

# BPP Actuarial Education (ActEd)

## Life as an actuarial tutor

### Introduction

BPP Actuarial Education (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
- attention to detail
- 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

BPP Actuarial Education (ActEd) is part of the BPP Professional Education Group. As well as train IFoA students, ActEd also:

- supports actuarial apprenticeships
- develops and runs training courses for the financial services industry
- provides educational input to existing in-house training programmes
- assists 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 around 30 tutors, 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.

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 3 days
August and early September	Around 4 days

### **Travelling**

An ActEd tutor's teaching workload inevitably involves quite a lot of travelling, unless you live in or near London. We run most of our tutorials in London but also run tutorials in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Birmingham, Dublin and other locations. Online tutorials are normally delivered from the tutor's home or any BPP centre.

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 a number of tutors live close by and/or base themselves in the office. However, most 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 recommend that all tutors make at least occasional visits (at their own expense) to the office to maintain close links with each other and the support staff. Although there are no set rules, most tutors find that they spend one or two days in the office each month for the first few 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 annual leave (normally 33 days plus bank holidays) at the quieter times of year, *ie* April to June, September 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 week's skiing in January to March. Shorter holidays can be taken at any time – the teaching can then be scheduled around these days.

### **Recruitment days**

We hold recruitment days at our office in Abingdon, comprising of an interview along with the opportunity to give a short mock tutorial in which you'll present some information relevant to the actuarial exams to some ActEd staff who are pretending to be students.

Most people tend to get nervous about the mock tutorial. Please don't 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 [lanSenator@bpp.com](mailto:lanSenator@bpp.com). We can then give you the up-to-date situation on vacancies and take things from there.

