

F A Q – CPA

Q – How do I obtain an application to take the Uniform CPA Examination in Pennsylvania?

A – Contact the testing company, CPA Examination Services at 1-800-CPA-EXAM.

Q – What is the residency requirement to take the Uniform CPA Examination in Pennsylvania?

A – There is no residency requirement to take the Uniform CPA Examination in Pennsylvania.

Q – What is the education requirement to take the Uniform CPA Examination?

A – Before an individual may take the examination, the Board shall be satisfied that the individual: (1) has attained eighteen years of age; (2) is of good moral character; and (3) has graduated with a baccalaureate or Master’s degree from a college or university that at the time of graduation was accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

The baccalaureate or higher degree candidate must have completed a total of one hundred fifty semester credits of post-secondary education, including at least a total of twenty-four semester credits of accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects of a content satisfactory to the Board and an additional twelve semester credits in accounting, auditing and tax subjects of a content satisfactory to the Board, not necessarily as part of the individual’s undergraduate or graduate work.

The baccalaureate degree candidate must have completed at least a total of twenty-four semester credits, which credits shall be in accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects of a content that is satisfactory to the Board, not necessarily as a part of his undergraduate work.

The Master’s degree or other post-graduate degree candidate must have completed at least a total of twenty-four semester credits, which credits shall be in accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects of a content that is satisfactory to the Board, not necessarily as part of his undergraduate or graduate work.

Before an individual who takes the examination as a baccalaureate degree candidate or Master’s degree candidate may be issued a certificate, the individual must obtain one hundred fifty semester credits of post-secondary education including at least a total of twenty-four semester credits of accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects of a content satisfactory to the Board and an additional twelve semester credits in accounting, auditing and tax subjects of a content satisfactory to the Board, not necessarily as part of the individual’s undergraduate or graduate work.

Under Act 73, a candidate for a CPA certificate must have completed 150 semester hours of post-secondary education, possessing at least a bachelor's degree, with 36 semester hours in accounting-related subjects. This requirement does not apply to a candidate who passed at least one part of the CPA Examination before December 31, 2011. As in the past, a candidate for the CPA Examination must possess at least a bachelor's degree and have completed 24 semester hours in accounting-related subjects.

Q – Is the 150-hour requirement mandatory in Pennsylvania?

A - Under Act 73, a candidate for a CPA certificate must have completed 150 semester hours of post-secondary education, possessing at least a bachelor's degree, with 36 semester hours in accounting-related subjects. This requirement does not apply to a candidate who passed at least one part of the CPA Examination before December 31, 2011. As in the past, a candidate for the CPA Examination must possess at least a bachelor's degree and have completed 24 semester hours in accounting-related subjects.

Q – What is the experience requirement for certification?

A – A candidate with a bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree or higher or Master's degree with 150 credit hours must have completed at least one-year of experience totaling 1,600 hours, including no less than four hundred hours of attest activity in public accounting – or - as an internal auditor if the internal audit function reports to an independent board or similar body responsible for oversight of the financial reporting process – or - as an auditor with a unit of Federal, State or local government; was of a caliber satisfactory to the Board; and was supervised by an individual with a current license to practice public accounting as a certified public accountant or public accountant in this Commonwealth or another state. Experience must be completed within one hundred twenty months preceding the date of application for a certificate.

A candidate that does not have the 150 credit hours, must complete at least two-years of experience totaling 3,200 hours of experience that satisfies the requirements and of a caliber satisfactory to the Board and was supervised by an individual with a current license to practice public accounting as a certified public accountant or public accountant in this Commonwealth or another state. Experience must include at least eight hundred hours of attest activity and the experience must be completed within one hundred twenty months preceding the date of application for a certificate.

NOTE: After December 31, 2011, the time frame for obtaining qualified experience will go from one hundred twenty months to sixty months.

Q – Is there a time limit to complete the required experience for the certification?

A – Yes. A candidate for a CPA certificate who first sat for the CPA Examination before December 31, 2011, must have completed qualifying experience within one hundred twenty months preceding the date of application to the Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy for the certificate. A candidate for a CPA certificate who first sat for the CPA Examination on or after December 31, 2011, must have completed qualifying experience within sixty months preceding the date of application for the certificate.

As in the past, a candidate for a CPA certificate who possesses a post-graduate degree or has otherwise completed 150 semester hours of post-secondary education must have obtained one year of qualifying experience, while a candidate who possesses a bachelor's degree but has not completed 150 semester hours of post-secondary education overall must have obtained two years of qualifying experience.

Q – What must I do to reactivate my inactive or expired license?

A – You must contact the Board Office at 717-783-1404 and request a reactivation form when you are prepared to reactivate your license and have obtained the required qualified CPE. You must have obtained 80 total hours of CPE from either PA State Board of Accountancy, NASBA approved program sponsors or, if obtained after 1.1.10, from an approved program sponsor approved by another state that has substantial equivalency with Pennsylvania. Of those 80 hours, 16 must be in the category of Accounting and Auditing, 8 must be in Tax, 4 must be in Ethics and no more than 40 hours of the total 80 hours can be in individual study. All the required qualified CPE must be obtained in the immediate preceding 24-month period prior to the date of application for reactivation. For example: If you apply to reactivate your license on May 15, 2010, the only CPE that you can use must have been obtained during the period May 15, 2008 through May 15, 2010. You must submit copies of your CPE certificates of completion for each course when sending in your reactivation application and applicable fee. You must also submit the completed CPE Reporting Form. Copies of the CPE Reporting Form can be made if you need more than one copy.

Q – What are the CPE requirements to renew my license?

A - You must have obtained 80 total hours of CPE from either PA State Board of Accountancy, NASBA approved program sponsors or, if obtained after 1.1.10, from an approved program sponsor approved by another state that has substantial equivalency with Pennsylvania. Of those 80 hours, 16 must be in the category of Accounting and Auditing, 8 must be in Tax, 4 must be in Ethics and no more than 40 hours of the total 80 hours can be in individual study. The required qualified CPE must have been obtained during the CPE reporting period, which runs from

January 1st of every even numbered year to December 31st of every odd numbered year. You must have obtained a minimum of 20 hours per calendar year.

Q – How do I place my license on inactive status?

A – You may place your license on inactive status at the time of renewal by checking the inactive box on the application. If you wish to place your license on inactive status while your license is current, you will need to submit your request to the Board in writing indicating your name, license number, address on the license and you must return your current wallet card and larger 8.5 x 5.5 wall certificate to the Board Office.

Q – What is the new peer review compliance procedures?

A – A firm or sole practitioner that performs an audit or review engagement is no longer required to submit a copy of a current peer review completion letter at the time of application for license renewal. However, the firm or sole practitioner will be required to certify on the renewal application that it is in compliance with the peer review requirement and to furnish the name of the organization that administered its most recent peer review, the date of acceptance of that peer review, and the period covered by that peer review. The Board is authorized to contact the peer review administering organization to confirm the accuracy of the peer review information included on the renewal application.

A firm or sole practitioner that was not previously required to undergo a peer review must notify the Board within 30 days after accepting an audit or review engagement and must undergo a peer review within 18 months after commencing the engagement.