

F A Q – CPA

Q – How do I obtain an application to take the Uniform CPA (Certified Public Accountant) Examination in Pennsylvania?

A – Contact the testing company, CPA Examination Services at 1-800-CPA-EXAM or go to www.nasba.org and click on Exams.

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 in Pennsylvania?

A – A candidate for the Pennsylvania CPA Examination must have completed at least 120 semester credits from a college or university accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and completed at least a total of twenty-four semester credits, which credits shall be in accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects.

Q - What is the education requirement to be issued a CPA Certificate in Pennsylvania?

An individual may apply for their CPA Certification having 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 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 credits, which credits shall be in accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax 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 credits including at least twenty-four semester credits of accounting and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects and an additional twelve semester credits in accounting, auditing and tax 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 and auditing, business law, finance or tax subjects.

Q – What is the experience requirement for certification?

A – A candidate with a bachelor's degree with 150 semester credit hours-bachelor's degree or higher with 150 semester credit hours-Master's degree with 150 semester credit hours must have completed at least one-year of experience totaling 1,600 hours providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax or consulting skills, which were gained through employment in government, industry, academia or public practice and their experience hours were verified 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 if they had taken and passed at least one part of the CPA Examination prior to December 31, 2011.

A candidate that does not have the 150 credit hours, must complete at least two-years of experience totaling 3,200 hours of experience providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax or consulting skills, which were gained through employment in government, industry, academia or public practice and their experience hours were verified 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 and they must have taken and passed at least one part of the CPA Examination prior to December 31, 2011.

NOTE: After December 31, 2011, the time frame for obtaining qualified experience was shortened from one hundred twenty months to sixty months. Therefore, if you did not take and pass at least one part of the CPA Examination prior to January 1, 2012, your timeframe for obtaining the qualified experience is 60 months preceding the date of application for a certificate.

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 and passed at least one section of 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 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 with 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 documents should the CPA verifier submit if the experience hours that are being verified on the Verification of Experience Form are not “actual hours based on existing records”?

A – If the CPA verifier cannot verify the experience hours based on existing records, they will need to submit to the Board Office, along with the completed Verification of Experience Form, documentation that confirms the period of employment of the CPA Certification candidate AND the formula used to calculate the number of hours they are verifying on the Verification of Experience Form.

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 already obtained the required qualified Continuing Professional Education (CPE). You must have obtained 80 total hours of CPE from either Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy approved program sponsors, NASBA approved program sponsors, or from a program sponsor that is approved by the accountancy regulatory body of a state that permits the practice of public accounting under the principles of substantial equivalency. Of those 80 hours, 16 hours must be in the category of accounting and attest, 8 hours must be in tax, 4 hours must be in professional 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 September 1, 2013, the only CPE that you can use must have been obtained during the period September 1, 2011 through September 1, 2013. You must submit copies of your CPE certificates of completion for each course when sending in your reactivation application with the completed CPE Reporting Form and applicable fee. Copies of the blank CPE Reporting Form can be made if you need more than one copy. CPE must be listed in chronological order on the CPE Reporting Form.

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

A - You must have obtained 80 total hours of CPE from either Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy approved program sponsors, NASBA approved program sponsors, or from a program sponsor that is approved by the accountancy regulatory body of a state that permits the practice of public accounting under principles of substantial equivalency. Of those 80 hours, 16 hours must be in the category of accounting and attest, 8 hours must be in tax, 4 hours must be in professional 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 CPE 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 renewal notice that you receive in the mail, or on the paper renewal application, which can be found on our website at: www.dos.state.pa.us/account starting in October of every odd numbered year (renewal year). If you wish to place your license on inactive status while your license is current, you will need to submit the application to Request Changes to

Your Individual License to the Board 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 peer review compliance submission procedures for renewal?

A – A firm or sole practitioner that performs an audit or review engagement is no longer required to submit a copy of the 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 (this is the peer review administering organization and NOT THE FIRM THAT PERFORMED THE PEER REVIEW), the date of acceptance of that peer review, and the period covered by the peer review. The Board will 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.