



# Building the Future of Audit Talent: Our ACCA Journey

## The Challenge: A Shifting Audit Landscape

When I think about how the audit landscape has evolved, one challenge consistently stands out. Firms are finding it increasingly difficult to plan for the future. The end of apprenticeship funding in the UK, the shortage of entry level professionals, and the growing competition for experienced talent have made it harder for firms to build the next generation of auditors. Many are caught in a cycle where senior staff are stretched thin and junior development has slowed, making long term succession planning a real concern.

At GCO, we have always believed that the future of audit lies in people. Our purpose has never been just about providing capacity, but about helping firms build high performing teams that can grow and sustain themselves over time. We are equally committed to creating meaningful opportunities for professionals in Africa who have the talent, drive, and potential to contribute on a global stage. When we looked at the challenges firms were facing, we saw a clear opportunity to connect these two worlds in a way that benefits everyone.



## Where Our ACCA Journey Began

That was the beginning of our ACCA journey. We wanted to rethink how the next generation of audit professionals could be developed and how we could play a role in that process. The ACCA qualification, with its strong international recognition and structured development pathway, offered the perfect foundation.

Our idea was simple: by creating a formal ACCA Training Office in South Africa, we could train and develop aspiring accountants locally while giving UK firms access to a steady pipeline of junior talent that is integrated into their teams from the start.

This model benefits both sides. For clients, it creates a long-term, sustainable way to build their teams with individuals who understand their systems, standards, and culture. For trainees, it provides a rare opportunity to gain international experience, develop technically and professionally, and qualify as Chartered Accountants while working with global audit firms.



## Raising the Standard: Becoming a **Platinum-Approved Employer**

Becoming an ACCA Platinum Approved Employer was a proud moment for us. It confirmed that our training environment meets the highest global standards for professional development. More importantly, it recognised our commitment to ensuring that every trainee in our program receives the coaching, structure, and mentorship needed to reach their potential.

Our first intake of trainees has already started, and it has been incredibly rewarding to see how quickly they are adding value. They are supporting client teams with audits, learning from experienced managers, and bringing a level of energy and curiosity that has been refreshing to watch. Their progress has also reinforced our belief that this model does more than just fill a skills gap — it builds confidence, capability, and a real sense of purpose on both sides.

## From Managing Talent to **Growing It**

The launch of the ACCA program represents an important evolution for GCO. We started our business with a focus on sourcing and managing offshore professionals for our clients. Over time, we realised that managing performance is only part of the solution. To help firms truly scale, we needed to be involved in how talent is grown.

This program marks that shift. It allows us to be part of the full talent lifecycle — from training and development to qualification and long-term partnership. It's a reflection of how we see the future: not just connecting talent to opportunity, but actively shaping the professionals who will lead the industry forward.

## Looking Ahead: **Collaboration Without Borders**

Looking ahead, our vision is to see this model evolve even further. I believe that in the near future, certain clients will have full audit teams based in South Africa working on their own portfolio of clients while operating as a true extension of their UK offices. It's an exciting prospect — one that reflects how global collaboration can redefine what the audit workforce of the future looks like.

If we succeed in this journey, UK firms will gain a reliable, high-quality pipeline of professionals who are trained to their standards and invested in their success. At the same time, talented young Africans will be given the opportunity to grow their careers and contribute to international firms without having to leave their home country.

*For me, that is what makes this program so special.* It is not just about training accountants. It is about building a bridge between markets, unlocking opportunity, and shaping the future of our profession in a way that benefits everyone involved.

“  
Over time, we realised that managing performance is only part of the solution. **To help firms truly scale, we needed to be involved in how talent is grown.**”



**MUHAMMED EBRAHIM**  
VP - Product Development

Join us in shaping the future of audit where opportunity and excellence meet.  
[www.gcopartners.com](http://www.gcopartners.com)