

CPA Harmonized Education Policies Vol. 3

*A collection of policy directives
for CPA preparatory courses*

Effective July 1, 2024

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Table of contents

Introduction	1
1 Admission Policies	2
1.1 Admission requirements	2
1.1.1 International applicants	2
1.1.2 30 credit-hour definition	3
1.2 Conditional admission	3
1.3 Additional admission category	4
1.3.1 Mature entrants	4
1.4 Admission process	4
2 Administrative Policies	5
2.1 Fees/refunds	5
2.2 Transfers from other provinces/regions	5
2.3 Expulsion or suspension	5
2.4 Withdrawals	6
2.4.1 Temporary withdrawals (temporary leave)	6
2.4.2 Permanent withdrawals (voluntary leave)	6
2.4.3 Course withdrawals	6
2.5 Readmission	6
2.6 Academic accommodation	7
3 Course Policies	8
3.1 Course enrollment	8
3.2 Course exemptions	9
3.3 Challenge Exams	10
3.4 Course assignments	11
3.4.1 Late assignments	11
3.5 Passing a Course	11
3.5.1 Non-core courses	11
3.5.2 Core-courses	11
3.6 Repeating a course	11
3.6.1 Non-core courses	11
3.6.2 Core courses	11
3.7 Access to course materials in D2L	12

4	Course Examination Policies	13
4.1	Course examinations.....	13
4.2	Course examination time limit.....	13
4.3	Course examination appeals (remarks).....	14
5	Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct Policies	15
5.1	Academic integrity	15
5.2	Professional conduct	15
	Appendix: CPA Preparatory Course Credit Allocation	16

Introduction

The *CPA Harmonized Education Policies Vol. 3 - CPA Preparatory Courses* outline the national guidelines regarding the implementation of policies for admission, administration, courses, course examinations and other policies for CPA preparatory courses.

The specific regulations and bylaws of the provincial/regional CPA bodies take precedence (where applicable) over these general guidelines and requirements. Contact your provincial/regional CPA body for specific requirements.

The CPA profession's goal is to provide an environment that is safe and conducive to learning for all individuals. Individuals who violate this environment either through their actions, words or by violating any of the exam/module regulations will be expelled from the premises/program/profession. Re-admittance will be at the discretion of the province/region.

1 Admission Policies

1.1 Admission requirements

To be admitted to CPA preparatory courses, applicants require:

- completion of a minimum of 30 credit-hours¹ or equivalent of education at a post-secondary institution
- good character
- lawful permission to study and/or work in the registered province/region, if applicable².

An additional admission category is in Section 1.3 [Additional admission category](#).

1.1.1 International applicants

Credit-hours or equivalent education obtained from post-secondary institutions, which are recognized in the *International Handbook of Universities* published by the International Association of Universities or a similar recognition service, will be accepted. Canadian study permits are required for all international students studying in Canada.

International education should be assessed for CPA preparatory course admission by a recognized qualification assessment service. The qualification assessment service may include non-degree academic credit from an international professional designation to count toward the credit-hour requirement.

The process for determining content equivalency is up to the regional/provincial body in accordance with the CPA national recognition and accreditation standards for post-secondary institutions. International credentials are compared to the competency requirements of the [CPA Competency Map](#).

1 Credit-hour is an input measure meant to reflect student time required to earn credit for the course. Generally, a three-credit course requires 33 hours of contact time (lectures etc.) or 132 hours of student engagement time (lectures, tutorials, practice activities, testing or assessment, or preparation).

2 Contact your provincial/regional CPA body for more information.

1.1.2 30 credit-hour definition

The completion of the minimum 30 credit-hours required for entry into CPA preparatory courses must be granted by an academic institution that either must be:

- a post-secondary academic institution that is authorized by the appropriate regulatory authorities in Canada to grant degrees and/or diplomas
- a university that provides post-secondary academic education and is recognized in the *International Handbook of Universities* published by the International Association of Universities or a similar recognition service
- a post-secondary academic institution that is a member of the equivalent national association in another country and is accredited by the appropriate regulatory authorities in the other country to grant degrees

The academic institution must:

- be established or accredited by a statute or other governmental approval
- offer a program(s) of academic study beyond the general and compulsory primary and secondary levels of schooling required by the government of the country, state, or province as the case may be

For the purposes of the recognition of prerequisites, the academic institution can accept instruction provided by either:

- a non-degree-granting institution
- an educational institution outside of Canada that is recognized for credit by an authorized, degree-granting Canadian institution

1.2 Conditional admission

Applicants must satisfy all admission requirements before starting CPA preparatory courses. Applicants who have satisfied all the requirements, but their 30 credit-hours have not yet been formally conferred and/or their official transcript is not yet available, will be granted conditional admission to start a CPA preparatory course (contact your provincial/regional CPA body). Applicants admitted on a conditional basis can start and complete their course and exam within the four-month period provided they are eligible (i.e. prerequisite requirements are met). Conditionally-admitted students will automatically be deregistered from all CPA preparatory courses that start after the four-month period if official transcripts have not been provided or their 30 credit-hours have not been officially verified.

1.3 Additional admission category

1.3.1 Mature entrants

A mature entrant into CPA preparatory courses is defined as an individual who meets each of the eligibility criteria described below:

1. completion of at least three years of relevant experience in any of the CPA technical competency areas — Financial Reporting, Strategy and Governance, Management Accounting, Audit and Assurance, Finance and Taxation — with any two competency sub-areas developed to at least a Level 0 proficiency as identified in the [CPA Practical Experience Requirements standards document \(CPA PER\)](#)
2. submission of a comprehensive resume presenting all current and past work experience, community service and volunteer activities
3. submission of all official transcripts from any prior university or college courses taken, if applicable
4. submission of two letters of reference from a:
 - i. current employer
 - ii. personal character reference

1.4 Admission process

To complete admission to CPA preparatory courses, applicants must submit the following:

1. a correctly completed application form
2. the appropriate fee remittance
3. all required supporting documentation, which may include official transcripts³, international credit equivalency reviews (e.g. World Education Services Canada), transcripts from other recognized accredited bodies, proof of legal name, and completed student code of conduct form
4. proof of a study permit, for international, non-resident students studying in Canada (where required by the province/region)

³ Transcripts may be mailed directly to your provincial/regional CPA body in a sealed envelope from the institution's Registrar's Office, emailed directly through an approved education credential service (i.e., MyCreds, Parchment, National Student Clearinghouse), and/or as approved by your provincial/regional CPA body.

2 Administrative Policies

2.1 Fees/refunds

Provincial/regional CPA bodies will set course fees and collect these fees from students. Students should refer to their provincial/regional CPA body for refund policies.

2.2 Transfers from other provinces/regions

On request from the student, necessary records will be transferred from one region/province to another.

The student must be in good standing in the currently enrolled region/province at the time of the request.

The receiving provincial/regional CPA bodies will honour the assessment work completed by the sending regional/provincial body.

2.3 Expulsion or suspension

Students will be suspended or expelled from a CPA preparatory course for:

- non-payment of fees
- failure to comply with regulations of a provincial/regional CPA body, where applicable
- exhausting course or examination attempts

Students may be suspended or expelled from taking CPA preparatory courses for academic or professional misconduct. For more information, see Section 5 *Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct Policies*.

Students who are expelled may be considered for reinstatement based on:

- whether the applicant merits and qualifies for re-instatement and
- academic and/or experience requirements at the time of re-entry and conditions to be completed if reinstated.

2.4 Withdrawals

2.4.1 Temporary withdrawals (temporary leave)

In special circumstances, students taking CPA preparatory courses can temporarily withdraw from taking additional courses for a maximum two years in total. While they are withdrawn, students will have access to past course material (subject to [3.7 Access to course materials in D2L](#)) and cannot request transfer credits from post-secondary institutions, but may access other benefits (job board, etc.). Please contact your provincial/regional CPA body for additional information on access and eligibility.

2.4.2 Permanent withdrawals (voluntary withdrawals)

Students taking CPA preparatory courses can permanently withdraw in good standing by submitting a request in writing to their provincial/regional CPA body.

2.4.3 Course withdrawals

Voluntary course withdrawal requests must be made directly to the appropriate provincial/regional CPA body by the student.

Students withdrawing from a CPA preparatory course are subject to the following:

- for non-core courses, no course attempt is charged if the withdrawal request occurred after the first day of class and 24 hours before the final examination
- for core courses, no course attempt is charged if the withdrawal request occurred after the first day of class and before the course end date
- a course attempt is charged if the final examination is attempted
- a course attempt is charged and a failing mark given if a student fails to attend their registered examination sitting without notice
- a course attempt is charged and a failing mark given if a student does not write the course examination within one year of registering for the course (see Section 4.2 [Course Examination Time Limit](#) for more information)

Students who withdraw from a CPA preparatory course are required to restart the course if the student re-enrolls in the course.

2.5 Readmission

Students who have temporarily withdrawn from CPA preparatory courses (see Section 2.4.1 *Temporary withdrawals (temporary leave)* for more information) do not need to apply for readmission and are eligible to continue taking CPA preparatory courses if they notify the appropriate provincial/regional CPA body before the two year limit for temporary withdrawals.

Students who:

- have been expelled or suspended (see Section 2.3 *Expulsion or suspension* for more information), or
- have chosen to permanently withdraw (see Section 2.4.2 *Permanent withdrawals (voluntary leave)* for more information)

must apply for readmission to take CPA preparatory courses. All admission requirements (see Section 1.1 *Admission requirements* for more information) must be met and applicants are subject to academic entry requirements at that time.

2.6 Academic accommodation

Students taking CPA preparatory courses may request academic accommodations in the case of a documented disability, or other documented health condition, that may affect their ability to participate in a course or attempt its examination.

The deadline for submitting an examination accommodation request is 10 weeks prior to the examination for which the applicant is seeking an accommodation to allow time for review and, if approved, for arrangements to be made at the examination. Students who miss the application deadline should still submit their completed application to their provincial/regional CPA body as soon as possible. Please note that applications submitted after the 10-week deadline may not have sufficient time for review or for arrangements to be made at the examination by the requested examination date. More information on accommodations can be found on the CPA Canada website, including the submission process and required application forms. The Information for Accessibility and Accommodation Requests package (available for download on the [CPA Canada website](#)), also includes valuable information on the accommodations process and types of documentation that may be required. Applicants can direct questions to their respective provincial/regional CPA body.

3 Course Policies

3.1 Course enrollment

The order in which CPA preparatory courses are completed depends on any course exemptions students receive:

- Introductory Financial Accounting and Introductory Management Accounting are prerequisites for:
 - Intermediate Financial Reporting 1
 - Intermediate Financial Reporting 2
 - Advanced Financial Reporting
 - Corporate Finance
 - Audit and Assurance
 - Taxation
 - Intermediate Management Accounting
 - Performance Management
 - Information Technology
- Introductory Management Accounting may be taken concurrently with, but not prior to, Introductory Financial Accounting.
- Intermediate Financial Reporting 1 is a prerequisite for Intermediate Financial Reporting 2.
- Intermediate Financial Reporting 2 is a prerequisite for Advanced Financial Reporting.
- Intermediate Financial Reporting 1 and Intermediate Financial Reporting 2 are prerequisites for Audit and Assurance and Taxation.
- Corporate Finance is a prerequisite for Intermediate Management Accounting.
- Intermediate Management Accounting is a prerequisite for Performance Management.
- Economics, Statistics, and Business Law may be taken at any time.

Students must successfully pass their prerequisite course examination prior to starting a subsequent course. Students who are awaiting appeal (remark) results on a prerequisite course may choose to start a subsequent course. See Section 4.3 [Course examination appeals \(remark\)](#) for more information.

Non-core courses	Core courses*
Introductory Financial Accounting	Intermediate Financial Reporting 1
Introductory Management Accounting	Intermediate Financial Reporting 2
Economics	Advanced Financial Reporting
Statistics	Corporate Finance
Business Law (Canadian)	Audit and Assurance
	Taxation (Canadian)
	Intermediate Management Accounting
	Performance Management
	Information Technology

* The 10-year currency requirement applies only to the core courses.

Note: For information on time limitations for recognizing completed CPA preparatory courses for admission and enrollment eligibility, refer to the currency of education sections of the [Harmonized Education Policies for the CPA Professional Education Program \(CPA PEP\)](#).

3.2 Course exemptions

An exemption will be granted for a CPA preparatory course if the student has taken an equivalent course and passed with a mark of at least 60% for a core course or a mark of at least 50% for a non-core course. For more detailed information, see Section 1.1 [Admission requirements](#).

Applicants whose academic credits can be sufficiently verified for equivalence through acceptable supporting documentation (for example, official transcripts, course syllabus, etc.) will be provided appropriate course exemptions for the CPA preparatory course(s).

Academic credits that cannot be sufficiently verified for equivalence through acceptable supporting documentation (for example, official transcripts, course syllabus, etc.) will result in the applicant not receiving course exemptions. Exemptions in Taxation and Business Law require Canadian prerequisite knowledge and therefore may not be granted based on courses completed outside of Canada.

CPA preparatory course exemptions that are granted, as they meet the currency of education aspect at the time the transcript assessment is completed, will be honored for admission to CPA PEP provided they still

meet the currency of education policy (Section 1.1.4 *Currency of Education* of CPA Harmonized Education Policies Vol. 1) at that time. The completion of updated courses may be required for any expired exemptions.

Note: An overall grade point average (GPA) of 65% (or equivalent⁴) or higher on the core courses is required for entry into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

3.3 Challenge Exams

Challenge exams are available to students who have:

1. Completed a course(s) through a post-secondary institution (PSI) 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 (PSI) 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 body⁵.

If a challenge exam is approved by the provincial/regional CPA body, students will be granted one attempt to challenge the exam for each approved course and required to achieve the minimum pass rate of 60% for core exams. If unsuccessful, the student must complete the full CPA preparatory course (course and exam) or complete an equivalent course through a PSI as outlined on the CPA provincial transfer credit guide. The unsuccessful challenge exam will be counted as an attempt. Challenge exams are not available for non-core courses.

4 A scale of measurement that denotes a pass and could be in the form of a 'letter' such as A, B, C, etc. or a term such as 'pass' or 'fail', or a GPA decimal number (e.g. 2.67 GPA signifies an average mark or a C) or any other equivalent rating as denoted by a post-secondary institutions.

5 Contact your provincial/regional CPA body for any questions or concerns.

3.4 Course assignments

To be eligible to attempt the course examination, students must meet the examination eligibility requirements as established for the course, outlined in the *CPA Preparatory Courses Student Guide*. Submitted assignments not meeting the minimum standard will be considered incomplete. This will count as a course attempt and the student will be required to repeat the course. Repeating a course requires successful completion of all components, including a minimum number of assignments and the course-end examination.

3.4.1 Late assignments

No late CPA preparatory course assignments will be accepted; however, extensions may be granted under extenuating circumstances. All extension requests are expected to be submitted with appropriate supporting documentation.

3.5 Passing a Course

3.5.1 Non-core courses

To pass a non-core CPA preparatory course, students must achieve a minimum passing grade of 50%. The final examination is worth 100% of the grade.

3.5.2 Core courses

To pass a core CPA preparatory course, students must achieve a minimum passing grade of 60%. The final examination is worth 100% of the grade.

3.6 Repeating a course

3.6.1 Non-core courses

Students have up to a maximum of three attempts to pass each non-core CPA preparatory course. **A student who fails an attempt with a grade less than 50%** must retake the course before another attempt at the examination is permitted, provided they have not already exhausted their three examination attempts.

3.6.2 Core courses

For core courses, students are permitted only one rewrite attempt per course.

A student who fails an attempt at a course with a grade of 50% and above can attempt to rewrite the examination provided they have not already completed a rewrite attempt or exhausted their three examination attempts. Students must attempt their rewrite at the next available exam sitting.

A student who fails an attempt with a grade of less than 50% must retake the course before another attempt at the examination is permitted provided they have not already exhausted their three examination attempts.

If the third attempt is unsuccessful, students will not be able to attempt the CPA preparatory course again. However, they can choose to complete the equivalent course at a post-secondary institution and can continue taking other CPA preparatory courses.

3.7 Access to course materials in D2L

Students will have access to course materials for a period of 12 months upon writing the course exam.

4 Course Examination Policies

4.1 Course examinations

Students taking CPA preparatory courses must comply with the examination regulations, and all applicable provincial/federal laws. CPA members are not permitted to take CPA preparatory courses and/or examinations.

Students may be provided with access to electronic reference material during all course-end examinations. The nature and volume of reference material will be adapted to each course's assessment objectives.

All core course examinations must be written in-person at a CPA examination centre in Canada or Bermuda.

4.2 Course examination time limit

Students taking a CPA preparatory course must attempt that course-end examination within one year of the course start date.

The start date for non-core courses is defined as the completion date of full registration.

Students can withdraw from an examination up to the day before the examination without academic penalty provided the next available examination they register for is within the time limit maximum or within one year of the course start date/registration completion date. Some provinces/regions may charge withdrawal fees.

If a student does not sit for an examination, they receive a "fail" on their course result.

Students who exceed the one-year time limit without completing the final examination will fail the course and an attempt will be charged. Students will be required to retake the course to be eligible for another examination attempt provided that they have not already exhausted their three attempts.

4.3 Course examination appeals (remarks)

Appeals of examination results are permitted for students who “Fail” a core course only. Non-core courses are not eligible for appeal. Remark requests must be made within three business days after the examination results are released, and are subject to a fee.

Remark results for the core courses will not be available before the next semester begins. In this event, and where a course is a prerequisite for a subsequent course, students may choose to enroll in and begin the next course. If the remark does not provide a change to a passing grade, students must leave the course and a provincial/regional administrative fee may apply.

All examination responses are marked once. After the results are recorded, the constructed response questions are remarked for results falling within a set range of the course passing grade. Differences between the first and second marking are arbitrated by a third marker, ensuring fairness in marking the student responses around the course passing grade.

5 Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct Policies

5.1 Academic integrity

The CPA profession takes academic integrity seriously. Violations of academic integrity for students taking CPA programs and courses includes (but is not limited to): cheating and plagiarism, the enabling of plagiarism, or theft of another or former student or candidate's work. Submissions will be monitored for academic integrity. Refer to the *CPA Preparatory Courses Student Guide and Policy on Academic Integrity and the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)* for more information on academic integrity. Refer to your provincial/regional CPA body's policies on penalties.

5.2 Professional conduct

Students taking CPA preparatory courses are expected to behave professionally. Appropriate behavior includes but is not limited to: adhering to provincial/regional codes of conduct, behaving ethically, demonstrating integrity and honesty, and exhibiting respect to others including all written and oral communication with students, candidates, facilitators, session leaders, educational staff, and provincial, regional, and national administrative staff. Penalties for inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary action as stated by the provincial/regional CPA body.

Appendix:

CPA Preparatory Course Credit Allocation

Course	Number of credits
Introductory Financial Accounting (IFA)	3
Introductory Management Accounting (IMA)	3
Economics (ECO)	3
Statistics (STA)	3
Intermediate Financial Reporting 1 (IF1)	3
Intermediate Financial Reporting 2 (IF2)	3
Advanced Financial Reporting (AFR)	3
Corporate Finance (COF)	3
Audit and Assurance (AUA)	3
Taxation (TAX) (Canadian)	3
Intermediate Management Accounting (MAA)	3
Performance Management (PMA)	3
Business Law (BUL) (Canadian)	3
Information Technology (ITE)	3

CPA Professional Education Program admission requires:

- an undergraduate degree or Masters' degree
- completion of prerequisite learning with an overall GPA of 65% (or equivalent) or higher on core courses

- 120 credit-hours or equivalent of education (30 credit-hours*/one academic year of full-time or equivalent education)
- good character

* Credit-hour is an input measure meant to reflect student time required to earn credit for the course. Generally, a three-credit course requires 33 hours of contact time (lectures etc.) or 132 hours of student engagement time (lectures, tutorials, practice activities, testing or assessment, or preparation).



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