



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Autism and an actuarial career

June 2021

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What is an actuary?

Actuaries are problem solvers and strategic thinkers who use their mathematical skills to measure the probability and risk of future events. They use these skills to predict the financial impact of these events on a business and its clients.

Businesses and governments increasingly depend on the skills of actuaries and analysts to help them model and plan for the future. As the world changes at an increasingly rapid pace, risk management expertise can help businesses navigate this evolving landscape.

What does an actuary do?

Actuaries possess a unique mix of mathematical, analytical, communication and management skills. They apply their abilities to create social impact and inform high-level strategic decisions, and have a significant impact on legislation, businesses and people's lives.

For further information on the role of an actuary, please visit [What is an actuary?](#)

Is this the right career for me?

Choosing the right career when there is so much information out there can be a challenge. But if you're interested in a career where your maths skills can really make a difference, you've come to the right place. To find out all you need to know visit [Becoming an actuary.](#)

How could being autistic help you in your career as an actuary?

We all have individual skills, attributes and characteristics that are as unique as our personalities. It's important to recognise, embrace and celebrate different ways of thinking. Here we look at some of the positive features of autism that some autistic people may experience, and how these could be useful in a career as an actuary.

- **Methodical approach, analytical, spotting patterns and repetition**
The actuarial qualification consists of a large number of exams over a period of time. Having clear, specific and predictable goals to work towards can be more appealing to autistic people than the ambiguity of 'climbing the career ladder'.
- **Deep focus and excellent concentration with a freedom from distraction**
The majority of actuarial exams require independent self-study; some tutorials and coursework are optional depending on whether the individual wants to gain more practice in the subject. This autonomy may suit an autistic person as they can work through at their own pace without limitations or distractions.
- **Honesty, reliability and commitment**
As an actuary, you are part of a governed profession with the expectation of high levels of professionalism and integrity.
- **Unique thought processes and innovative solutions**
Finding new and better ways of doing things is very important to improve how actuaries work.

- **Attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy**

Actuarial work essentially comes down to problem solving, so persistence and hyper-focus can be a real asset, as well as the ability to notice small inconsistencies or errors in data or calculations.

- **Ability to absorb and retain facts with an excellent long-term memory and superior recall**

In addition to analytical ability, there are lots of regulations and requirements surrounding the work, so an ability to retain large amounts of (often technical) information is another asset.

- **Detailed factual knowledge of areas of interest and high-level skills**

Most actuaries have degrees in maths, physics, economics or similar subjects that are logical and numerical. Because actuarial work is detailed and analytical, there is a need for people who are focused, detail-oriented, and able to work with large amounts of complex data.

You may be able to identify with some of the above positive features of autism; these attributes and skills could help you to excel in a career as an actuary. The IFoA recognises this and wants to support more autistic and neurodiverse people into the profession. You may already be working in this area or thinking about qualifying, either way the IFoA and your employer are committed to supporting you to succeed.

If you would like to explore your work-related strengths or struggles in more detail, please use this [screening tool](#).

You can read more about the personal and professional experiences of members with autism on the IFoA's blogs.

Support available to autistic actuaries

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales and decide to tell your employer about your diagnosis, you are protected by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act requires public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, and includes a section on employment. Being protected by the Equality Act means you should be treated equally and fairly in the workplace, and not be discriminated against on the grounds of your disability. It also means that your employer should make reasonable adjustments to help you at work. In Northern Ireland you are covered by the Northern Ireland Disability Discrimination Act.

This should create a more supportive work environment for you. It may be that you do not want your whole team to know, so you could just tell your line manager and/or the human resources team.

Employers and managers should make reasonable adjustments for you in the workplace; the scope of what is 'reasonable' will depend on the workplace and the role the autistic employee is performing, but some examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adjusting a person's working hours and allowances around working from home/another location
- Providing an adapted piece of equipment to help the person do their job
- Giving written instructions for tasks and more regular catch-ups with managers and supervisors
- Arranging for the person to receive regular support in the workplace from a buddy, mentor or job coach

- Job carving to remove non-critical elements of the role the employee may struggle with, such as answering the telephone or face-to-face interactions with the public
- Raising awareness and understanding among managers and colleagues who work closely with the person
- A workplace assessment to assess your support needs.

For further information on employment and support at work in the Equality Act, please visit [Support at work – a guide for autistic people](#).

For information on reasonable adjustments, please visit [Top autism tips: employment - reasonable adjustments](#).

The National Autistic Society has a range of [training programmes](#) available to help you and your employer.

If the help you need at work is not covered by your employer making reasonable adjustments, you may be able to get help from Access to Work. You'll be offered support based on your needs, which may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace. Your workplace can include your home if you work from there some or all of the time. For more information, please visit [Access to Work](#).

IFoA support for actuarial students

The IFoA is committed to assisting employers to ensure they have the necessary information and resources to support actuarial students with their studies. Employers can offer support to students studying for the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' (IFoA) exams through:

- Mentoring
- Tuition
- Study leave
- Financial assistance
- Appointing a student employer contact.

For more information, please visit [Information for employers](#).

The IFoA can also make access arrangements (reasonable adjustments) for students, with a student journey that can be flexible and tailored to your needs. Adjustments can be made to exam conditions to ensure you have the right support in place, such as extra time, use of a computer or enlarged documents. Exams can be retaken if failed, and you can pick up further qualifications as and when you are ready. The IFoA also has its own coaching body [The Actuarial Education Company](#), which offers a broad range of study products that can help you at each stage of your exam preparation, including [help for students who need additional support](#).

For full details of all exam preparation and adjustments and how to apply for them please visit [Access arrangements](#).

As a member of the IFoA there are also a range of support systems and adaptations we can make to help make your IFoA membership work for you:

- Reduced subscription fees

- Reduced CPD requirements
- Retaining your Practising Certificate
- Keeping up to date – if you decide to take a career break
- Networking – ways to get involved with volunteer roles and professional communities
- [IFoA Buddy System](#) – you can get in touch with other members for independent peer support
- [Actuarial Mentoring Programme](#)
- Reconnection programmes – offered by employers for those who have been out of work for a while.

For more information, please visit [Career breaks](#).



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