The Uniform CPA Examination protects the public interest by helping to ensure that only qualified individuals become licensed as U.S. Certified Public Accountants (CPAs). Individuals seeking to qualify as CPAs—the only licensing qualification in accounting in the United States—are required to pass the CPA Examination.

Protecting the Public Interest

An individual seeking licensure as a CPA in any of the 55 jurisdictions (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands) must pass the CPA Examination.

The purpose of the exam is to provide reasonable assurance to the 55 boards that those who pass the CPA Examination possess the level of knowledge and the skills necessary for initial licensure. Public interest is protected when only qualified individuals are admitted into the profession.

The Uniform CPA Examination is one of the “Three E’s” — Education, Examination, and Experience — that constitute the requirements for CPA licensure. Of these three requirements, only the CPA Examination is uniform and accepted for CPA licensure by all U.S. jurisdictions. Therefore, if an individual passes the CPA Examination in one jurisdiction, there are no pre-requisites in another. As a result, passing the CPA Examination is not sufficient in itself to qualify for licensure.

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Eligibility: 3 + 1 E’s to becoming a CPA

Education: 150 semester hours

Examination: CPA Examination

Experience: 2 years accounting experience

Ethics: (some states)

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As a central repository for all CPA Examination candidate information, the National Candidate Database is a global tracking system for CPA Examination candidates. NASBA is responsible for the development and scoring of the CPA Examination, NASBA, state boards, the AICPA and the testing centers protect the personal data provided by candidates during application and examination processes.

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The CPA Exam is a Collaborative Effort

The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), the AICPA® and Prometric (nAP) collaborate closely to deliver the Examination. The AICPA is responsible for the development and scoring of the CPA Examination. NASBA, state boards and the testing centers protect the personal data provided by candidates during application and examination processes.
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### The Board of Examiners (BOE)

The AICPA Board of Examiners (BOE) is a senior AICPA committee that is the body for the Uniform CPA Examination in accordance with legal and psychometric standards as applied to licensure examinations. In addition, the BOE serves as a communication link between the BOE and the 55 boards of accounting. It is responsible for overseeing state board concerns to the BOE and keeping the state boards advised of BOE guidance and recommendations, including examinations committees or examination directors.

The BOE consists of CPAs, state board regulators, psychometricians and educators. It represents a cross-section of the CPA profession and is comprised of CPAs, state board of accountancy members/chairs or executive directors.

The BOE has the following committees:

- **The State Board Committee (SBC)** — The SBC serves as a communication link between the BOE and the 55 boards of accounting. It is responsible for communicating state board concerns to the BOE and keeping the state boards advised of BOE guidance and recommendations, including examinations committees or examination directors.
- **The Content Committee** — The committee is responsible for the content of the examinations. Membership in the committee and its four subcommittees — one subcommittee for each of the four examination sections — is by invitation of the BOE.
- **The Psychometric Oversight Committee (POC)** — The POC directs and evaluates examination research and oversees the application of psychometric principles to examinations. Members of the POC are psychometricians with expertise in psychometric procedures, measurement theory, computer-based examinations and legal issues relevant to examination development.

### Volunteer Opportunities

The AICPA is accepting applications until May 15, 2013, for the 2013-2014 volunteer year, which begins October 2013. For more information about volunteering with the AICPA and to obtain an application, please contact volunteerservices@aicpa.org.
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International Delivery of the CPA Exam
The AICPA also developed the International Qualification Examination (IQEX), which is designed to facilitate the U.S. CPA qualification process for those accounting professionals from other countries whose professional bodies have entered into reciprocity agreements with the U.S. accounting profession. The AICPA, along with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Association of International Accountants (AIA), have mutual recognition agreements in effect with certain professional bodies in the following locations: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico and the UAE. In November 2012, the IQEX transitioned to a new format that uses an administration of the Uniform CPA Examination’s Regulation section as the required examination.

The AICPA and NASBA—in consultation with state boards of accountancy, the BOE and other major stakeholders—operates an international examination delivery program. The result is the international administration of the Uniform CPA Exam, which uses the state board licensure process and the current examination structure. International locations were evaluated and chosen on a variety of criteria:

1. Volume demand as demonstrated by candidates from those countries taking the exam in the United States
2. Ability to deliver the exam without legal barriers
3. Exam security (including intellectual property of Exam content and physical security in relation to current local state of affairs) assessed at levels equivalent to those presented domestically
4. Existence of established Prometric test centers

In August 2011, the administration of the Exam was launched internationally in Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, and Brazil. In February 2012, the Exam was further expanded to South America and administered in Brazil.

As of September 2012, international delivery included testing in the following locations:

- Bahrain
- Brazil
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- United Arab Emirates
- Mexico
- Canada
- Hong Kong
- Ireland
- Australia
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Germany
- France
- Switzerland
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Italy
- Spain
- Portugal
- Taiwan

International CPA Exam candidates from countries where international delivery is offered are issued temporary registration certificates which are only valid for one examination sitting per year. CPAs are the only accounting professionals licensed in the United States, and only those who pass the Uniform CPA Examination are eligible to become CPAs in the United States.

More than 13,526 international candidates registered to sit the CPA Examination between August 2011 and September 2012.

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International Delivery of the CPA Exam

The AICPA and NASBA — in consultation with state boards of accountancy, the BOE, and other major stakeholders — spent two years studying an international examination delivery program. The result is the Uniform CPA Examination delivered internationally through the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA). The Uniform CPA Examination is one of the “Three E’s” — Education, Examination and Experience — that constitute the requirements for CPA licensure. Of these three requirements, only the CPA Examination is uniform and accepted for CPA licensure by all U.S. jurisdictions. Education and experience requirements may vary from one jurisdiction to another. As a result, passing the CPA Examination is not sufficient — in itself — to qualify for licensure.

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Administration of the Uniform CPA Examination and IQEx

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The content of the Uniform CPA Examination is developed through an extensive and integrated process. At each step in the process, experts in various disciplines are applied to ensure that the test materials are accurate and appropriate for use on the CPA Exam.

The first key area of expertise is accounting. Individuals who draft, review, and finalize test materials are experienced CPA's. A second area of expertise is in the science of testing, called psychometrics. At each stage in the test development process, psychometricians are involved in the design, development and implementation of test materials. These include test specifications, test questions, and data analysis, as well as the development and administration of test questions. These experts in the design and development of test questions are involved in the process.

The CPA Exam is comprised of four sections: Auditing and Attestation (AUD), Business Environment and Concepts (BEC), Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR) and Regulation (REG). These four sections represent a total of 14 hours of testing. All four sections contain multiple-choice questions (MCQs). AUD, FAR and REG sections have an additional portion for task-based simulation (TBS) questions; BEC has a portion for written communication questions, but no TBS questions.

CPA Policy on New Pronouncements

Accounting and auditing pronouncements are eligible to be tested on the Uniform CPA Examination. Under normal circumstances, the CPA Exam is administered in a testing window beginning six months after the pronouncement's effective date. However, under circumstances such as emergency conditions or other extraordinary circumstances, the testing window for a new pronouncement may be shortened or longer than the normal six-month window. When this occurs, the window for testing the pronouncement is determined by the Board of Examiners and is published in the Examination Administration Bulletin at least six months prior to the testing window.

Changes in the federal taxation area, the Internal Revenue Code and federal taxation regulations may be included in the testing window beginning six months after the change’s effective date or enactment date, whichever is later. For all other subjects covered in the Regulation (REG) and Business Environment and Concepts (BEC) sections, materials eligible to be tested include federal laws in the window beginning six months after their effective date, and uniform acts in the window beginning one year after their adoption by a simple majority of the jurisdictions.
Administration and Delivery of the Uniform CPA Examination and IQEX

Content Specification Outline by Area

• AICPA
  - Exam Development
  - Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Examination Management Services
  - Data Collection Services

• NASBA
  - Practice Analysis
  - Assurance Services
  - Credentials

• International CPA Exams
  - CPA International
  - CPA Australia
  - CPA Canada

The Practice Analysis

- The Practice Analysis is the basis for the Uniform CPA Examination (and other licensure examination) practice analysis is the first step to building a technically sound and legally defensible examination. The practice analysis identifies expected knowledge and skills required to perform professional responsibilities in the field. The practice analysis is the foundation for exam development.

- The BOE considers many factors, including standard-setting study results, historical analysis of the CPA Exam, and trends, any changes in CPA Examination content and scope from the practice analysis, and the impact of relevant developments in financial accounting and reporting, as well as the impact of the profession's changing environment (including Internal Control).

- The BOE uses the practice analysis to develop the BOE decisions, the passing score, the practice analysis is the first step to building a technically sound and legally defensible examination. The practice analysis is the foundation for exam development.

- In setting the passing score, the BOE considered many factors, including standard-setting study results, historical trends, any changes in CPA Examination content and scope from the practice analysis, and the impact of relevant developments in financial accounting and reporting, as well as the impact of the profession's changing environment (including Internal Control).

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This booklet was created to give an overview of the Uniform CPA Examination and its components through the initiative of the State Board Committee (SBC) of the AICPA Board of Examiners, which oversees the Exam’s development, scoring and administration.