

The Effect of Forensic Accounting Education on an Accountant's Employment Potential

Patricia H Mounce¹ and Jessica Johnson Frazier²

¹Mississippi College, Clinton, MS USA

²Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY USA

One emerging career available to accounting professionals is that of the forensic accountant. The AECC has expressed concerns about accounting education meeting the needs of employers. Many U.S. corporations believe insufficient emphasis is placed on the prevention and detection of fraud. A forensic accounting course is one addition to the accounting curriculum that could address these concerns. The primary objective of this study is to determine the effect of having completed a forensic accounting course on the recruitment of accountants seeking a position above staff level. Another objective seeks to determine whether size and type of employer are significant factors in assessing the importance of forensic accounting as a desired attribute for employment candidates. This investigation asked employers how actively they would recruit a candidate for the position of assistant controller. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses. Results indicate that the hiring potential of candidates is enhanced by the completion of a forensic accounting course. Results do not indicate that size of firm or type of employer is a significant factor in assessing the importance of forensic accounting as a desired attribute.

INTRODUCTION

Until the late 1980s, accountants in public practice generally were involved in tax, audit, compilation, or write-up services. Accountants who chose private-accounting professions were oftentimes engaged in financial accounting as supervisors, controllers, internal auditors, or cost accountants. Unfortunately most accountants, whether in public practice or private industry, were generally perceived by the public to be "bean counters" or "number bunnies."

The 1990s saw the accounting profession explode with new certifications such as the Certified Business Valuation, Certified Fraud Examiner, and Certified Financial Planner. Today's accounting professionals are moving away from the traditional "green visor" roles and are offering seasoned professionals and newcomers opportunities to grow and expand into accounting careers that are diversified, challenging, and exciting. As indicated by the