

Challenge Exam Policy

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is a challenge exam?

Eligible students have the opportunity to write the course exam only and receive an exemption from the course portion of the CPA preparatory core course. For eligibility requirements, refer to the [CPA Harmonized Education Policies \(HEP\) Vol. 3](#).

2. Why is the CPA profession offering challenge exams?

To provide eligible students a pathway to demonstrate their prior learning in a prerequisite subject area for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

3. Who is eligible for a challenge exam?

Challenge exams are available to students who have:

1. Completed a course(s) through a post-secondary institution that no longer meets the 10-year currency requirement for exemption. The course must be;
 - a) equivalent per the provincial transfer credit guide or
 - b) eligible for a partial exemption as per the self-assessment tool or;
2. Completed a course(s) through a post-secondary institution that cannot be sufficiently verified for equivalence through acceptable supporting documentation. In which case, the student will be required to complete the self-assessment tool and attain the minimum required coverage of topics (50%) to be eligible to challenge the exam.

Challenge exam eligibility will be determined through the provincial/regional CPA body.

4. How do I know if I'm eligible for a challenge exam?

Eligibility for a challenge exam will be included in your CPA assessment results. Contact your provincial/regional CPA body to determine how to apply for an assessment. For eligibility requirements, refer to the [CPA HEP Vol. 3](#).

5. Is there a fee to challenge an exam?

Yes. Challenge exam fees are determined by the provincial/regional CPA body. For more information on the challenge exam fees in your region, please contact your provincial/regional CPA body.

6. Do I have to be a CPA student to challenge an exam?

Yes. You must be a CPA student in good standing with a provincial/regional CPA body to challenge a CPA preparatory core course exam.

7. Can I have access to the CPA preparatory course materials to prepare for the challenge exam?

CPA preparatory course materials are not available to students who choose to challenge an exam. The [CPA Competency Map](#) describes the knowledge, skills and proficiency levels required for CPA certification. In addition, the CPA preparatory course [syllabus](#) is available to all students.

8. What other study resources are available to students challenging an exam?

The profession offers valuable resources for students taking CPA preparatory courses that are publicly available to all students on the [Certification Resource Centre](#).

9. I have challenged an exam and failed. What are my next steps?

You must enroll and successfully complete the full CPA preparatory core course (course and exam) or complete an equivalent course through a post-secondary institution as outlined on the CPA provincial transfer credit guide(s). The unsuccessful challenge exam will be counted as an attempt. If you complete the full course and fail with a course grade between 50% and 59.9%, you will be able to rewrite the exam. Otherwise, you will be required to retake the full course prior to your third and final attempt at the course exam.

10. How many attempts do I have to challenge an exam?

If eligible, one challenge exam attempt is available for each of the CPA preparatory core courses. If you are unsuccessful on the one challenge exam, you will be required to take the course in full.

11. I have significant relevant work experience. Why do I need to have at least 50% coverage in the subject area to be eligible for a challenge exam?

Full exemptions from CPA preparatory courses are not available to students who do not have sufficiently verifiable prior academic courses from a recognized post-secondary institution, regardless of prior work experience.

Students with significant relevant work experience may apply for an exemption from the currency requirement for a prerequisite course if a relevant course was successfully completed more than 10 years prior to the admission to the CPA PEP. Assessments of work experience may result in no exemption, a full exemption from a prerequisite course, or a partial exemption from a prerequisite course, requiring students to complete the course examination. For more information on these assessments, contact your provincial/regional CPA body.

12. If I pass the challenge exam, what is the currency of education for the successful exam pass?

All CPA preparatory core courses will be accepted for 10 years from the date of completion. For more information on the currency of education for admission to the CPA PEP, refer to [CPA HEP Vol. 1](#).

13. Which third-party assessments will CPA accept as supporting documentation for the self-assessment tool?

All province/regions will accept the World Evaluation Services (WES) course-by-course evaluation. If you have an assessment from another third-party provider, contact your provincial/regional CPA body to determine if it will be considered.

14. What are the profession's requirements for a course syllabus?

A course syllabus should include the following information:

- Post-secondary institution letterhead, symbol, logo, etc.
- Course overview, learning outcomes or objectives
- Course(s) details (course name/number, course hours, semester/term, year, lecture times, instructor details)
- The year the course(s) were completed is required
- Course assessments (assignments, quizzes, exams, projects, case studies, etc.)
- Grading scale used by the post-secondary institution
- Course textbooks and other materials
- Description of the topics covered in the course
- Course prerequisite(s)/anti-requisite(s)/transfer credit(s) (if any)

Other considerations:

- Course descriptions in the context of an email cannot be accepted as sufficiently verifiable documentation
- Course syllabus must be in the original form as provided by the post-secondary institution
- Course syllabus should be submitted in PDF format
- Course syllabus not in English or French will require translation by a certified translator

15. Am I eligible to apply for a challenge exam if I have already received a CPA assessment?

Yes. If you received a CPA assessment and it is within the one-year assessment validity period or you are a CPA Student in good standing.

16. If I successfully pass a challenge exam with a CPA provincial/regional body and then transfer to another province/region, will the challenge exam be accepted?

Yes. The challenge exam will be accepted by the province/region upon transfer. You must be a CPA Student in good standing with the transferring CPA provincial/regional body.

17. If I have been granted a partial exemption for a challenge exam, how long do I have to enroll as a student and write the exam from the date of my transcript/eligibility assessment before the exemption expires?

You only need to have enrolled as a student within one-year of your assessment results date to maintain your partial exemption. After one year if you have not enrolled as a student, your assessment results will expire, including any challenge exams granted, and you will be required to submit a new transcript/eligibility assessment request. Once enrolled as a student you must successfully pass the challenge exam or the equivalent course before entering CPA PEP.

18. Can a student challenge a non-core exam?

Non-core exams are not challenged because they do not have a currency of expiration. Exemptions can be granted based on transcript review only. Contact your provincial/regional body for further information.

