



George Hay
Chartered Accountants

Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts

What you should know

Academy schools receive their funding direct from Government (i.e., state funded), rather than from the local authority, and are managed by Academy Trusts. Since they are independent of a local authority, they have more freedom over how they operate.

However, this brings its own challenges in respect of centralisation of funds, budgeting and expansion. Consequently, access to a specialist accounting and advisory solution can be important for success

What is the difference between a Single-Academy Trust (SAT) and a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Single-Academy Trust, or standalone academy is a not-for-profit company that is responsible for the performance of one academy in a trust.

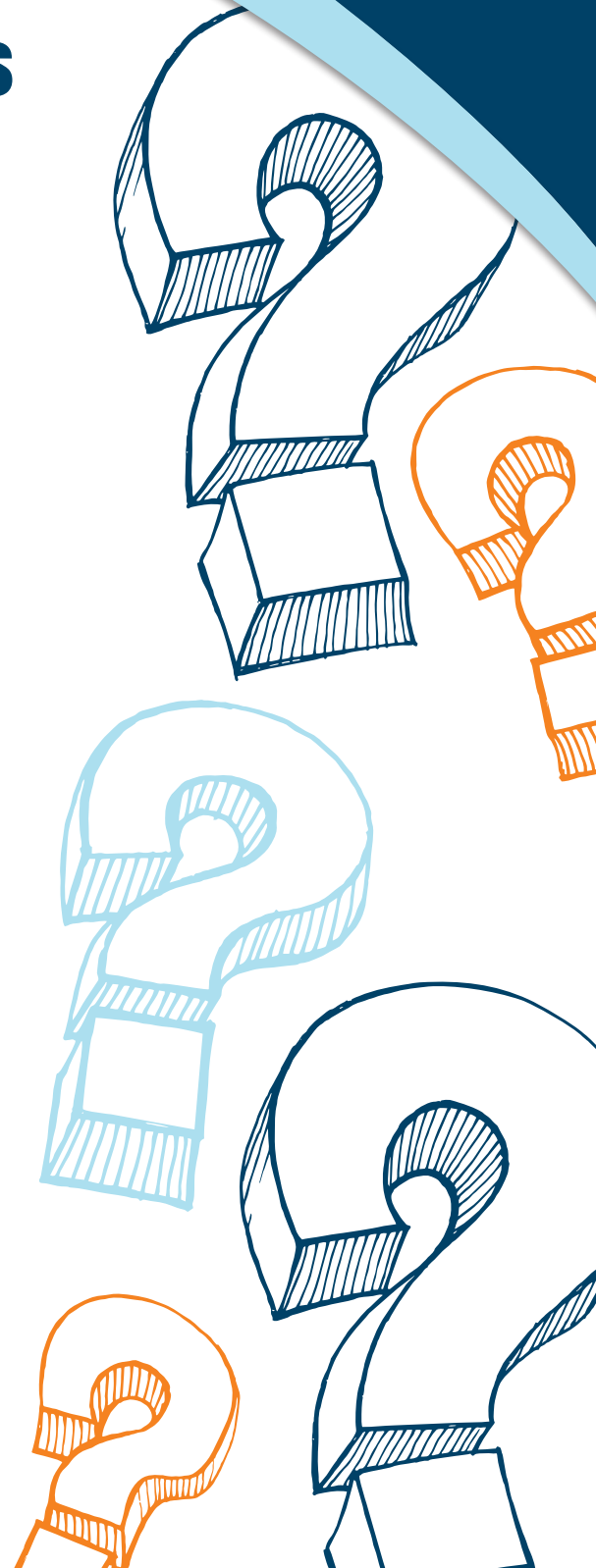
A Multi-Academy Trust is, as the name suggests, where a trust is responsible for the running of multiple academies. Not all academies are part of an MAT, but MATs are becoming more prominent in the education sector.

Academy conversion

Becoming an Academy is not a decision to be taken lightly; conversion can be a lengthy and complex process, involving structural, legal and financial changes.

Broadly speaking, the process typically involves registration of interest with Department for Education (DfE) and a period of consultation, followed by application to convert and finalising the funding agreement before you eventually open doors as an Academy.

Engaging support from advisers who have the expertise and experience to help you meet the challenges associated with conversion, and to add value beyond this, can make all the difference.



Academies - Specialist accounting requirements

Academies are required to prepare statutory accounts in accordance with the Charities SORP, and the Academies Accounts Direction, as well as providing additional reports to the EFSA throughout the year.

In addition, Academy Trusts are required to comply with the Academies Financial Handbook (AFH), which provides a framework for good governance, and the effective management of financial and other controls.

Our Academies and Education Team can support you to comply with the regulatory, accounting and reporting requirements that come with conversion, and advise you on how to achieve the best that you can within academy status long-term.

Audit: Internal vs External

Whilst fundamentally different, external audit and internal audit are complimentary functions; issues flagged internally can help to inform aspects of the external audit.

Together, both functions should serve to endorse and contribute to the overall pursuit of effective governance within an organisation.

In the very simplest terms, external audit involves the examination of a business from the outside, whilst the other is concerned with looking from the inside.

Despite requiring both external and internal audit support, where academies are concerned these functions now cannot be carried out by the same auditors.

We can act as internal auditors, or independent external auditors, depending on the requirements of your organisation.

Our approach to your audit will be efficient, robust and pragmatic, built around an understanding of the particular risks that you face, what you want to get out of the experience, and the solutions that could benefit your business.

Academies and MATs - Our service, your solution

We provide comprehensive accounts preparation and audit services to academies and MATs, drawing out key data to help you operate more efficiently and effectively.

With greater control over budgets, comes the freedom for Academy schools to adopt a more commercially minded approach when it comes to sourcing external providers of goods and services.

At George Hay Chartered Accountants, we offer a range of efficient, value for money, outsourced services to assist and support academy school business managers across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and beyond.

To talk to us about how we could support your academy trust, contact us today.



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