

FAQs Regarding the CPA Exam and Licensure Process

Q: How do the CPA Exam and licensure requirements differ from state to state?

A: Different states/jurisdictions have very different rules and requirements. Most states now require a bachelor's degree and 150 credits for licensure, but the specific coursework requirements may be very different. I would encourage you to visit <https://nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/> and click on the name of each state to learn more about each state's requirements.

Here in NJ, to sit for the CPA Exam, a candidate must have:

- *A bachelor's degree in any field of study from an accredited college or university*
- *120 total academic credits, of which 24 credits are in business coursework and 24 credits are in accounting coursework*

In New York, you may be eligible to sit for the exam prior to graduating with a bachelor's degree if you have met the other specific coursework requirements. Pennsylvania, for example, requires a bachelor's degree but some business courses (business law, for instance) may be counted as accounting courses.

New Jersey and surrounding states do not have a residency requirement, but other states do (meaning you can only be licensed in a state in which you live and practice). If you do plan to work outside the tri-state area, please keep this rule in mind and check with the appropriate board to ensure that you are applying for licensure in the correct jurisdiction.

Q: Do I need to take any specific coursework to be eligible to sit for the CPA Exam or to apply for licensure?

A: Here in NJ, a candidate is required to obtain 24 credits in business coursework and an additional 24 credits in accounting coursework, but there are no specific coursework requirements. Please note that other states may require a candidate to have specific coursework shown on a transcript before they are eligible.

Q: How do I know if a course is considered a business or an accounting course?

A: The short answer is that no one aside from NASBA's CPA Exam Services can confirm this, as they handle the transcript evaluation process for NJ candidates on behalf of the NJ State Board of Accountancy. If you are an international student and/or if you changed majors several times, it may be worthwhile to conduct an evaluation of your transcripts through NASBA. There is a fee for this service, but it can be helpful, especially if you are not an accounting major or if you've switched majors.

Possible business courses can include: economics, finance, marketing, management, business law, and similar (If a course is coded with a BUS or similar prefix in your college's course catalog, it will generally be counted as a business course, though there may be exceptions)

Possible accounting courses can include: financial accounting, managerial accounting, cost accounting, intermediate accounting I and II, individual and/or corporate taxation, government/NFP accounting, etc. Generally speaking, if a course is coded as an accounting course with a prefix ACC or ACCT or similar, it will likely be considered an accounting course.

Q: Can CLEP or FEMA credits count toward the general credit requirement?

A: Possibly. Please check with NASBA's CPA Exam Services at 1-800-272-3926 or cpaes-nj@nasba.org for more information. Generally, if you are awarded a certain number of credits on your transcript for completing a course, then these credits can be used toward the 120/150 credit requirements, though there may be exceptions.

Q: Don't I need 150 credits to sit for the exam? The question above says 120 credits will make you eligible.

A: You must have 120 credits and a bachelor's degree conferred on your transcript for you to sit for the exam here in NJ. However, you will need 150 total academic credits for you to be licensed as a CPA in the state of New Jersey.

Q: Is the 150 credits the only requirement for licensure?

A: In order to be licensed in NJ, you must complete the following:

- *Pass all four sections of the CPA Exam with a score of 75 or better on each section*
- *Obtain 150 total academic credits*
- *Obtain one year of work experience under the supervision of an active, licensed CPA who can sign off on the Statement of Experience section of the application*

Q: What happens after I pass the final part of the CPA Exam? Do my scores ever expire?

A: The good news is that, here in NJ, your CPA Exam scores will never expire once the final section is passed. You can take as long as you need to obtain the necessary 150 credits and one year of work experience.

Once you've passed all four sections, NASBA will turn your candidate file over to the board under which you applied for jurisdiction. Here in NJ, the NJ State Board of Accountancy will issue you a congratulatory letter with instructions outlining next steps to apply for licensure. Most candidates will complete the Application for Licensure by Examination. If you applied for the exams under another jurisdiction but are applying for licensure in NJ, you can complete the Application for Licensure by Transfer of Grades. You must meet the eligibility requirements for licensure here in NJ.

Q: Aren't I required to take an Ethics course? Is there an Ethics exam?

A: Here in NJ, new licensees are required to take the four-hour New Jersey Law and Ethics course within six months of licensure, before or after. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is currently taking the NJ State Board of Accountancy three to six months to process new licensee applications. As a result, I would wait until you have been issued a license number (i.e. until you are a CPA!) to take the Ethics course. Here in NJ, there is no Ethics exam; the course is the only item required. You must submit your credit letter for proof of completion of this Ethics course to the NJ State Board of Accountancy within 30 days of completion (email address at the bottom of this FAQ document).

NJCPA is an approved sponsor of the New Jersey Law and Ethics course, so I would recommend taking the course through the society since members receive a \$100 discount on this event.

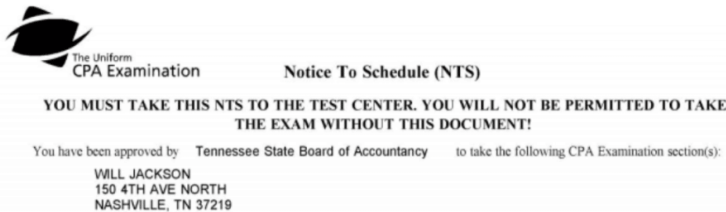
Q: How do I apply to sit for the CPA Exam?

A: Please visit <https://cpacentral.nasba.org> to complete your initial application to sit for the CPA Exam. Please allow six to eight weeks (possibly longer during peak times of the year) for your application to be processed and approved and for your Notice to Schedule (NTS) to be issued.

Q: What is a Notice to Schedule (NTS) form?

A: When you apply to sit for the CPA Exam and are approved to sit for the CPA Exam by NASBA’s CPA Exam Services, you will be issued a form called a Notice to Schedule (sometimes abbreviated NTS). A copy of the NTS is below:

Sample Notice to Schedule



Exam Section	Section ID	Launch Code (Password)	Earliest You Can Take The Exam	Latest You Can Take The Exam
AUD	26968	26968	04/27/12	10/27/12
BEC	26969	26969	04/27/12	10/27/12
FAR	26970	26970	04/27/12	10/27/12
REG	26971	26971	04/27/12	10/27/12

The NTS will identify the number of sections of the CPA Exam you are approved to take (i.e. the number of sections you applied for). Please note: most people do not sign up for all four sections at once (please see the question below to see what we recommend). When you receive the NTS, please put a copy in your car and make sure you print out multiple copies, as you will need to bring a copy of the appropriate NTS with you to the Prometric center on test day. Please make sure you bring the correct NTS with you (sometimes candidates have multiple NTS forms) because the Prometric site will not allow you to test if you bring the incorrect form. The NTS will be valid for six months from the time of issuance (the earliest and latest dates you can take the Exam are printed on the NTS in the right-hand columns). You will also notice that there is a Launch Code printed on this form; you will be required to enter the Launch Code when you log into the Exam on test day. If your NTS expires, you must apply for a new NTS by visiting <https://cpacentral.nasba.org>. Also, please note that the NTS is only valid for one attempt of the CPA Exam section reported. For instance, if you take FAR and fail, you must reapply for a new NTS. If you applied to take all four sections, though, your NTS for the AUD, REG, and BEC sections on the original NTS will still be valid.

Q: How many sections of the CPA Exam can I apply for at once?

A: You can apply for one section or all four sections at once. I would encourage you to only register for the number of sections you plan to take within a six-month timeframe (if you are unsure, we recommend no more than two per NTS).

Q: What if I’m an international student? Can I sit for the CPA Exam and apply for licensure in NJ?

A: Yes. There's one additional step in the process for international candidates. Candidates taking coursework outside the US must first have their transcript(s) evaluated by NASBA's International Evaluation Services (NIES). Please visit <https://nasba.org/products/nasbainternationalevaluationservices/requirements/> to learn more about this process and to apply for an advisory evaluation.

Q: What order should I take the four sections of the CPA Exam?

A: There is no right answer here and you can take the exams in any sequence you'd like! Many of the major review courses will recommend that you take FAR (Financial Accounting and Reporting) first since it is the section with the most material and the lowest pass rates. If you can get this section out of the way first, your 18-month window for passing the remaining three sections won't begin until you receive a passing score on FAR. Similarly, many review courses will suggest taking BEC (Business Environment and Concepts) last because it is traditionally the section with the least amount of material and historically the highest pass rates. If you want to start with BEC and save FAR for last, that's fine too!

Here's a possible order: FAR – AUD – REG – BEC

Q: How much does it cost to take the CPA Exam?

A: A summary of fees is below:

Initial Application Fee	\$225.00
FAR	\$226.15
AUD	\$226.15
REG	\$226.15
BEC	\$226.15
Reexamination Fees	\$75.00 per attempt

Please note that this does not include any additional fees for review courses or obtaining the additional 150 credits. This also implies that you will pass each section on the first attempt. If you score below a 74 on any section, you will be required to pay \$226.15 plus the reexamination fee per section.

Q: What is continuous testing?

A: Prior to 2020, candidates were not permitted to test anytime during the last two weeks of each quarter. Prometric centers were closed to exam candidates for scoring and system maintenance. As of July 1, 2020, continuous testing has been implemented permanently (not as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic). Candidates can now test year-round aside from holidays or weather-related closures.

Previously, if you did not pass a section of the exam, you would be required to wait until the start of a new testing window to retake that section. With continuous testing, you are now able to retake a section as soon as you receive your failing score (and as soon as your new NTS is issued, which could be as quickly as 48 hours).

Q: Do I need to invest in a CPA Exam review course to pass the exam?

A: While it is not required to purchase a review course and there are CPAs out there that have passed exams without a review course, it is definitely the recommended option to invest in a review course to have the best chance of success. NJCPA partners closely with Becker CPA Review, UWorld Roger CPA

Review, Surgent CPA Review, and Gleim CPA Review. You can compare review course features here: <https://njcpa.org/build-career/become-a-cpa/cpa-exam/review-courses>

Q: Which is the best CPA Exam review course on the market? Which review course should I choose?

A: There is no one review course that is the best option for everyone. All programs have great features, but it's up to you to determine which review course works best for you. I would recommend signing up for free trials and webcasts wherever possible to learn more about each platform, software capabilities, video lectures, textbooks, other materials, etc. to see which program fits your learning style best.

Q: Are there any major changes coming to the CPA Exam in the near future that I should be aware of?

A: Yes. CPA Evolution is on track to be implemented on January 1, 2024. CPA Evolution is an evolving licensure model where exam candidates will be required to specialize in one of three disciplines (Tax Compliance and Planning, Business Analysis and Reporting, or Information Systems and Controls) in addition to core topics that are currently being tested (Accounting, Audit, Tax and Technology). Candidates are required to choose one specialization (two or more are not permitted). The exam will continue to remain a four-part, four-hour (per section) exam, so a 16-hour exam in total. You can learn more about this proposed licensure model at <https://evolutionofcpa.org>.



Q: Is there anyone who can help determine if I meet the requirements to sit for the CPA Exam or for licensure?

A: Please note that NJCPA (the New Jersey Society of CPAs) is not a regulatory board, but Kim Conduurso, NJCPA Membership Development Specialist, is happy to help walk you through the process and answer general questions regarding the education or experience requirements. Kim can offer advice or guidance as it relates to your situation, but NASBA and/or the NJ State Board of Accountancy will have final determination. Please contact Kim at 862-702-5634 or kcondurso@njcpa.org with any questions.

Helpful Contact Information:

1) NASBA's CPA Exam Services

1-800-272-3926 (please ask to speak with a NJ State Coordinator)

cpaes-nj@nasba.org

2) NASBA International Evaluation Services

<https://nasba.org/products/nasbainternationalevaluationservices/>

Toll Free: 1.855.468.5382

Local: 1.615.277.9077

Fax: 615.324.1268

Email: nies@nasba.org

Mail:

NASBA - International Evaluation Services

150 4th Ave. N., Suite 850

Nashville, TN 37219

3) NJ State Board of Accountancy

973-504-6380 (please note that the board is currently fully remote and unable to answer inquiries by phone; email is best)

accountancy@dca.lps.state.nj.us

<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/acc>

4) NJCPA

Please feel free to contact Kim Condurso, Membership Development Specialist, at kcondurso@njcpa.org or 862-702-5634 with questions at any time!