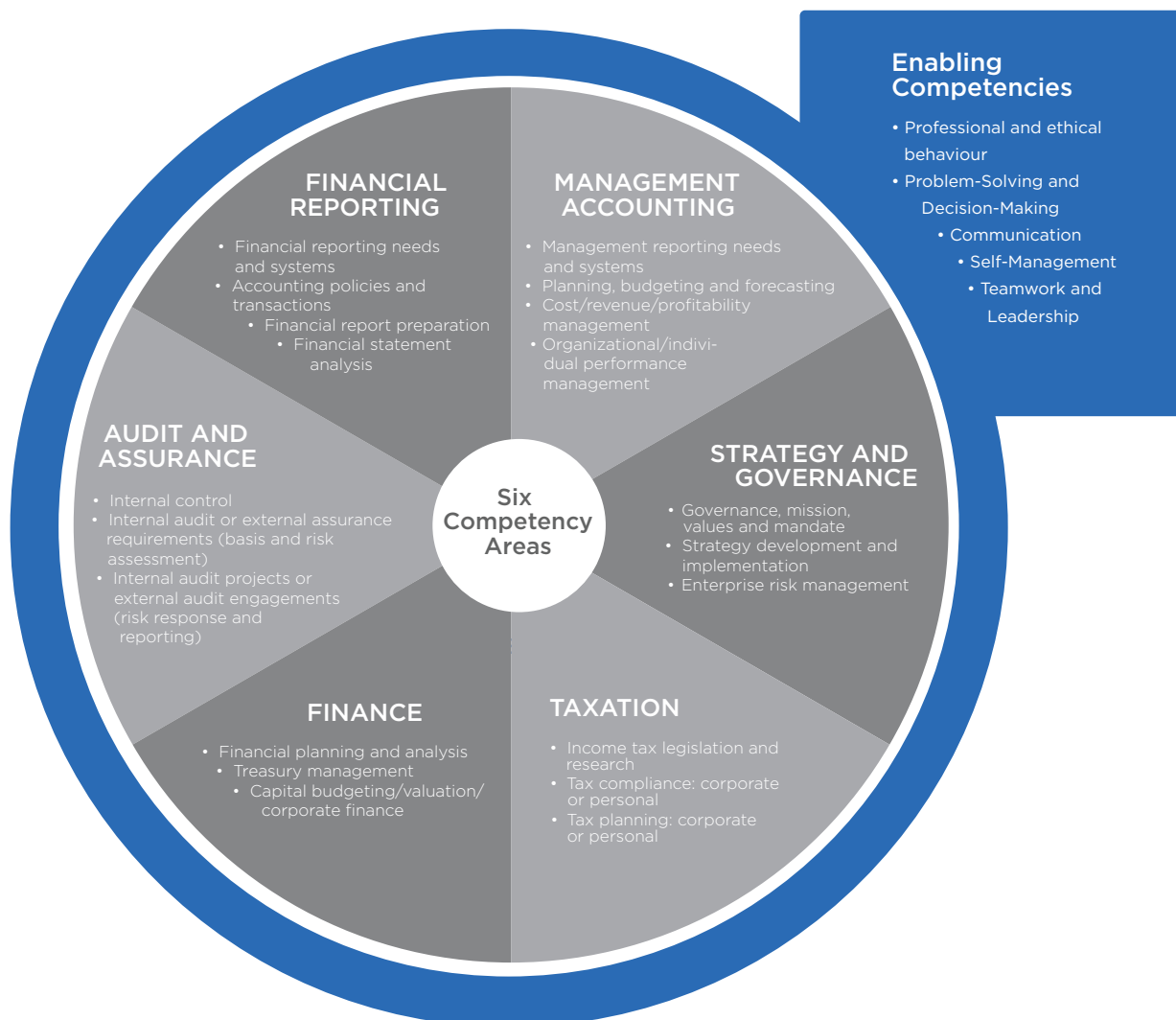


# CPA Practical Experience Requirements

## The CPA Practical Experience Competencies

Future CPAs must develop both technical and enabling competencies through their term of qualifying practical experience. Technical competencies fall into six competency areas; future CPAs must develop a range of these competencies in accordance with four requirements: **core**, **depth**, **breadth**, and **progression**. Enabling competencies fall into five areas; future CPAs must develop all enabling competencies.



# Technical Competency Requirements

Each competency area comprises three or four competency sub-areas. A future CPA must achieve a minimum number of competency sub-areas to achieve the core, depth and breadth requirements. Competency sub-areas are developed over time based on the future CPA demonstrating competency statements that make up each sub-area.

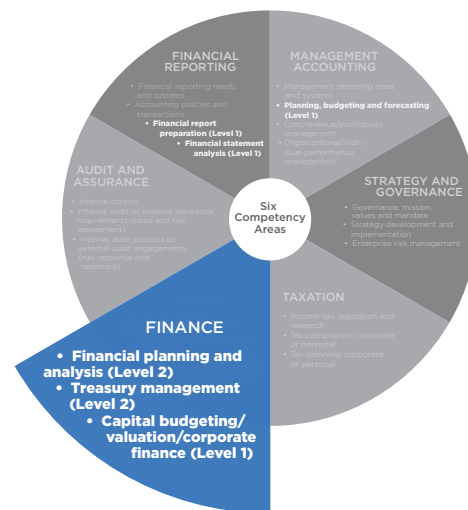
## Core

- Future CPAs must gain proficiency in **any three** competency sub-areas in Financial Reporting and/or Management Accounting to at least Level 1 proficiency.



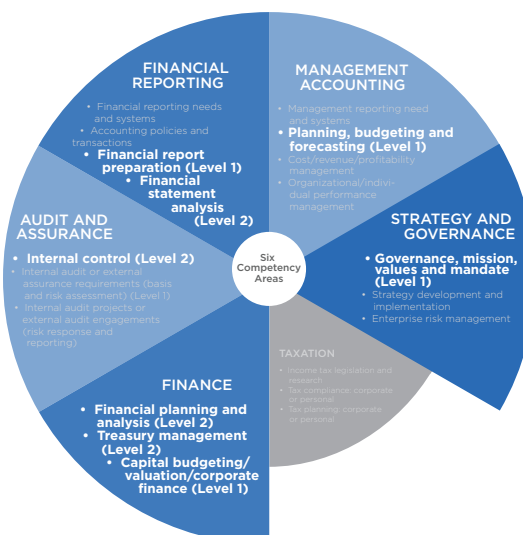
## Depth

- Future CPAs must gain proficiency in **all** of the competency sub-areas of one discrete competency area.
- **At least two** of the competency sub-areas must be at Level 2 proficiency; all others at Level 1.



## Breadth

- Future CPAs are required to gain proficiency in **at least eight** competency sub-areas.
- **At least four** sub-areas must be gained at Level 2 and the remaining at Level 1.



## Competency Statements

Below is an example of the competency statements for the 'Financial Report Preparation' sub-area within Financial Reporting

### Level 0

Verify mathematical accuracy of the financial statements and note disclosures.

### Level 1

Explain financial statements, including note disclosures.

### Level 2

Analyze/prepare financial statements, including note disclosures.

## Understanding ‘Progression’

The idea of ‘progression’ of the future CPA is embedded in required competencies. At the start of the practical experience term, work is largely confined to retrieving and comprehending information. As further experience is gained, it begins to develop into analysis and, by the end of the practical term, the ability to make effective decisions and problem solve, as well as take on increasingly complex and less routine work.



\*Based on the Cognitive System in The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives by Robert J Marzano and John S Kendall, Second Edition (Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press, 2007).

## Proficiency Levels

Future CPAs are not expected to demonstrate achievement of all technical competencies, but must achieve a selection at both Level 1 and Level 2 requirements as defined by breadth, depth and core requirements described previously.

Complexity, circumstance and autonomy determine the level of proficiency. Generally, the proficiency level increases as complexity and autonomy increase and/or as routine work decreases.

**Level 0** is experience at a purely administrative or clerical level.

**Level 1** is experience at a professional level, but lower than expected of a newly-certified CPA. This can include tasks which are routine in nature, of a low level of complexity and/or executed with a lower level of autonomy.

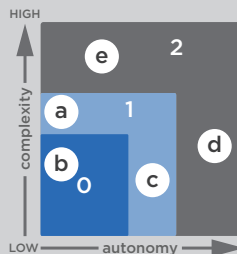
**Level 2** is the experience level expected of a newly-certified CPA. Completed tasks can be both complex and undertaken with autonomy. Highly complex tasks undertaken with a moderate level of autonomy may also count as Level 2 experience.

### Illustrative Example

#### Financial Report preparation technical competency sub-area

For this competency sub-area, Level 0 is defined as administrative support, Level 1 is defined as explaining financial statements, and Level 2 is defined as preparing financial statements - these examples show you how to adjust for complexity/circumstance and autonomy:

- Assist in preparing financial statements, including some complex transactions.
- Assist with preparation of a compilation.
- Prepare a compilation.
- Prepare financial statements with notes including some complex transactions.
- Prepare sections of financial statements and notes, including highly complex areas.



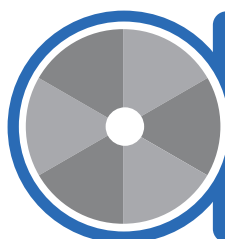
## Enabling Competencies

Enabling competencies reflect the personal attributes of being a CPA. These are the essential skills of ethical behaviour, decision-making, problem-solving, communication and leadership. They are pervasive to a CPA's work environment and allow a CPA to function as a competent professional in an increasingly complex and demanding environment.

The enabling competencies are grouped into five key areas. By the end of the term of the practical experience, future CPAs are required to develop all five enabling competencies to a Level 2 proficiency.

### Enabling competencies and your CPA mentor

The focus of the CPA mentorship program is on aiding future CPAs in achieving their enabling competencies. Future CPAs are therefore encouraged to engage with their CPA mentors as much as possible to help progress through the required proficiency levels.



### Enabling Competencies

1. Professional and Ethical Behaviour
2. Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
3. Communication (oral and written)
4. Self-Management
5. Teamwork and Leadership

### How are enabling competencies demonstrated and assessed?

Future CPAs must demonstrate how they have drawn on the enabling competencies while developing the technical ones. They do this by answering five three-part questions which allow them to describe a situation, its implications towards achieving enabling competencies, and how it will affect their future behaviour, for each of the five enabling competency areas.

Below is an example of how a future CPA might be expected to reflect on teamwork and leadership competencies by exploring 'what?', 'so what?' and 'now what?'.\*

\*Driscoll, J. (2007). Practising clinical supervision: A reflective approach for healthcare professionals (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Bailliere Tindall Elsevier.

### Sample Question

#### Teamwork and Leadership

#### Question 5.1: Plans and effectively manages teams and projects

**(a) Describe a time when you managed a project or team. What did you do to plan and execute the assignment effectively?**

This question is focused on the 'what?' - description of the situation: *facts*.

It gives a chance for the future CPAs to detail a scenario in which they believe they have demonstrated development towards obtaining the required enabling competencies, and have obtained the desired results.

**b) What did you learn from this experience and how did your organization benefit as a result?**

In effect, this question is the 'so what?' - key learnings, making sense of the situation: *analysis*.

Here the future CPA is expected to document and discuss the implications of the scenario described in part (a) in relation to how it led them towards the development of certain enabling competencies. This question is posed to help future CPAs demonstrate they have obtained sufficient levels of self-analysis and comprehension, to grow as a professional accountant.

**(c) Having carried out these actions, what would you do differently next time?**

This question focuses on the 'now what?' - alter future behaviour as a result of key learnings: *application*.

Whilst all three parts of the question are important, part (c) provides future CPAs the greatest scope to demonstrate that they have achieved Level 2 enabling competencies. It is here that future CPAs can demonstrate knowledge utilization and establish how they have taken learnings from their practical experience and can apply them to new situations. The question is inherently reflective in nature, and provides future CPAs a forum to showcase their ability to self-evaluate, review their actions and then utilize the learnings in a practical setting.