in 2023, covering Geneva, Zurich, Hong Kong, Perth (Australia) Dublin, Sydney, Dubai, Calgary, New York and San Francisco. We also introduce our local Ambassadors programme to build engagement locally and make new connections. ICAS is continuing to engage with members that have moved locations internationally, this initiative has seen 100% positive feedback to date alongside the creation of new Ambassadors and communities formed in Brisbane and Gibraltar.



Richard Grant CA

UK Area networks

2023 proved to be another busy year for our five UK area networks. The networks have been actively engaging early career members, with a focus on building connections with those qualified in the last year, through activity such as LinkedIn introductions, personal invites and dedicated places at Area Network events. The Area Networks have increased support for the ICAS Foundation across 2023, through a range of events that have raised awareness, funds and created speaker opportunities to the new generation of CAs. The networks hosted a range of regional events based on local member needs to engage, inspire and provide networking opportunities for CAs, with an uplift in member attendance by 19% from 2022.

CA magazine

In 2023, we issued ten editions of [CA magazine](#), together with special reports on how accountancy firms are adapting to tech, how to attract top talent, the future of the profession and AI. CA magazine was also shortlisted for seven industry awards. Five in the PPA Scotland Awards and two in the BSME Awards (British Society of Magazine Editors) where the magazine was pitted against Top Gear Magazine and Glamour, two huge brands. CA magazine won the coveted Cover of the Year and Designer of the Year at the PPA Awards.

Practice community

We continued to deliver for our Practice member community by implementing the [Evolve member wellbeing helpline](#) which was added to the programme of support and provides a free, confidential helpline, app and counselling service run to all ICAS firm principals and their employees. This was launched in May to coincide with UK Mental Health Awareness week. As part of the ICAS brand revision, the [ICAS Practice logos](#) have been revised and relaunched.



ICAS member event

These provide an excellent visual expression to allow individuals and firms to promote their status as a trusted specialist and regulated professional or regulated firm. Several resources for Members have been updated and released in support of quality services. These include technically refreshed editions of Procedures for Quality Audit (PQA), Accounts Preparation for the Unincorporated Business (APUB) and Accountants' Procedures for the Audit Exempt Company (APAEC). The latter two resources have also been enhanced with the addition of excel based models which allow firms to maintain work programmes electronically rather than utilising paper files. In addition, a [Vulnerable Persons Toolkit](#) and Guidance has been released. This supports our firms with the identification and support of vulnerable individuals who are clients and help them take steps that allow them to act in that person's best interests, ensuring that they provide an appropriate level of service to clients as well as reduce the firms' regulatory risk.

We ran Practice Member drop in-sessions with our Vice-Chairman and key members of the ICAS team to listen to feedback and to shape our member offering. These events ran throughout the last quarter of 2023 taking place in Aberdeen, Inverness, Edinburgh and Glasgow and were attended by 36 firms.



Sustainability at our Core



As the global sustainability landscape continues to rapidly evolve, ICAS remains a leading voice in shaping its future direction. Within the year, we welcomed the introduction of the much-anticipated International Sustainability Standards Board ('ISSB') S1 and S2 standards which help establish a global baseline for sustainability disclosures, alongside the launch of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards ('ESRS') and the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures ('TNFD'). We continue to champion for aligned, mandatory (on a proportionate basis), sustainability reporting standards, which should include the impact of climate change and other sustainability issues on a business, but also the impact of the business on the environment and society – otherwise known as double materiality.

This year, ICAS

- Responded to many Sustainability related consultations including the ISSB Consultation on its agenda priorities, the Department for Business & Trade ('DBT') & Financial Reporting Council ('FRC') Review of Non-Financial Reporting Requirements, the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB)'s proposed International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (ISSA) 5000, the Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR), the UK Green Taxonomy per the UK Government's Green Finance Strategy, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)'s DP 23/1: Finance for Positive Change with the Sustainable Finance Education Charter (SFEC), the FRC and British Accounting and Finance Association (BAFA)'s Call to Action: Embedding Sustainability in Audit and Accounting Education, the proposed IFRS Taxonomy – IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Taxonomy, the UK Sustainability Disclosure Technical Advisory Committee ('TAC') Call for evidence – UK endorsement of IFRS S1 and S2.



- Curated a wide range of resources on sustainability, such as regular features in its monthly editorial publication CA magazine sharing the perspectives of global sustainability experts. Interviewees included Peter Bakker (President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Eleco van der Enden (CEO of the Global Reporting Initiative) and Mark Vaessen (President of Accountancy Europe). Furthermore, ICAS contributed to the publication of 'Transforming the profession – the future of accountancy', an Accounting Bodies Network (ABN) project to highlight how the profession can adapt in response to macro sustainability trends.
- Collaborated with ICAEW and CIMA on a joint letter to the Prime Minister urging the UK government to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We also worked with accounting institute peers on various collective activities, including an ABN publication 'Our Journey: The Accounting Bodies' Road to Net Zero'.
- In April 2023, we hosted the inaugural Sustainability Summit, with keynote speakers and panellists including standard setters, FRC, UK Government, corporates, NGOs and industry bodies. It brought together a diverse group of people and allowed the UK government to hear the different views from speakers from key organisations, and the audience, to set out the ICAS position and to listen to the respective views from government, the FRC, key standard setters and business.

Sustainability learning & training

ICAS is developing a leading curriculum and CPD, relevant to the next and current generation of accountants, which embeds relevant sustainability matters in all disciplines.

- We've partnered with Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI) to offer our members a 'Sustainability Strategy, Risk and Reporting' certificate programme, and launched a new CPD course 'Sustainability and its relevance to the accountancy profession'.
- We've integrated sustainability throughout our new CA student syllabus, which launches in 2024. This includes a new Sustainability for Accountants elective.

Net Zero

Our total carbon emissions for 2022 was 1,566 tCO₂e (tonnes of CO₂ equivalent), an increase of 198 tCO₂e / 14.4% since our 2021 baseline, driven largely by the organisation starting to return to normal activity post Covid – including significantly more travel, employee commuting and heating costs. This includes Scope 1 – Direct emissions that occur from sources that are controlled or owned by ICAS, Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from purchased electricity, steam or heat and Scope 3 – Indirect emissions resulting from ICAS' business operations and value chain.

Of the 2022 emissions, 1,134 tCO₂e comes from Purchased Goods and Services – mostly from our supply base – as nearly all purchased goods will incur carbon. We also incur carbon emissions from Natural Gas (103 tCO₂e), Use and End of Life of Sold Products (96 tCO₂e) and Business Travel (91 tCO₂e). We have seen a 550% increase in business travel as we came out of the Covid lockdowns.

We will continue to decarbonise our operations and prioritise making real changes to lower our carbon footprint. Inevitably offsets may ultimately be required for residual emissions. We use our own initiatives and progress as a way to inspire our members and others.

We have made good progress in some areas of the NetZero pathway, and require further work in other areas. This pathway includes:

- Reducing our footprint of current office space
- An active and sustainable travel policy
- Digitalisation of materials
- Heating controls and insulation
- Lighting and awareness for electricity use
- Supplier contractual changes
- Energy awareness campaigns
- Decarbonisation of the grid.

The biggest impact will come from working with our Tier 1 suppliers to support delivery of their Net Zero pathways.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

In 2023, we transitioned into phase two of our EDI strategy, and we've set our vision for the next three years. EDI is at the heart of all that we do at ICAS and we are committed to creating fair and equal opportunities for all. Our royal charter places a mandate on us to act in the public interest and as champions of ethical standards, we have an obligation to our members, students, colleagues, stakeholders, and the public to ensure we play our part in creating an equal and fair society.

In 2023, we:

- Launched a [free wellbeing helpline for students and practice members](#) (and their employees)
- Created and launched a [EDI Toolkit](#) for firms
- [Published the EDI data](#) on our Council, main boards and committees
- Participated in UK Pan-professional body research (with CMI, ACCA, CII, CIPD and CIPS) on inclusion in the professions (Research to be launched Q1 2024)
- Signed up to HM's Treasury [Women in Finance Charter](#)
- Implemented a calendar of days of observance on a range of topics including, Pride, Black History Month, World Mental Health Day and South-East Asian Heritage Month

- Created a Black Members Network
- Published four [Championing Unique Perspectives](#) case studies
- Participated in the Edinburgh Pride March in June
- Flew the pride flag outside our Edinburgh HQ for the month of June
- Engaged our internal auditors, Azets to undertake an audit of our EDI work, and no major or minor improvements were identified
- Approved a new [three-year EDI strategy](#) to take us to 2027



ICAS member event



Andrew Graham CA

Trusted Regulation



We promote trust in the profession through excellence in regulation and by fulfilling our Royal Charter obligation to act in the public interest. As set out in the new **ICAS Regulation Strategy**, launched in September, our regulatory processes are evolving to become more efficient through an expanded risk-based approach, combined with better use of technology. We are working hard to improve the user experience, expanding our engagement with members and firms.

However we change, we never sacrifice our effectiveness, ensuring that our regulated community maintains the high profession standards associated with ICAS, and expected by clients and oversight regulators.

In 2023, we were active across various areas of regulation, including:

- 140 regulatory monitoring visits (covering AML, audit, and insolvency).
- Granting more than 200 new regulatory licences.
- Closing 75 investigations into complaints received by ICAS.
- Commencing our review into CPD regulatory requirements.
- Implementing changes in our Discipline and Appeal Tribunal structure.

In addition, we have worked closely with Government and other professional bodies on various reform programmes, including proposed changes to regulatory structures for AML, audit, insolvency, and tax.

We continue to work in accordance with the regulatory principles adopted and published by ICAS' Regulation Board in 2022.

- We believe that regulation is not a 'necessary evil' but represents a positive good for all stakeholders.
- We believe that ICAS is best placed to regulate our members and firms and will proactively seek to defend our ability to continue to do so in the future.
- We believe that regulation should continue to be a priority for ICAS, with the CA 'badge' only protected where regulatory functions are effective in maintaining and raising standards.



Ethical leadership



Ethics is at the heart of all that we do and all that we stand for. Demonstrating ethical leadership is a key pillar of our 2030 strategy. We always act in the public interest and uphold our moto *Quaere verum* – seek the truth. We have continued to demonstrate ethical leadership in 2023 through a range of initiatives.

Government relations and public affairs

We engaged with governments, politicians and civil servants in 2023; including writing letters to Ministers on audit and corporate governance reform and sustainability reporting. We joined forces with other bodies, including ACCA, ICAEW and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors to write to the UK Business Minister and Financial Secretary to the Treasury about audit and corporate governance reform, tax simplification and HMRC service levels. We held face to face meetings with Ministers on all these topics. We met cross party MPs and MSPs and civil servants, face to face and online and at political conferences and other events. The UK Levelling up, Housing and Communities Committee quoted our response to their Financial Reporting and Audit in Local Authorities inquiry supporting the need to review legislation to remove out of date statutory rules which can cause divergence from IFRS. *Committee on Standards in Public Life*

The Committee on Standards in Public Life published its Leading in Practice Report in January, which highlighted how

various organisations in all the public, private and charitable sectors have built ethical values into their ways of working. The report features practical case studies and ICAS' 'The Power of One' ethics initiative was included. Our engagement with the Scottish Parliament crossed many policy areas including charities, insolvency and tax.

Our Charities Panel chair gave evidence to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee on the Charities Scotland Bill. We also wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice calling for an urgent, wider review of Scottish charity law and to revisit the charity law audit threshold.

Consultation responses

We responded to 56 UK and international consultations. Our responses place public interest first, as well as representing our members' views. These included responses to the Department for Business and Trade's call for evidence on non-financial reporting, the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) proposed draft strategy and work programme, the FRC's revisions to UK financial reporting standards, the Pensions Regulator's



ICAS Sustainability Summit

Defined Benefit Code of Practice, and the FRC's consultation paper on its revisions to the UK Corporate Governance Code.

Guidance for members

We published a range of guidance for members including – [Guidance to the ICAS Code of Ethics: Objectivity – Financial interests in, or relationships with, clients](#). In December we issued our updated [‘Shades of Grey’ ethical dilemma case studies publication](#). This edition refreshes the 2009 report and features 19 case studies. The document was noted on IFAC's Global Gateway. A [Going concern guide for directors](#) was published in March 2023.

Ethics related events

We held member policy webinars on key topics including:

- UK GAAP: A Periodic Review, where the FRC set out the proposed changes to UK GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). ICAS & The British Business Bank held a webinar on SME funding and managing debt effectively.
- Our joint webinar, talking charity: Sustainability and impact reporting, with RSM UK, provided an opportunity to hear the latest on how charities communicate their sustainability engagement and reporting.



Lisa Blum CA

- Talking charity: what's new in financial reporting looked at what's new in charity financial reporting, key sector developments and changes to auditing standards and their impact.
- Ethical governance: dilemmas and trade-offs? This virtual event with EY and the Institute of Business Ethics (IBE) highlighted the importance of business leadership and addressed major ethical issues of today and tomorrow.
- **Materiality Perspectives covered an ICAS and an FRC Lab reports on materiality: Materiality Perspectives.** This webinar covered an ICAS and an FRC Lab reports on materiality.
- At our Ethical Leadership webinar members heard real-life experiences of leading CAs in dealing with ethical dilemmas and choices and the ethical implications of artificial intelligence.
- Cybersecurity for the accountancy profession. This webinar provided some key takeaways to help CA firms to manage their cyber risk and stay safe.

ICAS Research

Our research team has been busy throughout 2023 and we issued three high-quality research reports:

- **Application of Big Data capabilities** in the accounting profession. This is important given that accountants and finance professionals are experiencing significant technological changes that are transforming traditional accounting models. The growth of Big Data (BD), defined as high-volume, high-velocity and high-variety information assets, is a critical element of this change.
- The **corporate implementation of the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)**. The UNGPs are increasingly being integrated into national laws, with key concepts such

as human rights due diligence (HRDD), now forming the basis of recent national and international legislative initiatives. Despite these developments, little research has been undertaken into how the UNGPs are being implemented and internalised by corporations.

- The **production and consumption of information on intangibles** An empirical investigation of preparers and users.

Work also began on our **Shaping the Profession research** which will help ICAS consider what tomorrow may bring for individual CAs, firms, businesses and, just as importantly, what society will need from us as a profession.



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Collaboration



Global Accounting Alliance (GAA)

The Global Accounting Alliance (GAA) was formed in November 2005 and serves as a forum for 10 of the world's leading professional accountancy bodies whose members practice in major capital markets.

Its purpose is to serve the public interest by leading the advancement of a high-quality accounting profession by sharing information and collaborating, among GAA Members, and advocating on international issues important to the profession. This year, the GAA held a Special Session on Ethics, which was chaired by ICAS.

Topics discussed included: ethics and independence requirements in relation to assurance on sustainability-related information; tax planning; and the IESBA's proposed strategy and work plan for 2024-27. The GAA also hosted an ethics summit in Brussels on 11 May 2023. This was run by Economist Impact and focused on ethical leadership in business. Further information is available at: <https://globalaccountingalliance.com/resources/ethics-event/>

Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB)

ICAS continued to participate across a range of activities in the CCAB. These included a virtual seminar on 15 June 2023 to further promote the results of an earlier CCAB Ethics Group survey and case studies. As part of the seminar, ICAS presented on 'Organisational culture: The importance of speaking up and listening' Further information is available at: <https://www.ccab.org.uk/ethics-resources/> ICAS, along with the other CCAB bodies also issued an exposure draft of a proposed revised SORP for Limited Liability Partnerships. The revised SORP will be issued in the first quarter of 2024.

International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

IFAC is the global organisation for the accountancy profession. Founded in 1977, IFAC has 180 members and associates in 135 jurisdictions, representing more than 3 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry, and commerce. ICAS is a member of the IFAC Board as well as being represented on the International Panel on Accountancy Education (IPAE). The panel act as strategic advisors for IFAC's approach to advancing accountancy education at the global level. During 2023 the panel activities included Sustainability Reporting project, revisions to International Education Standard 6 Assessments, and attractiveness to the profession.



ICAS Admission Ceremony

Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW)

ICAS has continued to work with Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW) on a range of initiatives. CAW brings together 16 top Chartered Accountancy member institutes from around the world, uniting over 1.8 million dedicated members and students across more than 190 countries. In 2023, ICAS Chaired CAWs EDI Taskforce and commissioned joint global research on barriers affecting women mid-career as well as **creating a toolkit** to help address the inequalities that were identified. ICAS chaired a global webinar with 1,200+ delegates on the research and featured the research outcomes in CA magazine.

ICAS also co-chaired the Trust Leadership Taskforce and issued **a global paper on ethical leadership the accountancy profession**. ICAS worked on and published a **new Wellbeing toolkit** in October, as part of CAW's Wellbeing Taskforce. The new toolkit is a comprehensive guide designed to support managers working in the accountancy profession. We've also continued to champion CAW Network USA, which supports ICAS members in North America, by providing a range of events, CPD and networking opportunities.

ICAS Foundation



The ICAS Foundation is ICAS' social mobility charity. It is an independently registered charity with OSCR registration and provides bursaries, grants, mentoring, internship opportunities and practical support.

The Foundation invites applications from young people right up until they graduate, helping them to perform to their best potential. Every young person is supported for up to four years with individualised support, ready for further professional training and employment with a focus on a career in the accountancy profession.

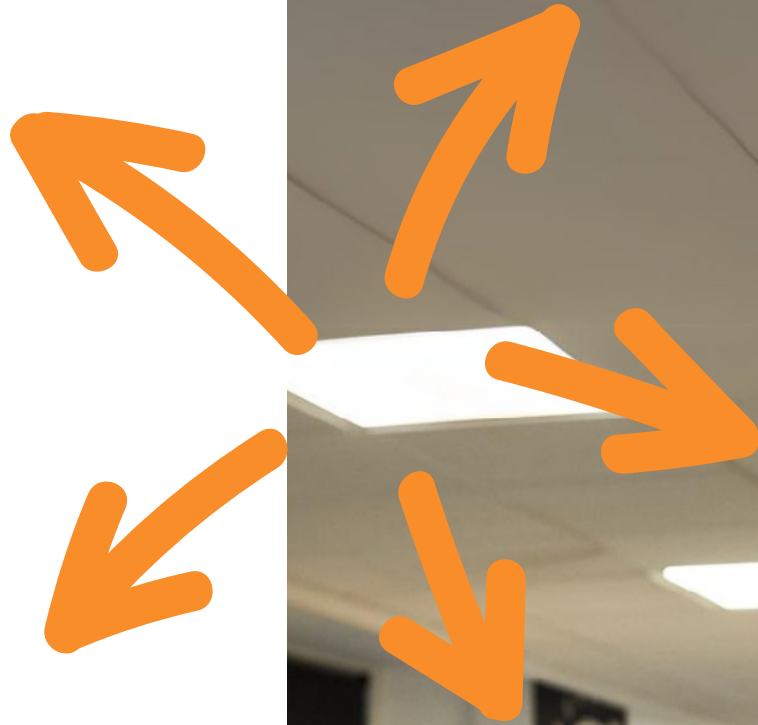
The primary aim of the ICAS Foundation is to bolster the delivery of education in accountancy and finance, as well as in any associated subjects. The Trust deed grants the Trustees extensive powers, enabling them to contemplate a diverse array of initiatives across all subjects that may be directly or indirectly relevant to the accountancy profession and the wider public.

A significant portion of the ICAS Foundation's funding is derived from a contribution by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Additionally, the Foundation receives annual donations from ICAS members. Further support is garnered through individual, corporate, and matching-fund donations, all of which play a crucial role in sustaining the Foundation's initiatives.

The Foundation's main activity is awarding bursaries of up to £10,000 to support students during their time at university. We actively focus on supporting young people from lower socio-economic circumstances, together with prioritising diversity and inclusion as key aspects of the selection criteria. Every student who receives a bursary also benefits from a one-to-one mentoring relationship, in most cases with a qualified Chartered Accountant. Occasionally we also offer grants for one off expenditure items to any student that meets our award criteria.

- In 2023, **120** individuals were supported. 9 of our 19 graduating students progressed into a CA training contract.
- **14** ICAS Foundation graduates achieve the CA qualification and join ICAS as members.
- As of December 2023, the Foundation has **87** volunteer mentors actively mentoring students.
- In the 2023 application round the ICAS Foundation received a record number of **160** applications and **28** bursaries were awarded.

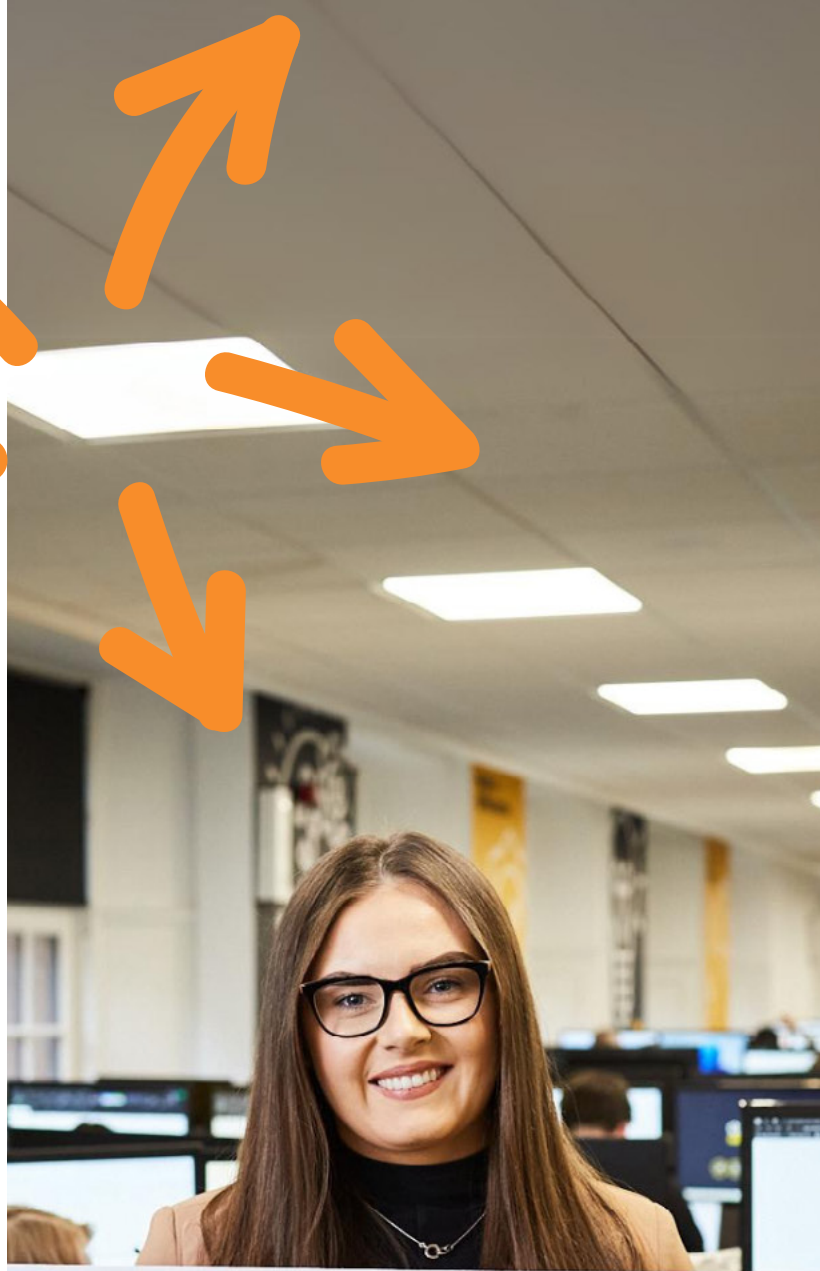
Since 2013, the Foundation has awarded **£2.39m** in financial support and mentoring support to **323** students, along with grant funding to an additional 9 students.



During 2023 the ICAS Foundation strategy 2023 – 2030 was launched followed by a three-year business plan to support the KPI's required to achieve the goals. In addition, a rebrand of the ICAS Foundation was launched in February 2024, with a new tag line 'Nurturing Future Leaders in Accountancy'.

The ICAS Foundation Strategy 2023-30 includes clear objectives: expanding partnerships, supporting more young individuals, increasing mentorship opportunities, securing high-quality internships, and raising our profile.

The Foundation's goal is to enhance social mobility throughout the profession. The charity has observed first-hand how their support has turned dreams into reality for individuals to pursue CA training.



**Nurturing
Future Leaders
in Accountancy**

Emma Mathieson
ICAS Foundation Student

Scottish Chartered Accountants Benevolent Society (SCABA)



Supporting CAs and their dependants in times of need, the Scottish Chartered Accountants' Benevolent Association (SCABA) is a charity which supports CAs, and their dependants, from the moment they step on the path to becoming a CA, throughout their professional lives and beyond.

The financial support offered depends on the need and is means tested. In 2022 additional support was given to beneficiaries receiving income support grants to help with the unexpected increase in cost of living. Beneficiaries have adapted in 2023 to the new reality and in several cases receive additional state support. SCABA also provides short term emergency funding and one-off financial support to others to resolve specific needs such as specialised medical treatment, household adaptations, return to work support, unexpected property repair, and education and training support. Grants totalling £56,000 (£90,500 – 2022) were awarded in 2023 including support to the ICAS Foundation.

SCABA's support is not simply financial. The outreach service provides emotional support by offering time to listen and understand the impact of any given situation and to assist the applicant to identify and explore solutions. Advice and assistance are available to both new and existing beneficiaries to maximise state benefits and improve health and wellbeing,

including signposting and referral to other organisations. This is an essential and valued part of the SCABA offer as reflected in a quote from a recent beneficiary and ICAS member.

"I would like to take this time to thank everyone at SCABA for the incredible, kind, non-judgemental service which you provided to me in one of the most difficult times of my life. Everyone who I've dealt with has been nothing short of outstanding in their service."

SCABA is dependent on the continuing generosity of ICAS members. Council is extremely grateful to all those who support other members in need, especially in challenging economic times. This included a £100,000 legacy at the very end of the year.

Council has exciting plans for 2024 with modernisation of charity governance and a rebrand. This will provide a platform to heighten awareness of the services available to members, trainees, and their dependants, and the value that these represent to our donors.

Thank you



ICAS would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteer members who have supported the ICAS team throughout 2023.

We have over 300 member volunteers who give up their time to serve on boards, panels and committees to whom we are extremely grateful to for their support and guidance.

ICAS operates a strong member and colleague partnership which demonstrates our commitment to our values of being team spirited, proudly committed and smart working.





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