

Requirements for CPA Certification/License in Massachusetts - Effective 1/01/07

(These requirements are directly from the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants web site, MSCPAonline.org, and are provided by Continuing & Career Education for the convenience of our students. However, students interested in sitting for the CPA examination are responsible to assure their eligibility by contacting the MSCPA themselves. MSCPAonline.org also includes FAQ's and other useful information.)

To be eligible for a CPA certificate/license in Massachusetts, a candidate must complete at least 150 semester hours of college-level education and successfully pass the computer based CPA examination. Experience in the practice of public accounting may be required, depending on one's educational background.

Beginning January 1, 2007, CPA candidates will be able to sit for the exam upon:

- completion of 120 semester hours (180 quarter hours) of university credit
- conferral of a baccalaureate degree
- completion of 21 semester hours in accounting, to include coverage in financial accounting, management (cost) accounting, auditing, and taxation.
- completion of 9 semester hours in business, to include coverage in business law, finance and information systems.

To qualify for exam eligibility and CPA certification in Massachusetts:

- All educational credits must be completed at a nationally or regionally accredited college or university. Credits can be earned outside of a candidate's actual bachelor's or graduate degree.
- All credits earned at a two-year accredited school must be accepted in transfer at a four-year nationally or regionally accredited college.
- Credits earned in introductory accounting courses now qualify to meet the required 21 semester hours in accounting if the above conditions are met.

The exact nature and number of specific courses you must complete to qualify for CPA certification/licensure is based on the highest level of education you have attained. These different levels are:

- Graduate degree in accounting from an accredited college or university that has been approved by the Board of Public Accountancy.
- Graduate degree in accounting from an accredited college or university that does not fall within the above level, or a graduate degree in business administration or law from an accredited college or university.
- Bachelor's degree in business from an accredited college or university.
- Bachelor's degree in any discipline from an accredited college or university.

A candidate can determine if he or she has met the educational requirements for certification/licensure by answering the following series of questions:

For Graduate-Level Studies:

1) Do you have a *graduate degree in accounting* from an accredited college or university that has been approved by the Board of Public Accountancy? (View the list of approved colleges and universities at MSCPAonline.org)

YES: You have satisfied the educational requirements. You do not have to provide any additional information about the specific courses you have taken.

NO: Proceed to the second question below.

2) Do you have a *graduate degree in accounting from an accredited college or university that does not fall within Level 1, or a graduate degree in business administration or law from an accredited college or university?* Graduate degrees in business administration include such degrees as Master's in Business Administration (MBA), Master's of Science in Accounting Information Systems (MSAIS), Master's of Science in Finance (MSF), and Master's of Taxation (MST). (Read further guidance on *what constitutes a graduate degree in business* at MSCPAonline.org)

YES: To be eligible for certification/licensure, your degree must include, or be supplemented by, a specified number of hours of accounting and business courses.

Accounting coursework: You must have 18 semester hours (27 quarter hours) of accounting at the graduate level or 30 semester hours (45 quarter hours) at the undergraduate level, or an equivalent combination thereof.* These courses must include coverage in financial accounting, audit, taxation, and management accounting. Coverage in these topic areas generally means that a course has been completed in the specified subject area, but a candidate may submit proof that the required subject areas have been covered in other courses. *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as accounting courses and to learn how you can verify that you have obtained the required coverage in courses other than those in the specified topic areas.*

Business coursework: You must have 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of business courses (other than accounting courses) at the undergraduate level, or 18 semester hours (27 quarter hours) at the graduate level, or an equivalent combination thereof.* These courses must be completed or accepted in transfer at a four-year accredited college or university. *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as business courses.*

NO: Proceed to the third question below.

Undergraduate Information (for CCE Students)

3) Do you have a bachelor's degree in business from an accredited college or university?

YES: To be eligible for CPA certification/licensure, your degree must include, or be supplemented by, a specified number of hours of accounting and business courses.

Accounting coursework: You must have 30 semester hours in accounting at the undergraduate level.* The accounting courses must include coverage in financial accounting, audit, taxation, and management accounting. Coverage in these topic areas generally means that a course has been completed in the specified subject area, but a candidate may submit proof that the required subject areas have been covered in other courses.* *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as accounting courses and to learn how you can verify that you have obtained the required coverage in courses other than those in the specified topic areas.*

Business coursework: You must have 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of business courses (other than accounting courses) at the undergraduate level.* These business courses must include coverage in the areas of business law, information systems, finance, and coverage in one of the areas of economics, business organizations, professional ethics, and/or business communication.* *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as business courses.*

NO: Proceed to the fourth question below.

4) Do you have a *bachelor's degree in any discipline* from an accredited college or university?

YES: To be eligible for CPA certification/licensure, your degree must include or be supplemented by a specific number of hours of accounting and business courses.

Accounting coursework: You must have at least 30 semester hours (45 quarter hours) in accounting courses at the undergraduate level.* These credits must include at least three semester hours in each of the subject areas of financial accounting, auditing, taxation, and management accounting. *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as accounting courses.*

Business coursework: You must have least 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of business courses (other than accounting courses) at the undergraduate level.* The business credits must include at least three semester hours in each of the areas of business law, business information systems, professional ethics and finance. Courses in business

management of organizations, economics, and/or business communications may be included for the business course requirements. *See below for more information about what courses are acceptable as business courses.*

NO: You are not eligible for CPA certification/licensure.

*If you combine undergraduate and graduate courses to arrive at the required core accounting and business credits, please note:

Since a candidate needs 30 semester hours of undergraduate accounting courses or 18 semester hours of graduate accounting courses, each undergraduate hour equals $\frac{3}{5}$ of a graduate hour, or conversely, each graduate hour equals $\frac{5}{3}$ of an undergraduate hour.

Since a candidate needs 24 semester hours of undergraduate business courses or 18 semester hours of graduate business courses, each undergraduate hour equals $\frac{3}{4}$ of a graduate hour, or conversely, each graduate hour equals $\frac{4}{3}$ of an undergraduate hour.

Acceptable Accounting Courses and Verifying that you Have Obtained Sufficient Coverage in the Specified Topic Areas

Completion of a course in each of the four required areas is the most direct way to meet the requirement. Examples follow:

- **Financial accounting:** Intermediate Accounting, Advanced Accounting, International Accounting, Financial Statement Analysis, Financial Reporting and Analysis
- **Auditing:** Financial Statement Auditing, Internal Audit, IT Audit, Forensic Accounting
- **Taxation:** Income Taxation, Financial Planning, Corporate Taxation, Tax Implications of Accounting Decisions
- **Management Accounting:** Cost Accounting, Accounting Information for Decision Making, Managerial Accounting

If a course title does not clearly relate to the coverage area, the candidate may need to submit a course catalogue, syllabus or letter from a professor detailing the coverage. If you think there may be a question about the coverage provided in one of your courses, use this course evaluation checklist as a guide for yourself or to submit with documentation supporting coverage when you apply to sit for the CPA Exam.

Examples of courses that count toward the requirement for accounting hours and may have the required coverage include Accounting Information Systems, Accounting Internship (limit of three semester hours), Contemporary Issues or Topics in Accounting, Accounting Theory, Governmental or Not-for-Profit Accounting.

Examples of courses that do not count toward the requirement for accounting hours include accounting courses that are not completed or accepted in transfer at a four-year accredited college or university, Law for Accountants (satisfies business course requirement), and Communication or Writing for Accountants (satisfies business course requirement).

What Constitutes a Course in Business?

A candidate with a graduate degree in accounting from a program that has been approved by the Board of Public Accountancy is not required to satisfy specific business course credit hour or content requirements. It is assumed that the candidate has pursued a sufficient level of business coursework while earning the graduate degree.

A candidate with a graduate degree in business administration or law from an accredited college or university must complete 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of business courses at the undergraduate level, or 18 semester hours at the graduate level (27 quarter hours), or an equivalent combination thereof. There is a great deal of flexibility in business courses offered by schools of business and management. Although candidates with graduate business or law degrees do not need to satisfy specific business course requirements, candidates are strongly encouraged to obtain coverage in business law.

A candidate with a bachelor's degree in business from an accredited college or university is required to complete the same number of credit hours of business coursework as a candidate with a graduate degree (24 undergraduate or 18 graduate), and these courses must include coverage in each of the following areas:

- **Business law**
- **Information systems**
- **Finance**
- **At least one of the areas of** economics, business organizations, professional ethics, and/or business communications

Completion of a course in each of the required areas is the most direct way to satisfy the coverage requirement. Since these coverage areas are broad, the requirement may be satisfied by a wide variety of courses. Examples of courses that might provide coverage in these areas include, but are not limited to:

Business law: Business Law; Law for Accountants

Information systems: Management Information Systems; Information Resource Management

Finance: Corporate Finance; Managerial Finance; Financial Risk Management; Financial Planning; Investments

Economics: Managerial Economics; Macroeconomics; Microeconomics

Business organizations: Organizational Behavior; Managing People

Professional ethics: Business Ethics; Professional Ethics

Business Communication: Business Writing; Professional Speaking; Managerial Communications

If a course title does not clearly relate to the coverage area, the candidate may need to submit a course catalogue, syllabus or letter from a professor detailing the coverage. If you think there may be a question about the coverage provided in one of your courses, use this course evaluation checklist as a guide for yourself or to submit with documentation supporting coverage when you apply to sit for the CPA Exam.

A candidate whose highest degree is a bachelor's degree in a discipline other than business must complete at least 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of business courses at the undergraduate level. These credits must include at least three semester hours in each of the following areas:

- **Business law**
- **Business information systems**
- **Professional ethics**
- **Finance**

Courses in quantitative applications in business, business management of organizations, economics and/or business communication may be included for the business course requirements.