

# *Building a modern audit profession*

**AUDIT MANIFESTO**

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AUDIT MANIFESTO	3
INTRODUCTION	6
PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A MODERN PROFESSION	9
PRINCIPLE 1: PURPOSE Articulate, communicate and uphold social and economic purpose	10
PRINCIPLE 2: IDENTITY Develop and promote the distinctive identity of the audit professional	15
PRINCIPLE 3: COMMUNITY Foster a collaborative learning community for the professional practice of audit	18
PRINCIPLE 4: EDUCATION Commit to holistic professional formation and education	21
PRINCIPLE 5: MINDSET Adopt a 'design mindset' to think and work differently	24
A PATH TO PROGRESS	26
AUDITFUTURES - KEY PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS	27

# *Audit Manifesto*

This Manifesto distils knowledge and insights from ICAEW's AuditFutures initiative into five principles for building a modern audit profession.

These five principles should be at the heart of audit reform. They call for serious attention to purpose, identity, community, education and mindset. They could help to advance the policy debate and guide the audit profession on its journey towards a better future.

Echoing the observation by Sir Donald Brydon that 'audit is not broken but it has lost its way and all the actors in the audit process bear some measure of responsibility', the Manifesto is a call to the audit profession to take appropriate ownership of how it is reshaped and rebuilt. By seizing the initiative, the audit profession can enhance trust in business and itself, reaffirm its public interest role, and strengthen its position in society.

The Manifesto is the heart of this report. The report and associated online materials will help to inform the dialogue between stakeholders which AuditFutures will be encouraging in the coming months.

We invite you to join us. Together, we can think differently (and better) about audit and its future. Together, we can build a sustainable future for audit, and in a small way, a better world.

## INSPIRATION

Since its earliest days, in the tailwinds of the global financial crisis, AuditFutures has been initiating open, collaborative dialogues on the future of the audit profession. We have engaged with a community of more than a thousand people, in audit and beyond, to gain deeper insights into their experiences, ideas, inspirations, philosophies and predictions, and to learn from them. The energy, passion and commitment of our community were the driving force for our work.

Along the way, AuditFutures has explored new and different ways to reimagine audit and take the profession out of its comfort zone. We have facilitated deep, collaborative discussions; iterative and cross-professional learning; and shared practical approaches to 'thinking differently' and consider things from alternative points of view. Adopting these approaches has enabled people in and around the audit profession to critically reassess their present and envisage a better future.

## VISION

AuditFutures has always had a clear vision for the profession: to serve society. Understanding, questioning and unpacking the social purpose of the audit profession has been at the heart of our projects and workstreams. Now, these dialogues can help to create the clarity of social and economic purpose that is needed to guide progress in audit as a practice, service and profession.

Evolution is necessary. Just as audit developed to meet the needs of the past, it must develop to meet the evolving needs of the present and anticipate the needs of the future. To do this, those in and around the audit profession will need to enter unfamiliar territory, consider uncomfortable questions, and adopt unfamiliar ways of thinking and seeing.

AuditFutures has explored, developed and applied approaches that could allow for positive and meaningful change by: actively seeking fresh perspectives; listening to and understanding young auditors; learning from other disciplines and professions; improving collaboration with the academic community; and thinking conceptually differently about audit.

## LEADERSHIP

To redesign the audit profession so that it brings out the best in its people, it needs to be self-critical; each and every auditor needs to question their own values and assumptions. Auditors need to think about the sort of society we all want to create and consider the wider role and purpose of the audit profession in serving the public interest.

The profession should invite fresh perspectives and radical thinking to assist it in understanding key issues facing the profession and the society it serves, so that it can create better solutions which are in the public interest. It should strive to respond dynamically to evolving social and economic needs, technologies and work patterns; to reassess and renew its role and strengthen its place in society.

## *Principles for building a modern audit profession*

### PRINCIPLE 1 - ARTICULATE, COMMUNICATE AND UPHOLD SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PURPOSE

The social and economic purpose of audit underpins the social contract and legitimacy of the profession and provides direction and meaning to innovation and improvement of services. Most importantly, understanding the purpose behind an individual's tasks is essential for their motivation, commitment and quality of work. A vibrant and socially relevant audit profession can inspire, attract and retain responsive and talented people who are seeking work with meaning and relevance.

The audit profession can better crystallise its purpose by facilitating dialogue with stakeholders across the wider ecosystem in which it operates - and beyond. Such deliberate engagement with society will demonstrate leadership and initiative and will enable trust and accountability.

1  
PURPOSE



### PRINCIPLE 2 - DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY OF THE AUDIT PROFESSIONAL

A distinctive professional identity is linked to how individuals see their work. It influences how they contribute to the purpose of their profession and how they communicate its value. The cultivation of identity is a continuous journey throughout the various steps of professional preparation and is reinforced through lifelong learning and practice. A modern profession needs to consider more systemically the elements of this journey and how they underpin professional identity, culture and practice.

It is important to plan the resources and design the conditions that foster auditors' moral and intellectual qualities, as well as the beliefs and ideals they should hold for the profession. This systemic approach will help attract and retain talent, with the needed values, behaviours and commitments. Professional identity entails virtues and worldviews that are largely reinforced and promoted by the underlying ethos of the profession.

2 [IDENTITY]



### PRINCIPLE 3 - FOSTER A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF AUDIT

A modern profession should facilitate learning between firms and create precompetitive spaces that advance its knowledge and promote its social and economic role. Audit firms of all sizes would benefit from collaborating in practice areas where each could perform better and where there are new challenges to resolve. The value of 'collaborative communities of practice' has already been demonstrated by practitioners in various sectors and professions.

Practitioners need physical and mental spaces where they can learn and deliberate. Providing this within and across organisations allows individuals to develop agency and mechanisms for solving complex problems. Safe spaces allow for experimentation and learning that could unite the profession around a common purpose in serving the public interest.

3  
COMMUNITY



**PRINCIPLE 4 - COMMIT TO HOLISTIC PROFESSIONAL FORMATION AND EDUCATION**

Powerful educational experiences can foster a sense of liberation, curiosity and commitment. A modern audit profession needs a level of formative preparation and ongoing training that will inspire, build and sustain its professional workforce. This requires holistic attention to conditions, theory and approaches to learning, in order to cultivate capacities of judgement and qualities in aspiring auditors.

Formative education and training should, ideally, broaden capabilities and perspectives that are beyond the required technical excellence and skillset. Approaching professional formation more holistically would help to increase attention to developing curiosity, scepticism and critical thinking.

More meaningful professional education and training could be built on three interwoven aspects: excellence (pursuing a 'good' that is internal to the practice of audit); engagement (the ability and motivation to critically engage with the purpose and function of audit); and ethicality (a broad understanding of ethics that emphasises 'being' rather than doing).



4  
EDUCATION

**PRINCIPLE 5 - ADOPT A 'DESIGN MINDSET' TO THINK AND WORK DIFFERENTLY**

A modern audit profession should reach out beyond its traditional stakeholders. In order to be trusted and responsive to the evolving needs of business and society, it has to find ways to engage more widely and deeply.

Adopting a design mindset could help the audit profession to expand its ideas of what is possible and desirable, and to find a way forward - to innovate. It will benefit from applying different perspectives and lenses to problem solving and from embracing iterative developments to drive change in an agile way and with pace. Similar design approaches have helped innovators in the arts, sciences and business to think differently about purpose, experience and services.

This people-centred approach has the potential to foster different ways for the audit profession to think, work and support continuous learning and improvement. Attending to the experiences of auditors and other stakeholders could empower the profession to evolve and to adapt to the complex, changing reality of its ecosystem.



5 MINDSET

***‘The profession employs tens of thousands of bright, imaginative, innovative people and it generates billions of pounds of business for the UK by developing solutions for businesses here and around the world, so why can’t it fix its own?’***

MARK BABINGTON, FINANCIAL REPORTING COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY STANDARDS, SPEAKING TO AUDITORS AT AN ICAEW DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF AUDIT IN 2019

# Introduction

These comments were made by auditors who attended our Time to Think forums. AuditFutures creates and hosts these workshops as 'safe spaces' where young professionals are given a voice that would otherwise be lost in the ongoing debates around the future of audit. These forums bring together auditors who are new to the profession and encourage them to think differently about audit, to reflect on their motivations, the meaning and purpose of their work and their professional roles; to ask and try to answer some fundamental questions. What is an auditor? Why do people join the audit profession? Why do they leave? What does it mean to be a professional? What guides our values and behaviours? What is the purpose of audit? How can audit expand its vision of what is possible and desirable? How can it move forward?

## Collective intelligence

Much may be learnt from Time to Think and other initiatives undertaken by AuditFutures – and by various types of stakeholders inside and outside the corporate reporting ecosystem (see page 8) within which audit sits. Listening to young people, seeking out new perspectives on audit, collaborating with other disciplines and professions, and thinking differently about audit, have always been at the heart of AuditFutures. Back in 2014, our project with the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) broke new ground, by engaging across professions to reconsider the past, present and future of audit, and what value it could bring to society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Since then, AuditFutures' landmark initiatives (see page 27) have engaged with more than 1,000 professionals, opening and expanding opportunities for dialogues on audit, across and beyond the profession. Together, we at AuditFutures and those involved in the dialogues, have drawn the audit world out of its bubble. We have explored connections between audit and the disparate disciplines of design and philosophy; built on this to develop new theoretical approaches and practical tools to engage practitioners in discussions; created precompetitive spaces where audit firms can discuss collaboration and learning among peers; and challenged the profession to think differently and better about audit – and its future.

***'We need to help the public understand what we do.'***

***'I value the public service role of the profession – it is a positive role which is not well promoted or understood.'***

***'We don't often discuss audit quality – our pressure comes from recoverability rates.'***

***'We need to focus on the important things.'***

***'In the public sector, we get to the heart of audit and can add more value.'***

***'People are not proud to be auditors.'***

***'Critical thinking is one of the most important skills a young auditor can have.'***

***'It is a mistake for auditors to be young people straight out of university. Experience and understanding business are important.'***

***'We are keen to be doing more as part of the audit process.'***

## Envisioning

The world has changed a lot during the lifetime of AuditFutures. Nonetheless, some of our work has never been more relevant; some of it may have been prescient. Audit has recently been the subject of intense public and political scrutiny. When a series of high-profile UK corporate collapses happened shortly after ‘clean’ audit reports were issued on their financial statements, these circumstances prompted a number of government-sponsored inquiries into aspects of the UK audit market and profession; then some significant **reports and recommendations**, including those from Sir Donald Brydon.

The results of Brydon’s review opened a new frontier for audit with the possibility of a new Corporate Auditing Profession. In chapter 6 of his report, Brydon outlined how and why a financial reporting regulator should establish this new profession, to equip today’s auditors and others with appropriate education and authorisation; he then delivered a speech urging senior audit professionals to get together and design a profession for themselves. Like Brydon, AuditFutures has an ambitious vision for the audit profession. To articulate this, insights from the work of AuditFutures have been distilled into the principles we are sharing within this report.

To guide discussions and inform decisions about the future of the audit profession, we propose five principles, which suggest that a modern audit profession should:

- uphold a social and economic purpose;
- develop auditors with a distinctive professional identity;
- create precompetitive spaces where professionals can collaborate and learn;
- build professional education and formation through the combination of excellence, engagement and ethicality; and
- adopt a ‘design mindset’ to think and work differently.

## Context and challenges

Rethinking and reshaping the audit profession will be challenging, but change is inevitable. We are all living and working through a period of extraordinary complexity and uncertainty. Our world will be fundamentally reshaped by our responses to existing and emerging challenges, such as the pandemic, climate change, technology disruption, the search for a more sustainable and inclusive capitalism, and demands for greater transparency and broader reporting by business.

Audit has the potential to play an important role in addressing some of the problems associated with these challenges. It evolved to meet the needs of the past and it can evolve to meet those of the future. But the profession has reached a crossroads at a time of unprecedented changes and challenges; an unprecedented response is required. The audit profession needs to step up and lead: to demonstrate initiative, leave its comfort zone and move beyond conventional approaches, conceptions and views.

Auditors need to go back to basics: think about the type of society they want to create and consider the wider role and purpose of audit, and the audit profession, in serving the public interest. AuditFutures believes that the audit profession can be redesigned to bring out the best in its people; it can innovate. But this calls for self-critical reflection. It calls for a willingness to reassess values and assumptions and tackle some uncomfortable questions about audit as a service, practice and profession.

## Leading by example

AuditFutures has spent a number of years conducting extensive and ground-breaking research and outreach. Its novel, collaborative, cross-professional approach has opened and sustained dialogues on audit and its future, enabling genuine reflections and learning that might not otherwise be possible.

We have used insights from all of these initiatives and projects as the basis for our five principles, and we believe that they can help the profession to move forward, advance policy debate, and support the development of a modern audit profession.

Innovation is in the DNA of AuditFutures. We are also sharing some of the novel approaches and practical tools that we have advanced and employed in our initiatives and projects, to facilitate ‘thinking differently’ and considering things from alternative points of view.

Combined with our five principles, these approaches may support ways of thinking, working and teaching that can allow for positive and meaningful change by:

- actively seeking fresh perspectives;
- listening to and understanding young auditors;
- learning from multiple disciplines and professions;
- improving collaboration with the academic community; and
- thinking conceptually differently about audit.

Through this report we share our Audit Manifesto and support this with insights and learning from our AuditFutures’ initiative, in its spirit of open collaboration and exploration. Together, we can think differently (and better) about audit and its future. Together, we can build a sustainable future for audit, and in a small way, a better world.

## WHAT ARE AUDIT AND ASSURANCE?

Assurance is a professional service that aims to improve the quality and transparency of information, to reduce the chance of problems arising from information that is ambiguous, incorrect or opaque.

An assurance engagement generally results in a written report, which aims to enable better and more informed decision-making related to the subject of the assurance, by users of the report.

Matters that may (potentially) be the subject of an assurance engagement are diverse. Examples include: climate risk disclosures, charity fundraising, cyber security, mineral reserves and financial statements.

There are many sector-specific, national and international frameworks and standards in place to aid the scoping and performance of assurance, and to facilitate comparability across the resulting reports.

Assurance may be conducted for various reasons. Some types of assurance are initiated voluntarily; some assurance and reports are necessary for compliance and regulatory reasons, as with financial statements.

Laws in various jurisdictions require businesses, charities and other types of entity (that meet specified criteria) to periodically have their financial statements audited.

The term audit, however, is used to describe various types of assurance-related activity and reporting.

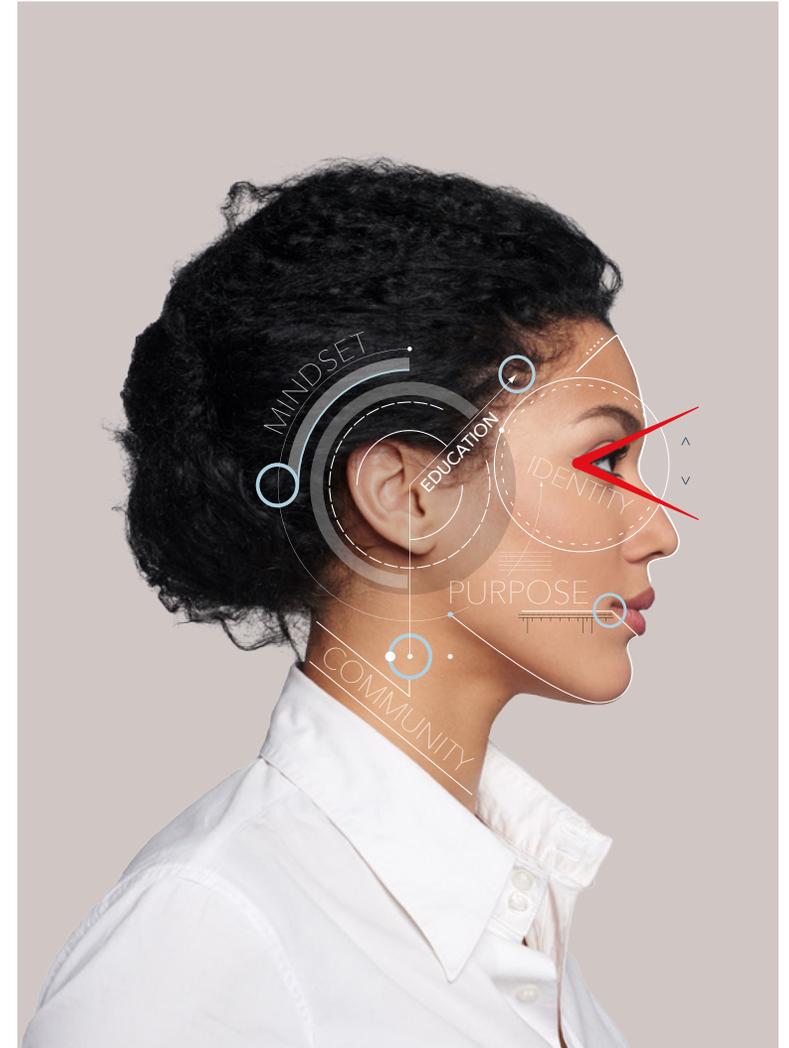
## THE CORPORATE REPORTING ECOSYSTEM

Corporate reporting is a broad term that means different things to different people. There are a number of reasons for this - not least the lack of a globally agreed definition.

Corporate reporting is like an incredibly complicated jigsaw puzzle, in pieces. It attempts to capture massive amounts of information about organisations; its scope is constantly evolving to meet the changing expectations and requirements of different stakeholders; rules, regulations and frameworks are in a constant state of flux; parallel and sometimes overlapping reporting systems are in operation; there are variations across jurisdictions, sectors and organisations; no single entity or authority has control of the entire corporate reporting system; and it is part of a much larger and looser ecosystem.

The annual report (AR) is a key component of corporate reporting and most jurisdictions require certain companies to prepare one; many require it to be filed with a national company registry. Typical contents are financial statements (with the auditor's report on these either in or accompanying the AR), reports from the chair and executive officers and other types of narrative reporting. Their scope may include: company activities, brand and reputation, strategy and performance on environmental, social and governance matters, cyber security and other types of risk management disclosures.

The players in this corporate reporting ecosystem are many and varied. A brief list includes: businesses of many different sizes and types (not just corporations), board members and executives, employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors, auditors, governments, regulators, activists, the public and various other individuals, institutions and professions.



## *Principles for building a modern profession*

AuditFutures has an ambitious vision for the audit profession. To articulate this, insights from the work of AuditFutures have been distilled into a number of principles and summarised in this Manifesto for the modern audit profession.



**PRINCIPLE 1: PURPOSE**

*Articulate, communicate and uphold social and economic purpose*

Understanding, questioning and unpacking the social purpose of the profession has been at the heart of AuditFutures' projects and work streams. We bring forward the concept of purpose, as this aspect of professional work is not often discussed in depth. However, it is a fundamental principle for any profession, as it underpins its social contract and legitimacy and provides direction and meaning to innovation and improvement of services.

Most importantly, understanding the purpose behind an individual's tasks is essential for their motivation, commitment and quality of work. A vibrant and socially relevant audit profession can inspire, attract and retain responsive and talented people, who are seeking work with meaning and purpose.

Insights from our research suggest that there is plenty of uncertainty (and dispersed understanding) about the social purpose of audit. We believe this ambiguity has had negative implications for the evolving nature of practice, educational and training objectives, and informed debate. Public discourse often alludes to the infamous 'expectation gap' without reaching consensus on what the purpose of audit should be. In speaking to students, trainees and professionals, we have seen a general agreement on the need to serve society and act in the 'public interest', but little or no clarity on what that might involve.

Unpacking and questioning the social purpose of audit was apparent early in the lifetime of AuditFutures and became the basis for many of our workstreams and projects. Our 2014 report *Enlightening professions: A vision for audit and a better society* was the result of a bold collaboration with the RSA, which suggested the need to rethink the future of professions and articulate a vision for audit.

This project helped to establish a modus operandi for our future work:

- taking an open and collaborative approach;
- engaging with other professions; and
- thinking about the sort of society and profession we want to create.

*‘If we want the auditing community to contribute to creating a better capitalism, we need a framework through which to understand what the purpose is.’*

MARIANNA MAZZUCATO, ECONOMIST, PROFESSOR AND AUTHOR



It also began our in-depth explorations of matters which help to shape the social and economic purpose of the audit profession, and how this is communicated, understood and upheld. Our work considered matters such as: the social contract for the profession; roles of professional bodies; auditors' critical capacities and abilities; and the need for agency and motivation in professionals.

***'What is it we want audit to do? Audit is in the uncomfortable position of being judged, very often, by failures with which it is associated but for which it is not responsible.'***

PAUL BUDDERY, CO-AUTHOR OF ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS?  
A VISION FOR AUDIT AND A BETTER SOCIETY

Understanding the purpose of individual and group activities and their impact has been shown to motivate individuals to engage and excel. There is a consensus in psychology studies that people need to have a sense of purpose that is embraced by and characterises the whole individual. Individual identity is activated when people get personally involved. This ownership can build intrinsic motivation and decrease the risk of ethical violations.

On the journey to becoming a professional, people should gain not only knowledge, but moral sensitivity and the ability to critically recognise themselves as responsible individuals whose actions impact on society and who contribute toward a specific greater good. To support this, higher purpose can be embedded and communicated through the 'ethos' of the profession (a concept we consider in the section on Principle 2).

To assist in clarifying, articulating, communicating and upholding the purpose of audit, we are sharing some of what we have learnt from AuditFutures' projects and workstreams.

We are also exploring considerations around some underlying aspects, in a series of essays on our website. But before moving on to consider ways in which the audit profession may better serve society, it is helpful to remind ourselves how it already adds value.

Audit and assurance services (see box) have evolved to meet practical needs. By building confidence and trust in financial and non-financial information, they have enabled various kinds of trade and related activities, allowing people to reap the benefits of economic development. But when notions of what it means to add value and the expectations and needs of stakeholders are evolving rapidly, so must audit.

Discussions at our Time to Think sessions with young auditors revealed differing perspectives on the purpose of audit today and ambitions for its future. The need to rethink the scope and purpose of audit also emerged as a theme in our engagements with the wider ecosystem of stakeholders, as well as innovation and technical leads from audit firms. The most significant insight in this area is that rethinking and renegotiating of the purpose of audit should drive any policy agenda. This is what should provide legitimacy for the profession and help renew its licence to operate in the public interest.

There are important questions about the social contract between business and society, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. One essay in the Manifesto resources sections of our website, [A profession which serves society](#), shares findings from AuditFutures' engagement and considers how the audit profession might rethink its role in wealth creation and actively lead on the journey towards to a fairer and more successful society.

This will not be simple, straightforward or speedy. Significant change does not happen overnight; neither does an understanding of what this will demand from the audit

profession in terms of values, behaviours, capacities of judgement and abilities such as ethical awareness and moral sensitivity – or how these may be developed. Perhaps it is time for the profession to reconsider audit from a philosophical perspective.

***'The audit profession should operate with radical transparency, as if in a glass box, be clear about its social purpose and embrace innovation and collaboration.'***

MATTHEW TAYLOR, RSA CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FORMER  
POLITICAL STRATEGIST

The process with which the profession engages in a continuous dialogue about its purpose and role is also important. To demonstrate leadership, ownership and initiative, a modern audit profession should rethink and respond to challenges and opportunities. The commitment for such dialogue with society will enable trust and accountability. It will help the profession to uphold its purpose and be accountable for its pledge to society.

AuditFutures has explored these goals through various initiatives and shares some of what has been learnt within the following essays:

- **Reviving purpose in teaching ethics** considers the importance of why and how ethics is taught and shares ideas on aspects of this (such as ways to integrate related content into the curriculum and teach the concept of professionalism).
- **Purpose and professionalism** outlines why we need to revive the notion of professionalism and build awareness of this among auditors. These are valuable components of shaping the social and economic purpose of the profession and how this is communicated, developed and sustained – and how members of the profession think about their profession, about themselves and about their purpose.

To further explore some of the research and thinking that underpins this principle, [visit our website](#).

## RETHINKING THE FUTURE OF AUDIT

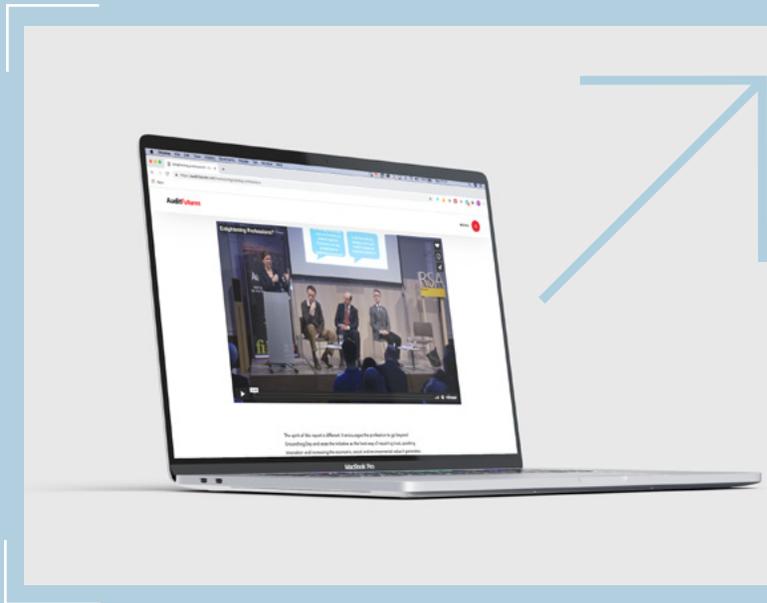
*Enlightening professions? A vision for audit and a better society* reports on one of AuditFutures' earliest initiatives, a 2014 project with the RSA [on rethinking the future of professions](#).

At the time, it was unusual to reach beyond the world of audit into other professions. This project initiated open dialogues to broaden thinking and understanding around professions in the past, present and future. It began by thinking about the sort of society we want to create, then considered the roles and responsibilities of professions in achieving this, before going on to explore where audit fits.

It drew on a literature review, a call for evidence through the RSA Fellowship, semi-structured interviews and contributions from more than 200 people inside and outside the audit profession. Many parts of the report remain relevant, salient and enlightening; some parts now seem prescient.

At 28 pages, it is not a quick read, but the 'Executive summary' offers an accessible overview of both the RSA report and some of the big issues it predicted for society, the professions and audit – which are now widely recognised.

Major issues faced by society, businesses and the audit profession have also been the subject of other AuditFutures' initiatives, including the recent Time to Think sessions. These forums bring young people together, from across the profession, to consider and discuss topical issues, by introducing them to philosophical and design approaches. During 2019 alone, AuditFutures hosted seven practical sessions with more than 100 people from around 20 audit firms.



# IN SUPPORT

***‘If we want the auditing community to contribute to creating a better capitalism, we need a framework through which to understand what the purpose is.’***

MARIANNA MAZZUCATO, ECONOMIST, PROFESSOR AND AUTHOR

***‘The audit profession should operate with radical transparency, as if in a glass box, be clear about its social purpose and embrace innovation and collaboration.’***

MATTHEW TAYLOR, RSA CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FORMER POLITICAL STRATEGIST

***‘What is it we want audit to do? Audit is in the uncomfortable position of being judged, very often, by failures with which it is associated but for which it is not responsible.’***

PAUL BUDDERY, CO-AUTHOR OF ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS? A VISION FOR AUDIT AND A BETTER SOCIETY

***‘Audit needs to change in terms of purpose. To not only give assurance on financial statements, but advice on how to fix issues – given public expectations that auditors should be stopping companies going under.’***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

***‘The profession employs tens of thousands of bright, imaginative, innovative people and it generates billions of pounds of business for the UK by developing solutions for businesses here and around the world, so why can’t it fix its own?’***

MARK BABINGTON, FINANCIAL REPORTING COUNCIL’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY STANDARDS, SPEAKING TO AUDITORS AT AN ICAEW DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF AUDIT IN 2019

***‘Discussing why we are doing what we are doing is an important topic. It is not something all professionals agree on – particularly the expectation gap between what the public thinks and what audit actually does.’***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT





## PRINCIPLE 2: IDENTITY

### *Develop and promote the distinctive identity of the audit professional*

Our work shows that professional identity is not something that is widely discussed, and concepts of the 'audit professional' can seem disparate and unclear. Investing in the development and promotion of the distinctive identity of the audit professional is especially necessary and challenging in a world of work where recruitment is shaped by global openness, diversity and inclusiveness.

Professional identity influences and is influenced by many things, both inside and outside the audit profession, shaping how the profession sees itself and how it is seen by others. To preserve its attractiveness, relevancy, retention and respect, the profession should be placing more emphasis on the characteristics, values and commitments that auditors should identify with. Beyond focusing on skills and knowledge, the profession can benefit from discussions that question its purpose and role in society and explore the virtues that it aspires to foster. In turn, this will assist with plans for developing the competencies and skills that may be needed in the future. A richer understanding and connection to the needs of a wider range of stakeholders could help us to redefine the scope of professional expertise, by giving appropriate weight to particular competencies and qualities.

These personal qualities, attitudes and strengths for moral behaviour are what we define as virtues. Some of the virtues that have been associated with the audit profession during our workshops are: fairness, integrity, truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, service to the common good, gratitude and benevolence. In addition, we have also discussed the importance of virtues that help individuals to act wisely within different contexts: courage, perseverance, diligence, constancy and humility.

For much of audit's long history, what it meant to be an auditor changed little from one generation to the next, and the auditor's role was well understood. In recent years, audit has been reshaped by social, political and technological developments and increasingly sophisticated financial markets, laws and regulations, and the role of auditors and their professional identity has become less clear and less well understood.

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***‘The auditor should recognise himself or herself as a public servant working in the public interest.’***

PAUL BUDDERY, CO-AUTHOR OF ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS?  
A VISION FOR AUDIT AND A BETTER SOCIETY

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AuditFutures has done a significant amount of work on exploring what a profession is and what should define its professional identity in the future. The goals that motivate professional work also define what qualities and principles individuals need to uphold to accomplish these aims. To understand the particular individual virtues that are necessary within the audit profession, we need to develop a richer understanding of the ethical commitments and the social purpose that drive the nature and work of the profession.

The essays in our [online resources section](#) share what has been learnt, from some of AuditFutures' projects and workstreams, about how the audit profession's distinctive identity may be developed, reinforced and promoted.

*Developing a professional identity* focuses on how this is achieved. It shares how AuditFutures' workshops have enabled auditors to reflect on the development of their professional identity (by positioning professional competencies, technical knowledge and ethical values in a broad context) and how this could culminate in the identification of a distinctive ethos to guide the audit profession into the future.

*Ethos as a unifying narrative for auditors* introduces the concept of 'professional ethos': the characteristics of people who share core values, aspire to contribute to a higher purpose and exhibit particular virtues. Ethos is a way to communicate the key aspirations and commitment of the profession and to motivate and guide individuals on their professional journey. We explore: how this narrative fits with a professional code of ethics; whether professional ethos reflects the attitudes and aspirations of auditors; and why professional ethos should be understood as the core of what it means to see, think and work as an audit professional.

A number of AuditFutures' activities encourage auditors to think deeply about what shapes their personal and professional identities, and this is reflected in the essay *Becoming a professional: the journey*. It shares some AuditFutures' research and collaboration with academics, educators and training providers and considers how to guide the professional journey towards some key outcomes.

We explore why it is important to motivate the audit professional as a moral agent; initiate auditors in professional ethos; and build a reflective practice through education and training. As professionals, it is important for auditors to

appreciate that their actions can impact society and that the power and trust it places in them can – and should – contribute to a specific public good.

In other words, virtuous professionals are not merely competent technicians who follow professional rules, but people of moral and intellectual qualities that enable them to achieve the public good they have committed to – the social purpose of the profession.

The development of identity is a long-term process that is shaped through various stages of education, reinforced through meaningful lifelong learning and practice, and can be mapped as a continuous journey. A modern profession needs to explore the interdependent elements of this journey and the processes that interact to develop professional identity, professional culture and practice.

To further explore some of the research and thinking that underpins this principle, [visit our website](#).

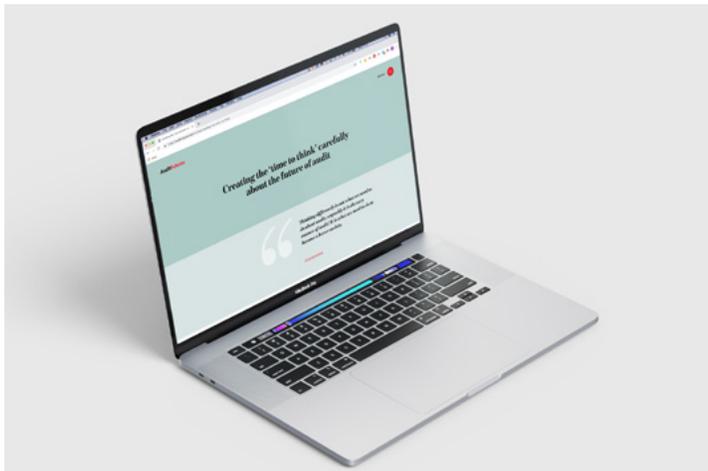
***‘As the future of the profession, it is vital for everyone to understand our role, as without this understanding we are unable to challenge the norm. These discussions force us to question the work we do, highlighting the bigger picture.’***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

# TIME TO THINK

Time to Think builds on a number of AuditFutures' education and innovation initiatives, with a **forum for young professionals**. A number of workshops have been hosted, to bring young people together from across the profession, engaging with individuals and teams with various specialisms, at accountancy firms of different sizes throughout the UK.

During 2019, seven forum workshops brought together more than 100 people from around 20 firms. This outreach provided extensive anecdotal feedback, which is being used to formulate various hypotheses, for further AuditFutures' research and exploration.



# ETHOS

The AuditFutures' Ethos project has undertaken significant work exploring what a profession is and what should define professional identity. The project drew on the work of philosophers and sociologists, and developed some new theoretical approaches to open and support dialogues.

The report ***Ethos: a guiding compass for the future professional*** was, for example, developed by AuditFutures as a practical tool to introduce the concept of ethos and facilitate discussions among auditors.

The Ethos report brings attention to the concept of ethos and emphasises how significant character, qualities and purpose are for guiding the work of auditors. The report unpacks these aspects and integrates them into the concept of an ethos for the audit profession.



***'I think it's important to think about how to bring about positive change in the auditing profession, how to inculcate values and ethics into organisational culture, in order to highlight the social benefit of the audit profession.'***

STUDENT ATTENDEE AT AUDITFUTURES' PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY WORKSHOP

***'An uncertain future elsewhere, makes an auditing career a good investment and a secure profession.'***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

***'We want the audit profession to achieve and reach its true potential by continuing to contribute to the development of society and civilisation.'***

STUDENT STUDYING 'PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY' AS PART OF BSc IN ACCOUNTING



## PRINCIPLE 3: COMMUNITY

### *Foster a collaborative learning community for the professional practice of audit*

Taking an open and collaborative approach is part of the DNA of AuditFutures and could offer the audit profession a new way and new resources for rethinking its future. It may be particularly relevant against the backdrop of recent public scrutiny and reviews into reforming the audit market and some of the technology-driven developments that are reshaping the practice of audit.

Open and collaborative approaches to innovation have grown in popularity across many sectors in recent decades, but some sectors and organisations still favour the more traditional strategy of innovating and then building barriers to entry. In the world of audit, the open and collaborative method may not seem like a good fit for the hierarchical pyramid structure of professional services firms; but it still has much to offer the profession.

**Our online resources hub** considers ways in which networks of professional firms can benefit from working together; aspects of the 'professional practice' of audit and how to enhance these; what may be achieved by building precompetitive spaces for learning, deliberation and innovation; and the role of professional bodies in fostering collaborative and learning communities for the professional practice of audit.

AuditFutures has learnt from its research projects and workstreams in these areas. Renewed attention on improving audit quality and fostering market competition offers fresh opportunities for audit firms to show leadership and learn from each other, and AuditFutures' technical and practical workshops have highlighted many areas where innovation is needed.

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***'It is very important to be able to hear and think with people in the profession who might be facing similar issues and who share ideas about the future.'***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

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The essay [Open innovation in audit](#) offers pointers on how the audit profession can learn from the tech sector, which has clearly demonstrated the benefits of being open and collaborative. It also shares some mechanisms the audit profession could use to collaborate in areas such as audit data standards, technology innovation and adoption.

AuditFutures believes that a modern audit profession should facilitate learning between firms and create precompetitive spaces that advance its social and economic roles. Audit firms need to collaborate in practice areas where all firms could perform better. The value of 'collaborative communities of practice' has already been demonstrated by practitioners in various professions and specialisms.

[Fostering a collaborative innovation community](#) picks up this theme. It argues the need to focus on culture and interrogate intrinsic values and institutional foundations that make up audit practice, to build capabilities and conditions that are needed for innovation and improvement. It also explores the threats and opportunities associated with digital technologies.

AuditFutures' discussions with more than 20 audit firms have considered the rise of automation, existing investments in tech, and potential implications of existing and future adoption for professional ethics and skills, firm structures and services, innovation and competition, knowledge sharing and transfer and how all of these might best be managed.

Many firms with audit practices have active innovation and technology teams. AuditFutures has established that some of them are willing and able to move forward with collaborations that could help to improve audit, demonstrate a commitment to improvement and reshape perceptions of the sector, by sharing positive narratives rather than reinforcing negative ones.

To further explore some of the research and thinking that underpins this principle, visit our [online resources hub](#).



***'Engaging in genuine and critical conversation about current context, issues and how to improve our practice has been very refreshing and motivating.'***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

# THE AUDIT COLLABORATORY

AuditFutures has initiated a number of projects bringing various audit firms together to discuss topical **questions in a precompetitive environment**.

One of its workshop events convened a broad range of people from 14 firms of varying sizes, including three of the largest firms, to explore how audit firms can collaborate better and share learning and knowledge. It considered questions such as:

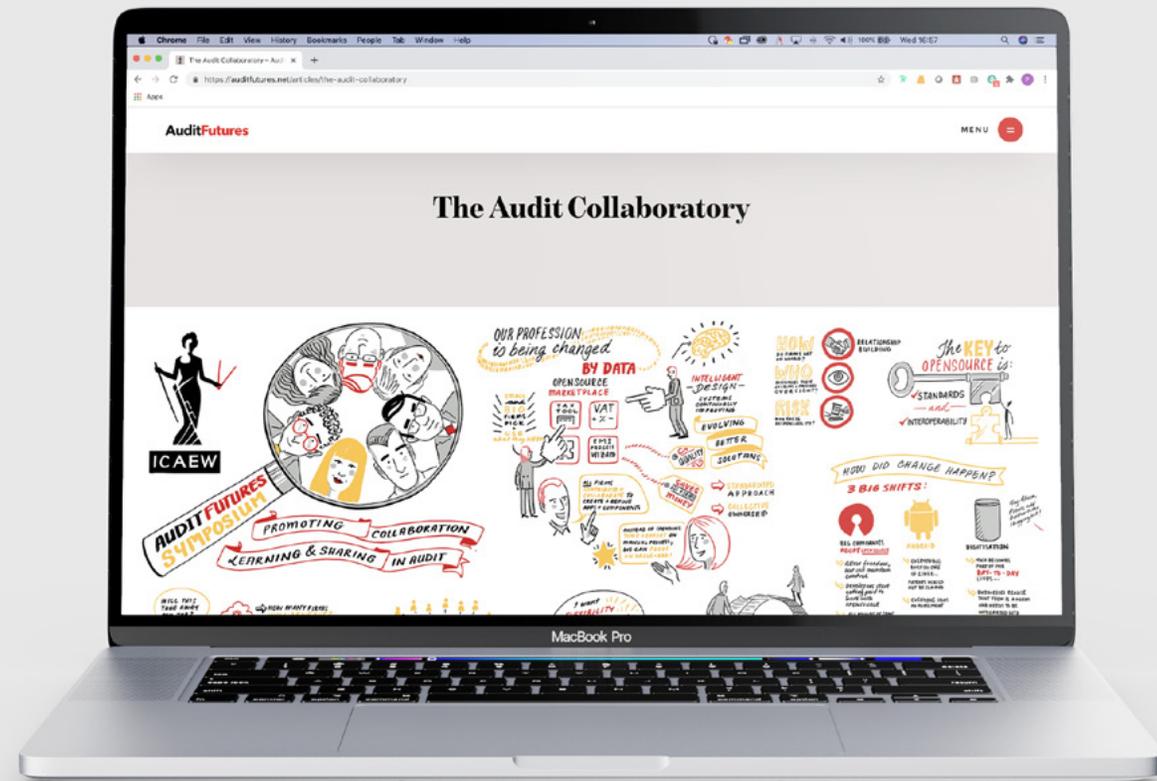
- what can firms learn from shared challenges in data extraction and preparation, to enable audit teams to focus on higher value services such as analytics and machine learning?
- how might firms energise compliance training and make it more effective? and
- how can different firms collaborate to capture and share insights and experiences that make audit work well?

A number of new projects emerged from this on:

- how the profession could scope and develop an open source platform to improve collaboration between firms;
- testing an approach to sharing 'near misses' in audit;
- creating an 'Audit Technology Firm Forum' to review and rate tech providers, to share experiences and identify the best providers for audit purposes; and
- producing training and personal development resources to complement existing training on audit process and procedures.

*'Progress is possible through shared inquiry and mutual encouragement.'*

PAUL BUDDERY, CO-AUTHOR OF ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS? A VISION FOR AUDIT AND A BETTER SOCIETY





## PRINCIPLE 4: EDUCATION

### *Commit to holistic professional formation and education*

A modern audit profession needs a level of professional preparation that could inspire, build and sustain its workforce. This requires attention to the seriousness and practice of theory and learning, to facilitate the cultivation of critical judgement in aspiring auditors. It also requires the sort of powerful educational experiences that can foster a sense of liberation, curiosity and commitment.

Audit is informed by and contributes to some key issues within business, politics, human rights, ethics and sustainable development. Solving problems and innovating in these areas, and the practice of audit, calls for auditors who can combine their technical skills with a deep understanding of the purpose of their profession and the emotional intelligence, moral orientation, and vision to be a 'good professional'.

Through AuditFutures' projects and research, we explore why it is important for the education and training of auditors to broaden their perspective beyond the required technical excellence and skillsets. The essays in our [online resources hub](#) consider the educational experiences needed; creating space to develop necessary capacities; experiential and reflective practices; and rethinking approaches to teaching.

**Aims of education** urges a rethink on the purpose of education of professional auditors, by fostering the development of three interwoven aspects: excellence (pursuing a 'good' that is internal to the practice of audit); engagement (the ability and motivation to critically engage with the purpose and function of audit); and ethicality (a broad understanding of ethics that emphasises 'being' rather than 'doing').

**Education: fostering excellence, engagement and ethicality** picks up this theme. It shares some of the engagement and research AuditFutures has undertaken, and what we have learnt about what is needed to proactively guide professional auditors to develop an understanding of social and economic purpose, values, public good, and ethical leadership.

***'Engaging in a genuine and critical conversation about current context, issues and how to improve our practice has been very refreshing and motivating.'***

PAUL BUDDERY, CO-AUTHOR OF ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS?  
A VISION FOR AUDIT AND A BETTER SOCIETY

**Inspiring a love of wisdom** looks more closely at some of the work AuditFutures has done with universities, training providers and professional services firms to enable and support the development of creativity, critical thinking and ethical reasoning in young auditors. The goal is to foster the personal motivation, values, competencies and behaviours the modern profession needs.

The essay explores how young audit professionals are incentivised and motivated, internally and externally, and shares insights into how we learn from academic research in philosophy, psychology and organisational theory. It shares

aspects of AuditFutures' project Philosophy for Accountancy (P4A), which engages students in philosophical inquiry and reflection, and suggests how to integrate this into professional curricula.

AuditFutures' educational collaborations offer valuable insights. They can deepen understanding of the needs and aspirations of young auditors, reveal opportunities for academics and practice to work together, and reinforce other AuditFutures' research findings. Integrated and long-term initiatives in professional education are needed to develop the audit professionals the future demands.

To further explore some of the research and thinking that underpins this principle, visit the [online resources hub](#).



***'It has improved students' ability to think about the purpose of accountancy and it has given them the opportunity to develop personally and professionally and to become much more motivated.'***

PLAMENA PEHLIVANOVA, EDUCATION SPECIALIST, ON TEACHING THE P4A UNIT TO FIRST YEAR BSc ACCOUNTING STUDENTS

# PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY

Philosophy for Accountancy (P4A) was one of AuditFutures' earliest education initiatives and it has provided a rich source of information and insight into the theory and practice of learning, which have helped AuditFutures to develop a new approach to some aspects of how accountants (including auditors) are educated.

The P4A programme was designed to broaden accounting education and to help educators in supporting the development of responsible professionals.

To inspire and engage undergraduate accounting students in developing their professional leadership, through critical thinking and ethical reasoning, there have been P4A events at more than 50 universities across the UK.

As part of the P4A initiative, AuditFutures has also held workshops for academics on the continuing professional education and development of qualified members of the accountancy profession.

Outputs include a report, [Philosophy for Accountancy](#), and the pilot P4A event, involving around 45 students at Alliance Manchester Business School, which is the subject of a [short documentary film](#).

AuditFutures' [Time to Think project](#) built on work from the P4A education initiative.

## IN SUPPORT

***'Engaging in a genuine and critical conversation about current context, issues and how to improve our practice has been very refreshing and motivating.'***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

***'Critical thinking is one of the most important soft skills a young auditor can have. By providing a forum for us to question, challenge and discuss issues we face, we are given the opportunity to hone this skill.'***

YOUNG AUDITOR AND TIME TO THINK FORUM PARTICIPANT

***'Instead of reading a textbook, we are asking what is the role of the auditor, what is the purpose of audit and why are we studying it? This is inspiring.'***

STUDENT ATTENDEE AT PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY WORKSHOP

***'The P4A unit gave us an awareness of what's going on in the business world outside the classroom and gave us a glimpse of the future of what we are stepping into.'***

STUDENT STUDYING 'PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY' AS PART OF BSc IN ACCOUNTING

***'It has improved students' ability to think about the purpose of accountancy and it has given them the opportunity to develop personally and professionally and to become much more motivated.'***

PLAMENA PEHLIVANOVA, EDUCATION SPECIALIST, ON TEACHING THE P4A UNIT TO FIRST YEAR BSc ACCOUNTING STUDENTS



**PRINCIPLE 5: MINDSET*****Adopt a ‘design mindset’  
to think and  
work differently***

Thinking differently about audit is at the heart of the AuditFutures’ initiative. We want to start with the premise that the profession is offered a design opportunity and everything within its ecosystem should align with professional purpose, identity and values. The profession needs to adopt ways of thinking and working that unleash people’s full creative energy and foster their motivation and commitment. Insights from our work show that more critical and imaginative ways are needed to radically improve processes and products, by reframing the problems, experimenting, challenging the status quo and bias, and questioning assumptions.

Different conversations and perspectives on audit are necessary if the profession is to avoid inward-looking ‘Groundhog Day’ discussions and better inform debate about audit’s future. A modern audit profession should reach out, beyond its traditional stakeholders, engaging more widely and deeply, to explore changing needs and gain new knowledge. AuditFutures is proposing principles for this profession, but more thought, action and leadership are needed to envision the future and find ways to fulfil that vision.

One of our earliest projects, back in 2014, was a collaboration with the Royal College of Art (RCA), in London, seeking fresh perspectives on the future of audit from a group of service design students. This project led to some inspired and inspiring ideas, which surprised many auditors who encountered them at AuditFutures’ first Accountancy Salon on design and trust.



The connections between audit and design are less tenuous than may at first be apparent. Like design, audit is rooted in real, practical needs, but because design is often concerned with people's experiences, feelings and motivations, it can give discussions about audit some novel cultural and human dimensions. When designers ask auditors questions such as: 'What is your mission?' and 'How do you want an audit report to make the reader feel?' this can spark some different conversations and perspectives on audit as a product, a service and a profession.

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***'You can get out-of-the-box thinking from a business school, but design adds human and cultural dimensions.'***

NICK DE LEON, RCA SCHOOL OF DESIGN

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Based on learnings from AuditFutures' collaborative projects and workstreams, we believe that design has a role to play. Adopting a 'design mindset' could help audit move beyond perceived 'box ticking' processes, to innovate, rediscover itself, and enhance its ability to develop offerings and services that align with the changing needs and expectations of the society served by audit – and its professional purpose, identity and values.

AuditFutures has drawn on a number of disciplines and experimented with tools and methods from various industries and professions, and our way of engaging with others has had positive results. By emphasising dialogue, experimentation and learning in our workshops, and approaching problems as a designer would, we have found innovative and unusual solutions, using low risk, low cost approaches that have achieved high levels of commitment from participants.

We share some of our approaches, what we have learnt and our ideas about how they can enable a modern audit profession to think and work differently, in a series of essays on our [resources hub](#).

In [Designing assurance](#), we focus on developing and adopting a 'design mindset', outlining how and what we have learnt. The approach allowed our workshop participants to see their audit work through a different lens and find tangible and practical ways to bring ideas to reality. It could help the next generation of auditors to better prepare for and adapt to the future.

[Rethinking audit as a 'wicked problem'](#) offers another way for thinking differently. We outline how it can enable the profession to consider some of the divergent definitions, expectations, ideas and objectives of audit stakeholder groups. It could allow those in and around the audit ecosystem to better communicate and understand each other's perspectives on major 'pain points' and to prototype solutions.

Design thinking also informed AuditFutures' [Ethics by design initiative](#), a collaboration with Ethical Systems, an academic think tank. After using design approaches to rethink professional ethics and explore practical ideas for ethical systems design, we reflect on factors that influence behaviour and culture in organisations and share some of the resulting ideas and challenges.

Adopting a design mindset could help the audit profession to better consider the purpose, identity, institutions and education needed to build and sustain a modern audit profession – and our principles for this. It can help audit adapt to the complex, changing reality of the corporate reporting ecosystem, by giving the profession new tools to envision its place in the future of audit as a product, service and profession; and to clarify, articulate and fulfil its vision. Adopting a design mindset could empower the profession to evolve.

To further explore some of the research and thinking that underpins this principle, [visit our website](#).

***'I think what made the event so amazing was the rich content, brought by the design students and the wide scope of the panel discussion.'***

AUDITOR AND PARTICIPANT IN AN AUDITFUTURES' DESIGN SALON

## *A path to progress*

Young auditors are entering the profession at a time of major change, uncertainty and risk. There is plenty for them to ponder. Climate change, technology disruption, a global health crisis, the type of society they want to live in, their legacy for future generations, how best to deal with all of this and, in the grand scheme of things, whether audit is a 'good' career choice.

All of these matters merit serious consideration, and the sort of critical thinking skills, moral sensitivity, personal agency and self-awareness that AuditFutures has explored and encouraged. These traits helped to inform AuditFutures' five principles for building a modern audit profession; they could help it to respond to some of the major challenges that young auditors (and many others) are concerned by.

As the world changes, so must audit. There is an opportunity to reflect, reassess and reposition audit as a more agile, vibrant, socially aware and responsive service, practice and profession. With this Manifesto, AuditFutures is calling on the audit profession to come together, step forward and lead the transition.

***This report and associated online materials will help to inform the dialogue between stakeholders which AuditFutures will be encouraging in the coming months. We invite you to join us. Together, we can think differently (and better) about audit and its future. Together, we can build a sustainable future for audit, and in a small way, a better world.***

### PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE

AuditFutures' five principles should be at the heart of audit reform. The principles call for serious attention to purpose, identity, community, education and mindset. There are no simple solutions. All of those in the corporate reporting ecosystem will need to suspend their fatigued arguments and rehearsed thinking and challenge not just others' assumptions, but their own too.

AuditFutures' ambition is to motivate and empower professionals by offering a more positive and creative vision for the future of audit.

By challenging current practices and providing tools for thinking systemically, AuditFutures has catalysed innovation within institutions. By creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration and experimentation, it has engaged across generations and professions and enabled reflections and learning that might not otherwise have been possible.

### STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

Now the audit profession should pick up the baton. It needs to design new structures and strategies, innovate and evolve in response to social, economic and technological developments, and meet changing demands and expectations. It needs to embrace vulnerability and build resilience, so that it can lead business and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The profession should invite fresh perspectives and radical thinking to assist it in understanding key issues facing the profession and the society it serves, so that it can create robust solutions.

It should strive to respond dynamically to evolving social and economic needs, technologies and work patterns; to reassess and renew its purpose and strengthen its place in society.

### LEADERSHIP AND INITIATIVE

Just as audit developed to meet the needs of the past, it must develop to meet the needs of the present and anticipate the needs of the future. Envisioning that future and finding ways to fulfil that vision demands thought, action, leadership and unity of purpose. AuditFutures urges the audit profession to imagine the society of tomorrow, so that it can design tomorrow's profession.

There is an opportunity to take responsibility for reshaping and rebuilding the modern audit profession. By taking the initiative, the audit profession can enhance trust in business and itself, and reaffirm its public interest role. It should articulate, communicate and uphold its social and economic purpose. It should be a profession that young auditors are proud to belong to.

## *AuditFutures – Key projects and workstreams*

This report distils aspects of AuditFutures' work into five principles for building a modern audit profession, but AuditFutures' extensive research and outreach stretches back over years, and across numerous projects.

The following guide offers an aid to navigation. All of these projects, and more may be explored through the articles, blogs, films and other media on our [website](#).

### ENLIGHTENING PROFESSIONS?

In 2014 AuditFutures collaborated on a ground-breaking project with the RSA on rethinking the future of professions. Some parts of the report *Enlightening professions? A vision for audit and a better society* A vision for this audit and better society remain very relevant. Some notable aspects of this project were that:

- it reached out and invited an external organisation to conduct an independent piece of work (which proved controversial in some sectors of the audit profession);
- it engaged other professions in the process; and
- it began by thinking about what sort of society we want to create (and how audit should support this), rather than defending the profession's status quo.

[Find out more](#)

### REFOCUSING ON ETHOS

AuditFutures has done significant work exploring what a profession is and what should define its professional identity. This workstream challenged dry and learned definitions of what it means to be a professional and promoted the concepts of virtues and purpose. Drawing on the work of philosophers including Alasdair MacIntyre and the sociologists Eliot Friedson and Robert Solomon, AuditFutures developed some new theoretical approaches and practical tools to engage audit practitioners in discussions. They included *Ethos: a guiding compass for the future professional*, a practical tool to facilitate discussions, which has been used heavily in workshops and informed other AuditFutures projects.

[Find out more](#)

### RETHINKING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

AuditFutures work on rethinking the ethical foundations of professional practice, follows on from some earlier projects (and their outputs). A number of AuditFutures workshops and presentations have focused on this topic with the idea of thinking about how to develop agency and capacities for judgment in people. Some of the projects that sprang from this work were Philosophy for Accountancy and *Time to Think*, and *The Good Professional*.

### THE AUDIT COLLABORATORY

There have been a number of projects where AuditFutures brought together a range of firms, to discuss topical questions in a precompetitive space. The goal was to explore areas where firms should collaborate instead of competing, and to rethink learning among peers in the audit profession.

[Find out more](#)

### FUTURE FIRMS FRAMEWORK

AuditFutures worked with over a dozen firms on this project, to explore the contours of the future firm and to rethink the new institutions that could underpin the business model of the profession. Part of this project led to the development of a practical *Future Firms Framework as an innovation tool and discussion resource*. As part of this future firms workstream, AuditFutures also worked with social psychologist Jon Haidt, from New York University Stern School of Business, on organisational culture and *ethical systems design*.

[Find out more](#)

### THE AUDITJAM

A number of ideas and new projects originated from some of the jams or innovation workshops that have been hosted by AuditFutures for a number of accountancy firms and universities. These events actively sought to use design and design-thinking methods as a practical approach to innovation and in capacity building.

[Find out more](#)

### DESIGN THINKING AND INNOVATION

Design is a powerful way to innovate and has the potential to bring human and cultural angles to many activities. AuditFutures has pioneered the application of design thinking and service design in the context of audit and assurance. In addition to practical workshops (such as those mentioned in AuditJam, above), AuditFutures has developed a number of approaches that bring design thinking to the accountancy profession. They include [public events](#), [collaborations with designers](#), and [educational initiatives](#).

[Find out more](#)

### RETHINKING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Perhaps the most significant AuditFutures' workstream has been on education for the future. AuditFutures uses the term education in its broadest meaning, particularly to emphasise the need to think beyond qualifications and degrees. *The Future Professional* report draws on the work of Harvard's Howard Gardner, calling for a broader professional curriculum and arguing for the importance of reflective and dialectic thinking in professionals. AuditFutures has also challenged traditional ways of [teaching ethics](#) and promoted the [notion of purpose in ethics education](#).

[Find out more](#)

### PHILOSOPHY FOR ACCOUNTANCY (P4A)

One of the earliest education initiatives that AuditFutures pioneered was P4A. It helped with the development of new approaches to the teaching of accounting subjects such as audit. Outputs from this workstream included: a [report](#); a [short documentary film](#) about a pilot project at Alliance Manchester Business School; and a number of events in universities across the UK. As part of this work, AuditFutures also ran more than a dozen [workshops on continuing professional development for academics](#) from around 50-60 universities.

[Find out more](#)

### TIME TO THINK

AuditFutures built on its earlier education and innovation initiatives to launch a forum for young professionals, called Time to Think. This is a reflective space where junior people from across the profession can come together and discuss topical issues. By using philosophical and design approaches and methods, AuditFutures developed this initiative into a community of reflective professionals who engage in evaluative thinking. During 2019, seven sessions were hosted, bringing together more than 100 people from some 20 firms.

[Find out more](#)

The ICAEW Audit and Assurance Faculty is the professional and public interest voice of audit and assurance matters for ICAEW and is a leading authority in its field. Internationally recognised as a source of expertise, the faculty is responsible for submissions to regulators and standard setters and provides a range of resources to professionals. It also offers practical assistance in dealing with common audit and assurance problems.

For more information on the faculty, the current work programmes and how to get involved, visit [icaew.com/audit](https://www.icaew.com/audit)

There are more than 1.8m chartered accountants and students around the world and 186,500 of them are members and students of ICAEW. They are talented, ethical and committed professionals, which is why all of the top 100 Global Brands employ chartered accountants.\*

ICAEW promotes inclusivity, diversity and fairness. We attract talented individuals into the profession and give them the skills and values they need to build resilient businesses, economies and societies, while ensuring our planet's resources are managed sustainably.

Founded in 1880, we have a long history of serving the public interest and we continue to work with governments, regulators and business leaders around the world. And, as an improvement regulator, we supervise and monitor over 12,000 firms, holding them, and all ICAEW members and students, to the highest standards of professional competency and conduct.

ICAEW is proud to be part of Chartered Accountants Worldwide, a global network of 750,000 members across 190 countries, which promotes the expertise and skills of chartered accountants on a global basis.

We believe that chartered accountancy can be a force for positive change. By sharing our insight, expertise and understanding we can help to create strong economies and a sustainable future for all.

\*CAW, 2020 - Interbrand, Best Global Brands 2019

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