

BECOMING A CPA

The requirements for becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) are established by each state. These requirements include completing a certain number of credit hours in an accounting program at a college/university, passing the Uniform CPA Exam, and obtaining a specific amount of professional work experience.

Currently, all 50 states and the vast majority of U.S. jurisdictions have adopted the 150 credit hour requirement. This requirement means that students will need to earn 150 credit hours to become a licensed CPA. The reason for the 150-hour requirement is the belief that the traditional 120-hour undergraduate accounting program falls short of providing the skills needed to be a successful CPA; there is just not enough classroom time or opportunity in a 120-hour program to obtain these skills.

Of the states that require 150 credit hours, a few require 150 credit hours in order to sit for the CPA exam itself, while others allow fewer hours to sit for the exam but require 150 credit hours in order to obtain the CPA license. As noted above, in addition to passing the exam and completing the education requirements, a person must also typically have a specific amount of professional work experience hours prior to receiving a license.

Most firms expect their hires to have completed, or have almost completed, the 150 credit hours by their start date. These firms will expect that all full-time hires have a plan in place in order to satisfy the 150 credit hour requirement. Be prepared as the firms will most likely ask about your plan during the interview process!

Many students ask, "What is the best way to achieve 150 credit hours?" Students should approach the 150 hour requirement in a way that best prepares them for their professional career. To that end, it is important to plan early and to gather as much information as possible and make an informed decision by considering both the short and long-term benefits of each approach.

There are two approaches to completing 150 credit hours:

1. Complete the 150-credit hours as part of an undergraduate curriculum: This approach will require most students to overload during the fall and spring semesters and/or take summer classes. Some things to consider are the number of AP credits earned, undergraduate GPA, degree of involvement in campus activities, and study abroad plans. Some students find that the additional coursework needed to complete the 150 credit hours compromises both their GPA and the time they can devote to extracurricular activities; these students may find that they are less competitive when interviewing and/or later in a professional setting. It may be in their best interest to consider a master's degree. (See below).
2. Complete the 150-credit hours with a master's degree: Villanova offers a Master of Accounting. Typically students proceed through the undergraduate experience at a more measured pace and then complete a

master's degree. For some VSB students, it may be possible to earn both a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and a Master of Accounting (MAC) in less than five years. This will depend on the student's ability to overload during the fall and spring semesters, summer course options and the number of AP/IB credits earned. In addition, students may count two of their MAC courses as undergraduate accounting electives, which may facilitate earning both degrees in less than five years. (See following page for information on the Villanova Master of Accounting program)

VSU's MASTER OF ACCOUNTANCY (MAC) PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

At Villanova, the MAC program is designed to prepare students to meet the increasing professional demands needed by today's accountants. The professional environment facing accountants requires them to be multi-skilled across various business disciplines, including accounting, tax, finance, information systems, and data analytics in addition to having a broad knowledge of business. On top of these skills, accountants are expected to take on management leadership roles as early as two-years after entering the workforce. It is for these reasons that accountants are in such high demand after just a few years of work experience; this demand is not just for accounting positions but cuts across several disciplines. The MAC program is specifically designed to prepare students for this professional environment. It includes coursework on data and analytics designed for a career path in accounting.

The MAC program is a one-year program completed during the fall and spring semesters. For some VSU students, it may be possible to earn both a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and a Master of Accountancy (MAC) in less than five years. This will depend on the student's ability to overload during the fall and spring semesters, summer course options and the number of AP/IB credits earned. In addition, students may count two of their MAC courses as undergraduate accounting electives, which may facilitate earning both degrees in less than five years. Students may also opt to earn their undergraduate degree in the traditional four years and then complete the MAC in a fifth year. There is no right approach; it is important to seek advice and plan as early as possible.

CURRICULUM: The MAC program consists of a pre-session plus a 2-semester curriculum that includes ten courses:

Pre-session

Students entering the program will begin with a pre-session approximately two weeks before the start of the fall semester. This pre-session will include:

- Orientation (1/2 day)
- Bootcamp (1 day)
- MAC 8285: *Negotiations* (1.5 credits; 2.5 days)
- MAC 8286: *Leadership For the New Accounting Professional* (1.5 credits; 2.5 days)
- Professional Development Program (2-3 days)

Fall Semester

MAC 8211: *Accounting Systems & Controls** (3 credits)

MAC 8221: *Taxes and Business Strategy* (3 credits)

MAC 8281: *Advanced Topics in Financial Reporting and Fraud* (3 credits)

MAC 8288: *Advanced Auditing Topics** (3 credits)

MAC Electives** (0-3 credits)

Spring Semester

MAC 8111: *Data Models, Data Analysis & Visualization* (3 credits)

MAC 8241: *Performance Measurement & Business Risk Management* (3 credits)

MAC 8255: *Valuation Issues in Accounting* (3 credits)

MAC Electives** (3 -6 credits)

* With permission, MAC 8211 and MAC 8288 may be taken as an undergraduate; these two courses may satisfy two undergraduate accounting electives as well as MAC program requirements.

** Students need to take at least six credits of electives over both semesters to complete the MAC program. The MAC elective courses vary from 1.5 to 3.0 credit hours. Based on student preferences and course availability, electives can be taken in the fall and/or spring semesters. These electives will come largely from the Masters of Taxation, MBA, and Masters of Science in Analytics programs. Elective classes must be approved by the MAC Faculty Director.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information please contact your Clay Center Advisor, a Faculty Mentor, Daniel Guertin, Assistant Director, Recruitment, MAC (daniel.guerin@villanova.edu) or **Dr. David Stout**, Faculty Director, MAC (david.stout@villanova.edu). Visit the website, www.villanova.edu/business/graduate/mac/

CALIFORNIA CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements to Sit for CPA Exam

Candidates must have a baccalaureate or higher degree with 24 credit hours in accounting subjects, to include financial reporting, financial statement analysis, auditing, taxation, and external & internal reporting, and 24 credit hours in business-related subjects.

Educational Requirements for Licensure

Effective January 1, 2014, the following educational requirements must be met to obtain a California CPA license:

150 semester units including:

- 24 semester units of accounting subjects
- 24 semester units of business-related subjects
- 20 semester units of accounting study
- 10 semester units of ethics study

Please refer to the website below for check the website below for additional information.

Experience Requirements for Licensure

Candidates must have one year of general accounting experience, including a minimum of 500 hours of attest experience, supervised by a CPA with an active license and must pass an ethics course.

For more information please visit:

www.dca.ca.gov/cba

COLORADO CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To sit for the CPA exam, candidates must have completed a Baccalaureate Degree or higher degree with at least 120 credit hours of higher education including at least 27 semester hours of accounting coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level with a grade of C or higher.

Within the 27 hours, 21 hours must exclude introductory accounting courses. This must include a 3 semester hour auditing course concentrating on U.S. GAAS.

In addition, candidates must complete at least 21 semester hours in business administration. No more than 6 hours can be in any single subject area. Semester hours in excess of the 6-hour maximum may count toward the 120 semester hour requirement. 12 semester hours must be in courses above the introductory level in business administration.

For licensure, candidates must complete 150 semester hours.

At least 33 semester hours must be in accounting coursework with 27 hours being upper level courses. Of the 27 hours of upper level courses, 6 semester hours must be in auditing, 3 of which must include a course concentrating on U.S. GAAS.

At least 27 semester hours must be completed in business administration. 18 hours must be above the introductory level. At least 3 semester hours must be in business, technical, or accounting communications. No more than 9 can be in any single subject area. Hours in excess of 9 may be used towards the 150 semester hour requirement.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Candidates must complete a minimum of 1,800 hours which must have been obtained over a period of not less than one year and not more than three years in public accounting, industry, government, or academia, verified by a CPA.

For more information please visit:
www.nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/colorado/

CONNECTICUT CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

Candidates can sit for the exam with a bachelor's degree (120 hours of college credits). 46 credit hours must be in the study of accounting and related subjects including business law, economics, and finance; twenty-four must be specifically accounting. To be licensed, a candidate must complete a minimum of 150 credit hours including 36 credit hours in accounting (which may include a basic or introductory accounting course), 30 credit hours in economic and business administration, and 60 hours in general education.

Experience Requirements for Licensure

Candidates must have two years of experience in public accounting under the supervision of a licensed CPA, who has been licensed for at least three years, and complete the AICPA Professional Ethics for CPAs self-study course.

For more information please visit:

www.ctcpas.org/content/26766.aspx

DELAWARE CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To sit for the CPA exam, the candidate must have a bachelor's degree with at least 24 credit hours in accounting including financial accounting and reporting, auditing, and federal taxation. Courses in other business subjects, such as banking, computer science, economics, finance, insurance, management and marketing will not be accepted as accounting courses. All candidates must pass the AICPA self-study ethics course with no lower than 90%.

To obtain a license (CPA certificate and permit to practice), in addition to the bachelors' degree as described above, you must earn a total of 150 credit hours.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Delaware requires experience that extends over a period of no less than a year and no more than three years that includes no fewer than 2,000 hours. This experience can be in providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax or consulting skills. All of this must be under the supervision of and verified by a United States CPA. The experience can be obtained in government, industry, academia or public practice.

For more information please visit:

dpr.delaware.gov/boards/accountancy/index.shtml

FLORIDA CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

Applicants sitting for the CPA exam must have completed 120 credit hours. The accounting education program must include 24 credit hours of upper division accounting courses to include coverage of Taxation, Auditing, Cost/Managerial, Financial, and Accounting Information Systems. The business education program must include 24 credit hours of upper division general business courses with some exceptions. One microeconomics, one macroeconomics, one statistics, one business law, and one introduction to computers course may be lower division. As part of the general business hours, applicants are required to have a total of three credit hours of business law courses, which must cover contracts, torts, and the Uniform Commercial Code. Excess upper division accounting courses may be used to meet the general business requirement. However, elementary accounting classes are never acceptable for credit.

To become licensed, applicants are required to have completed 150 credit hours to include 36 credit hours of upper division accounting courses to include the following: Taxation, Auditing, Financial, Cost/Managerial and Accounting Info Systems and 39 credit hours of upper division business courses to include 3 credit hours of business law. One course can be at a lower lever (freshman or sophomore), the other course must be upper division (junior level or higher). These requirements include the requirements to sit for the CPA exam with 120 credit hours.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

For licensure, candidates must have at least one year of acceptable work experience under the supervision of a licensed CPA. Work experience shall include any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, or consulting skills, all of which must be verified by a certified public accountant who is licensed by a state or territory of the United States and who has supervised the applicant. This experience is acceptable if it was gained through employment in government, industry, academia, or public practice and constituted a substantial part of the applicant's duties.

The experience must either average at least twenty (20) hours a week over no more than one hundred and four (104) weeks or average no more than forty (40) hours a week over no more than fifty-two (52) weeks.

For more information please visit:

www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/cpa/exam.html

ILLINOIS CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

A candidate for the Illinois CPA examination must have successfully completed at least 150 semester hours of credit and earned a baccalaureate or higher degree. The semester hours accepted by the Board must include an accounting concentration or its equivalent with a minimum of 30 credits in accounting at the undergraduate or graduate level, including courses covering the subjects of financial accounting, auditing, taxation, managerial accounting and at least two (2) hours of research and analysis. Twenty-four additional semester hours of business courses are required including two (2) hours of business communication and three (3) hours of business ethics.

Experience Requirements for Licensure

Candidates must complete at least one year of full-time experience providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, audit, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, or consulting skills, or other attestation engagements which may be gained through employment in government, industry, academia, or public practice. The experience must have been gained after completion of the education required to take the Uniform CPA Examination. In order to be certified, candidates must also pass the AICPA Ethics Exam.

For more information please visit:

www.ilboe.org/requirements/introduction-to-cpa-processes/

MARYLAND CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To sit for the CPA exam, candidates must complete 120 credit hours with at least 27 credit hours in accounting subjects to include auditing, managerial accounting or cost accounting, federal income tax and nine undergraduate credit hours in financial accounting and elective accounting courses. In addition, candidates must complete 21 credit hours in other business subjects, in five out of the following nine subjects: economics, statistics, management, corporation or business finance, U.S. business law, marketing, quantitative methods, business communication, and computer science/information systems. These 21-credit hours are required for licensure; the 21-credits are not required to sit for the exam. Applicants must also complete a course (3 credit hours) in ethics education covering business ethics, philosophy of ethics or accounting ethics.

For licensure, candidates must complete 150 credit hours.

Experience Requirements for Licensure

Candidates must complete at least one full year of practical accounting-related work experience under the supervision of a licensed CPA. Employment may be in the areas of government, academia, public practice or industry. Services must fall within the area of attest, financial advisory, management advisory or tax. In order to be certified, candidates must also pass the AICPA Ethics Exam.

For more information please visit:

www.dllr.maryland.gov/license/cpa/cpaexam/

MASSACHUSETTS CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To sit for the exam, candidates must have completed 120 credit hours with 21 credit hours in accounting to include coverage in financial accounting, management (cost) accounting, auditing, and taxation. In addition, completion of 9 credits hours in other business courses to include coverage in business law, finance and information systems is required.

To become a licensed CPA, candidates must complete 150 credit hours within three years of passing all four parts of the exam. This includes 30 undergraduate accounting credits or 18 graduate accounting credits and 24 undergraduate business credits or 18 graduate business credits.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

All candidates need one year of public accounting experience for a full reporting license. This must include 1000 hours of attest experience. With a graduate degree in accounting, business, or law, there are no experience requirements if the candidate wants a non-reporting license.

For more information please visit:

www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/pa/faqs.html

NEW JERSEY CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

Candidates may sit for the exam after completing a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited school/university with a minimum of 120 credit hours. Should a candidate elect to take the exam after earning his or her bachelor's degree, the CPA certificate will not be awarded until the full 150 credits with the required concentrations has been obtained and the experience requirement has been met.

150 Credit Hour Options

Option 1: Earn a bachelor's degree with at least 24 credit hours in accounting and 24 credit hours in business courses other than accounting.

Option 2: Earn a graduate degree from a business school, college of business, accounting program, or department which is accredited by the AACSB or ACBSP and complete either 24 credit hours in accounting at the undergraduate level or 15 credit hours in accounting at the graduate level.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

An applicant for certification, having passed the examination, must provide satisfactory evidence of one year of experience in the practice of public accounting or its equivalent, under the direction of a licensee and the experience includes evidence of intensive and diversified experience in auditing or accounting as determined by regulation of the board.

For more information please visit:

www.njcpa.org/become-a-cpa/requirements/education-requirements

NEW YORK CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

Applicants may sit the exam when they have completed 120 semester hours of course work, including one course in each of the four required accounting content areas: financial accounting and reporting; cost or management accounting, taxation; and auditing.

The license, however, will not be issued until the applicant has met New York's 150 credit hour requirements. The candidate must complete 150 semester-credit hours and must have an overall average in the accounting subjects of "C" or better at the undergraduate level and "B" or better at the graduate level. Courses in federal tax, professional auditing and advanced financial accounting must be taken during the third or fourth year of an undergraduate program or in a higher-degree program. The degree, either undergraduate or higher-degree, must include the following:

- 33 semester hours in accounting, with courses in financial accounting theory and principles (including advanced financial accounting), managerial accounting, U.S. federal tax accounting, auditing, and computer auditing; and
- 36 semester hours in general business electives, including business statistics, business law, computer science, economics, finance, management, marketing, operation management, organizational behavior, business strategy, quantitative methods, and information technology; and
- The curriculum must also include the study of business/accounting communications, ethics/professional responsibility, and accounting research.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Applicants must demonstrate one year of qualifying experience providing accounting services or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management, advisory, financial advisory, tax, or consulting skills under the supervision of a CPA.

For more information please visit:

www.op.nysed.gov/prof/cpa/cpalic.htm

OHIO CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

The academic requirements for admission to the CPA examination are:

- 150 semester college credits.
- 30 semester college credits in accounting courses, OR 24 semester college credits in accounting courses above the introductory level. Accounting courses typically cover the areas of financial accounting, cost/managerial accounting, CPA auditing, and taxation.
- 24 semester college credits in business courses. Business courses acceptable include finance, management, economics, and marketing, as well as "business" courses designated as such by a college or university (business law, business communications, business statistics, etc.).

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Applicants must demonstrate one year of qualifying experience, under the supervision of a licensed CPA, satisfactory to the state accountancy board in any of the following: a public accounting firm, government, business, and academia.

For more information please visit:

www.acc.ohio.gov/CPAexam.aspx

PENNSYLVANIA CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To be eligible to sit for the CPA Exam, candidates must have graduated from an accredited college or university with a bachelors' degree or higher, and have at least 24 semester-credit hours in accounting subjects. These subjects include accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects sanctioned by the Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy. Candidates have 18 months to pass all four parts of the exam, beginning when the firsts section is passed.

For licensure, candidates must have graduated from an accredited college or university with a bachelors' degree or master's degree (or higher), and have at least 36 credit hours must be in accounting subjects; 24 credit hours in accounting and auditing, business law, finance, or tax subjects sanctioned by the Pennsylvania Board of Accountancy, plus an additional 12 credit hours in accounting, auditing and tax subjects. Total credit hours must equal at least 150 hours. Accounting related credits can be completed through undergraduate or graduate courses, or a combination of both levels of study and do not need to be part of a degree program.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Candidates must complete one year (1,600 hours) of work experience, through employment in government, industry, academia, or public practice within five years (60 months) of the date of certification application. Work experience is providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, consulting skills, financial advisory, management advisory, and tax. All experience must be of a caliber satisfactory to the State Board of Accountancy and verified by an individual who is currently licensed to practice public accounting as a CPA in Pennsylvania or another state.

For more information please visit:

www.picpa.org/content/38481.aspx

TEXAS CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

To be eligible to apply for the CPA exam, the following educational requirements must be satisfied:

- Hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from a U.S. college or university
- Complete 150 credit hours of college credits
- Complete 30 credit hours of upper level accounting courses
 - Within the coursework, two-semester hours of accounting or tax research and analysis are required
- Complete 24 credit hours of upper level related business courses
 - Within the coursework, two-semester hours of accounting or business communications are required
- Complete a 3-credit hour ethics course that had prior approval from the Texas State Board or Public Accountancy

Experience Requirement for Licensure

To apply for certification as a CPA, candidates must have at least one year of experience in attest or other professional accounting services under CPA supervision.

For more information please visit:

www.tsbpa.state.tx.us

VIRGINIA CPA REQUIREMENTS

Education Requirements

Candidates can sit for the CPA exam with at least 120 semester hours of education, a baccalaureate or higher degree, and an accounting concentration. The accounting concentration requires 24 semester hours in accounting courses, including courses in auditing, financial accounting, management accounting, and taxation and 24 semester hours of business courses. As many as 6 hours of accounting courses (not included in the 24 hours of accounting courses) may be considered for the business course requirement.

*Principles or introductory courses cannot be considered in determining whether a person has obtained the 48 minimum number of semester hours required for an accounting concentration. To obtain licensure, candidates must complete 150 semester-credit hours including 24 credit hours in accounting subjects excluding principles and introductory courses and 24 credit hours in other business subjects.

Experience Requirement for Licensure

Candidates must have at least one year (or 2,080 work hours) in academia, a firm, government or industry involving the use of accounting, financial, tax, or other relevant skills verified by a licensed CPA.

For more information please visit:

www.boa.virginia.gov/CPAExam/WhatIsTheCPAEXAM.shtml