

Uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Examination

The Uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Examination is the challenging examination that individuals must pass in order to qualify for licensure as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in any of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands). The purpose of the Uniform CPA Examination is to provide reasonable assurance to Boards of Accountancy (the state entities that have statutory authority to issue licenses) that those who pass the CPA Examination possess the level of technical knowledge and the skills necessary for initial licensure in protection of the public interest. Public interest is protected when only qualified individuals are admitted into the profession.

CPAs are the only *licensed* accounting professionals. All CPAs are accountants but not all accountants are CPAs. In many states, anyone can call himself/herself an “accountant.” In order to become a CPA almost all states require that an individual meet educational, experience and ethical requirements in addition to passing the Uniform CPA Examination. Although all candidates take the same examination, each of the 55 jurisdictions determine eligibility requirements. Visit NASBA (National Association of State Boards of Accountancy) for each jurisdiction’s requirements and information about sitting for the exam at <http://www.nasba.org/>

In Wisconsin, individuals can start to take sections of the CPA Examination when they complete 120 credits (hours). Individuals cannot be a licensed CPA until they complete 150 credits (hours) and at least a baccalaureate degree. By the end of 2015, the State of Wisconsin will require that certain courses be completed before you can sit for sections for the CPA Examination. These required courses are required for the BBA in Accounting at UW-Whitewater and include:

- Four of the 5 courses that follow: statistics, marketing, business finance, management or organizational behavior, computer science or computers in business.
- Two courses in principles of economics.
- At least one course in each of the following: introductory or principles of accounting, intermediate accounting or accounting theory, advanced accounting, cost accounting, auditing, income taxation, and business law.

The CPA Examination consists of four sections: Auditing and Attestation (4 hours), Business Environment and Concepts (3 hours), Financial Accounting and Reporting (4 hours), and Regulation (3 hours). These four sections represent a total of 14 hours of rigorous testing and cover the following topics. **All sections consist of multiple choice questions, simulations, and written communication tasks.** Currently, the topics tested by section are as follows. Detailed information about the structure and content of the CPA Examination can be found at <http://www.aicpa.org/BecomeACPA/Pages/BecomeaCPA.aspx>

Financial Accounting & Reporting (FAR)		Auditing & Attestation (AUD)	
30%	Financial Statements	18%	Engagement Performance & Understanding the Assignment
30%	Specific Transactions	18%	Understanding the Entity & Environment
20%	Concepts & Standards (including IFRS*)	18%	Performing Audit Procedures & Evaluating Evidence
10%	Not-for-Profit Accounting	18%	Evaluating Findings, Communication & Reporting
10%	Governmental Accounting	18%	Professional Responsibility
		14%	Accounting & Review Engagements
	* International Financial Reporting Standards		
Business Environment & Concepts (BEC)		Regulation (REG)	
21%	Financial Management	21%	Federal Taxation of Entities
18%	Economic Concepts & Analysis	19%	Business Law
18%	Corporate Governance	17%	Ethics, Professional & Legal Responsibilities
17%	Information Systems & Communication	16%	Federal Taxation of Individuals
14%	Operations Management	14%	Federal Taxation of Property Transactions
12%	Strategic Planning	13%	Federal Taxation Procedures & Accounting Issues

The CPA Examination is offered 8 months a year: January/February, April/May, July/August, and October/November. During the other four months (March, June, September, December) the exam is closed. All four sections must be successfully completed within 18 months of the time you pass your initial section or you will lose credit for having passed that section. For each section, a grade of 75 is passing.

UW-Whitewater Courses

Because the CPA Examination is rigorous, candidates must have a firm understanding of material taught in accounting and business courses. Candidates must also be able to apply that knowledge in specific situations. No CPA Examination review course can compensate for not firmly understanding the material taught in accounting courses so your GPA is a good indication of the likelihood that you will be able to pass the CPA Examination. **At a minimum, the UW-Whitewater courses you need to complete before you take each of the four sections are as follows.**

Financial Accounting & Reporting (FAR)		Auditing & Attestation (AUD)	
ACCOUNT 244	Intro to Financial Accounting*	ACCOUNT 454	Accounting Information Systems**
ACCOUNT 261	Intermediate Accounting I**	ACCOUNT 465	Auditing*
ACCOUNT 343	Intermediate Accounting II*		
ACCOUNT 461	Advanced Accounting*		
ACCOUNT 463/751	Accounting for Nonprofit Orgs		
ACCOUNT 757	Issues in Financial Accounting***		
ACCOUNT 783	International Accounting***		
Business Environment & Concepts (BEC)		Regulation (REG)	
Economics 201	Microeconomics	ACCOUNT 451	Tax I*
Economics 202	Macroeconomics	ACCOUNT 452/756	Tax II
ACCOUNT 249	Intro to Managerial Accounting**	FNBSLW 341	Business & Commercial Law*
ACCOUNT 454	Accounting Information Systems**	FNBSLW 342/542	Advanced Business & Commercial Law
ACCOUNT 456	Cost Management*		
ACCOUNT 781	Advanced Accounting Theory***		
FNBSLW 344	Business Finance*		
MANGEMNT 301	Organizational Behavior*		
MANGEMNT 489	Administrative Policy		
MARKETING 311	Principles of Marketing*		

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** At UW-Whitewater, this course is a prerequisite for another course or courses.

*** MPA only: It is **recommended** that you complete this course before taking this section.

First Time Examination Fees (<http://nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/wisconsin/wisconsin-cbt-fee-schedule/>)

All first-time CPA Examination applicants are required to pay both an application fee and an examination fee upon submission of the first-time application. You can apply for multiple sections at a time; however, you should apply for a section only if you plan to take it within the next six months. The State of Wisconsin also requires all CPA examination candidates to pass an ethics exam. The fee for this exam is \$75. The examination fees as of June 2015 are listed below.

One Exam Section		Three Exam Sections	
Auditing and Attestation (AUD)	\$378.03	AUD, FAR, REG	\$782.57
Business Environment and Concepts (BEC)	\$355.51	AUD, FAR, BEC	\$782.57
Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR)	\$378.03	AUD, REG, BEC	\$761.05
Regulation (REG)	\$355.51	FAR, REG, BEC	\$761.05
Two Exam Sections		Four Exam Sections	
AUD, FAR	\$591.06	AUD, BEC, FAR, REG	\$974.08
AUD, REG	\$568.54		
AUD, BEC	\$568.54		
FAR, REG	\$568.54		
FAR, BEC	\$568.54		
REG, BEC	\$548.02		

CPA Examination Reviews

Because the CPA Examination tests a wide range of topics, completing a CPA Examination review course is strongly encouraged. The cost of a CPA Review program is between \$1,000 and \$4,000 depending upon the program you choose. Although expensive, this cost should be thought of not as an expense but as an investment in your future. However, no CPA Examination review course can compensate for not thoroughly understanding the material taught in accounting courses. Your GPA is a good indication of the likelihood that you will be able to pass the CPA Examination.