

# The Actuarial Education Company

on behalf of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

## Life as an actuarial tutor

### Introduction

The Actuarial Education Company (ActEd) offers a unique working environment. As far as we are aware, no other company anywhere in the world employs so many actuaries in education and training. Because the work undertaken by our tutors is non-standard actuarial work, it can be difficult for those currently working in more traditional actuarial roles to understand the types of work our tutors carry out. This document describes the ActEd culture and the role of an actuarial tutor.

### The ActEd culture

Our aim is to achieve an optimum blend of the following objectives:

- to provide an excellent service for clients
- to provide an enjoyable and satisfying working environment for staff
- to generate profits.

In our view, these objectives are equally important, and mutually compatible. We give tutors freedom, flexibility and responsibility for their own work. By providing an enjoyable and satisfying working environment for staff, the company will produce good quality services and will maximise profits over the long term.

### What we look for in our people

The BPP values underpin the skills and behaviours we like to reinforce and recognise as an organisation. These are:

- everybody matters
- trust and respect
- stronger together
- embrace change
- student, learner and client centric.

In order to bring these values to life in a demonstrable way, we look for the following competencies:

- managing self
- citizenship
- teamwork
- communication
- innovation and learning.

We try very hard to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, office politics, doing things which serve little purpose, selfishness and status-based, hierarchical systems.

Tutors are expected to work hard. In return, they can enjoy a flexible and informal working environment in which they can choose, within reason, when and where to do their non-teaching work. Individuals with a high level of ability, self-determination and self-motivation thrive within this culture.

## About ActEd

ActEd is contracted to provide actuarial tuition for students on behalf of Institute and Faculty Education Ltd (IFE), a subsidiary of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA).

ActEd is a subsidiary of BPP Actuarial Education Ltd, part of the BPP Professional Education Group. ActEd only provides tuition services to assist student actuaries with their professional exams. Through BPP, we also:

- support actuarial apprenticeships
- support students studying for the Certified Actuarial Analyst qualification
- develop and run training courses for the financial services industry
- provide educational input to existing in-house training programmes
- assist other global actuarial professions with the education of their students.

## How do ActEd tutors spend their time?

An ActEd tutor's life is varied, and to a large extent, under their own control, so it is difficult to generalise. We currently have a team of over 30 tutors plus around 16 support staff, but we also share many resources with other parts of BPP. The main activities of an ActEd tutor are:

- writing new or updating existing ActEd study materials
- reviewing course material that other ActEd tutors have produced
- teaching small groups of actuarial students face-to-face and online (this can involve a lot of travelling to the major UK cities and also to Dublin).

In addition, tutors are involved in:

- producing pre-recorded online tutorials
- preparing for tutorials (by reading the ActEd notes and wider sources, watching other ActEd tutors teach *etc*)
- marking students' scripts
- answering students' technical queries posted on discussion forums
- participating in meetings to plan ActEd's future strategy (*eg* what services we should offer in the future, how we can improve our services)
- getting involved in running the business.

## What are the students like?

Actuarial students are intelligent and very motivated, which makes teaching them both rewarding and enjoyable. We get student feedback on every tutor, which is collected anonymously and discussed within the team. We make sure that new tutors have plenty of time to prepare for teaching and to watch other tutors in action before they start to teach for themselves. Students will quite rightly criticise tutors who do not meet the standard that they expect – that's why we recruit new tutors very carefully. All our tutors appreciate receiving enthusiastic positive feedback from their clients, and we generally receive outstanding feedback on the tutorials we run.

## How much teaching will I be expected to do?

A typical workload might involve around 80 days of teaching per year. The example below shows how this teaching workload may be spread over the year. A tutor might teach three or four different subjects, although new tutors usually only start with one or two subjects in their first teaching session.

The actuarial academic year might run as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Average weekly teaching commitment</b>
Mid-September to late October	None (unless running an induction course)
November to mid-December	Around 2 days
Late December	None
January and February	Around 3 days
March and early April	Around 4 days
Mid-April to May	None
June and July	Around 2 days
August to mid-September	Around 4 days

### **Travelling**

An ActEd tutor's teaching workload inevitably involves quite a lot of travelling. We run most of our tutorials in London but also run tutorials in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Birmingham, Southampton, Dublin and other locations. Online tutorials are normally delivered from Abingdon or from the tutor's home and are an increasingly important part of our product offering.

We expect our tutors to travel by car, train or plane as appropriate. ActEd pays all reasonable travelling and accommodation costs associated with tutorials, although we do not pay travelling costs for visits to Abingdon, which may be required on a fairly regular basis.

### **Working in our office in Abingdon**

We're based in Abingdon and it's important that a number of tutors live close by and base themselves in the office. However, many of our tutors live elsewhere and work mainly from home.

Twice a year, the whole ActEd team gets together for a meeting in Abingdon. However, we do insist that all tutors make at least occasional visits (at their own expense) to the office to maintain close links with the support staff and to keep up to date with the sort of information that isn't available by email or phone. Although there are no set rules, new tutors can expect to spend one or two days in the office each month for the first six months of employment with ActEd. Wherever you live, do remember that you'll probably need to be able to get to and from London easily as this is where you'll probably do a lot of your teaching. We may also take account of your location and resulting travel expenses when deciding upon your salary offer.

### **Holidays**

Tutors are expected to take most of their holiday (normally 30 days plus bank holidays per year) at the quiet times of year, *ie* mid-April to June, October to late December. However, tutors can normally arrange their timetable to take two weeks' holiday during the school summer holidays and keen skiers can normally arrange their timetable to allow a weeks' skiing in January to March. Shorter holidays can be taken at any time if they are allowed for in the timetable.

### **Recruitment days**

We hold recruitment days at our office in Abingdon, comprising of an interview with an ActEd tutor and our Managing Director, and the opportunity to give a short mock tutorial in which you'll present some information relevant to the actuarial exams to some ActEd tutors. We may also ask you to complete a psychometric test.

Most people tend to get nervous about the mock tutorial. Please do not worry – we won't expect a completely polished performance from actuaries who have never taught before. We're looking for potential (eg interpersonal skills and the ability to inspire students) and we realise that your technical knowledge may be a little rusty in places.

### **Still interested?**

Get in touch with us by emailing [jansenator@bpp.com](mailto:jansenator@bpp.com). We can then give you the up-to-date situation on vacancies, and take things from there.

