What does it take to become a CPA?

Presented by ThisWayToCPA
What is a CPA?

• Stands for Certified Public Accountant

• Trusted financial advisor who helps individuals, businesses, and other organizations plan and reach their financial goals

• All CPAs are accountants, but not all accountants are CPAs
To become a CPA

• 3 E’s are required for licensure:
  – **Education**
  – **Exam or Uniform CPA Examination**
  – **Experience**

• State Boards of Accountancy determine the laws and rules for each state/jurisdiction

• Visit ThisWayToCPA.com for **state requirements**
Education

• Requirements vary by state/jurisdiction
• Require 150 semester hours
• Number of accounting hours is dependent on state requirements
Uniform CPA Exam

- Computer-based format
- **Consists of 4 sections**
  - Auditing and Attestation (AUD)
  - Business Environment and Concepts (BEC)
  - Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR)
  - Regulation (REG)
- Same test no matter where it is taken
- Passing score is **75 on a 0-99 scale**
- Question types include multiple choice, simulation and written communication
- Eligibility to sit for exam depends on [state requirements](#)
Experience

• A *candidate* is an applicant for a CPA license

• Many states require the candidate to have 1 – 2 years experience under a CPA

• Additional requirements vary by the candidate’s:
  • Education – e.g., Graduate degree vs. 150 hours of undergraduate
  • Employer(s) – e.g., Public accounting firm vs. industry
  • Type of work – e.g., Tax professional vs. auditor
Licensure

- Licenses gives the right to practice public accounting
- Some state require ethics exam
- Must comply with rules of professional conduct
- CPA Exam & Licensure Center
Maintaining the license

• Continuing Professional Education (CPE)
  – Typically 40 hours per year
  – Types (e.g., computer-based vs. group/classroom learning) of CPE vary by jurisdiction
  – May need Ethics training and compliance
  – Subjects vary depending to type of license and area of employment

• Renewal every period
AICPA Student Affiliate Membership

Become an **AICPA Student Affiliate member**

- Benefits include:
  - Exclusive scholarship opportunities
  - Member-only competitions
  - Special discounts on conferences
  - Access to industry news and publications
  - Exclusive discounts and offers on products and services from partners
  - Deals and access to the latest industry information at a fraction of regular prices
State Society membership

• State CPA Society vs. State Board of Accountancy
  – Society is a membership organization
  – Board sets policy

• How do State Societies and AICPA differ?
  – National vs. state/jurisdiction
  – Work closely together in many cases
Let’s review

• Education
  - Bachelor’s degree
  - 150 semester hours

• Exam
  - Apply to sit based on state requirements
  - Pass all 4 parts with a score of 75 or higher

• Experience
  - 1-2 years in accounting
  - Under a CPA
Let’s review (continued)

• License
  – Meet state/jurisdiction 3 E’s requirements
  – Other requirements (e.g., ethics exam)

• Continuing Professional Education
  – 40 hours of CPE per year
  – Renew license every 1, 2 or 3 years

• Beyond
  – Join state society, AICPA and volunteer
  – Specialize in one or more areas (e.g., CFF)
Tips

- Understand your state/jurisdiction’s requirements
- Take it one step at a time!
  - Focus on the education requirement first
  - Become eligible to sit for the Uniform CPA Examination
  - Study for (and pass!) the CPA Exam
  - Gain the required experience
What’s ThisWayToCPA.com?

- AICPA’s website for college students and CPA Exam candidates
- A virtual warehouse chock full of the information (and motivation) you need to pursue a career in accounting
- Includes features like
  - Find Your Fit
  - CPA Profiles
  - CPA Exam & Licensure Center
Other resources

• AICPA website for CPA candidates
  – www.aicpa.org/Membership/Join

• AICPA’s website for high school students
  – www.startheregoplaces.com

• NASBA website
  – www.nasba.org