

## HOW TO BECOME A CPA

### About CPABC

The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia (CPABC) is the training, governing, and regulatory body for over 40,000 CPA members and 6,000 CPA candidates. CPABC's primary mission is to protect the public, which includes:

- Enforcing the highest professional and ethical standards.
- Promoting and increasing competence of members through professional development, and assessing the continuing competency of members.
- Enforcing practice standards and rules of professional conduct of candidates and members.
- Providing a complaint process that is fair and efficient, and investigating and adjudicating complaints.

Under the [CPA Act](#), only members of CPABC have the requisite level of training, education, and proficiency to practice as professional accountants in the province.

### Become a CPA

CPAs are highly sought after by employers and advise multinational corporations, small businesses, not-for-profits, government agencies, and countless individuals. They are highly regarded for their leadership in the field of public accounting, their strategic insight in the boardrooms of top corporations, and their guidance in government and public sector accounting. Over the next decade, BC expects a strong demand for professional accountants. Many of those jobs will be filled by professional accountants trained in other countries.

To become a CPA, individuals must meet three fundamental requirements: Education, Examination, and Experience. **Education** relates to obtaining requisite knowledge in core subjects such as ethics, accounting, audit & assurance, and taxation, and other subjects such as strategy, governance, and finance. **Examination** relates to testing the knowledge acquired across the various subjects. And **Experience** relates to gaining relevant practical work experience. Individuals who meet these requirements and are a person of good standing will earn the CPA designation. These requirements also follow the IFAC standards for the accounting profession.

CPABC and the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) work together to deliver the CPA program. CPAWSB delivers the academic components, while CPABC regulates CPA members and candidates who reside in BC.

Learn more about becoming a CPA, find events, or book an appointment with a CPABC Advisor at [gocpabc.ca](http://gocpabc.ca).

### Internationally Educated Accountants

In 2023, the BC provincial government introduced the *International Credentials Recognition Act*, which intends to increase fairness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the credential recognition process for internationally trained professionals. Based on past education, work experience, and accounting credentials, many internationally educated individuals have different pathways into becoming a CPA.

The following pathways apply to individuals who are active members in good standing and have completed all the professional courses, exams, and experience requirements of their professional body.

- **MRA/RMA members** can apply directly for the CPA designation in BC and will receive their assessment results within seven business days from the date all required documents are received.
- **MOU members** will receive “advanced standing” exemptions towards some of the academic and work experience components of the CPA Program. Assessment results are released within 10 business days of receiving all required documents for academic bridging, and within four to six weeks for experience bridging.
- **IFAC members** whose professional body is also listed as a ‘Member Organization’ with IFAC are eligible to apply for a CPAWSB Assessment and will receive “advanced standing” exemptions towards some of the academic and work experience components of the CPA Program. Assessment results are released within 10 business days of receiving all required documents for academic bridging, and within four to six weeks for experience bridging.
- **Other internationally trained accountants** are eligible to apply for a CPAWSB Assessment and all previous education completed will be assessed against the admission requirements to enter the CPA Program. Assessment results are released within 10 business days of receiving all required documents for academic assessment. Results will indicate how much of the admission requirements have been met and what is missing.

Learn more or begin your application at [cpawsb.ca/future-learners](http://cpawsb.ca/future-learners).

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Is there an English language proficiency requirement to become a CPA student?**

We recommend you have at least the Canadian English Language Benchmark of 8 out of 12, to understand the course content and examinations. Learn more at [language.ca/resources/expertise/](http://language.ca/resources/expertise/).

#### **Do international students pay more to take the CPA Program?**

No, international students pay the same as domestic students in British Columbia.

#### **Can I become a student of the CPA Program while living outside of Canada?**

You can begin the assessment process from your home country, but to enroll into the CPA program you must reside in British Columbia and hold both a study permit and work permit.

#### **If I am not a landed immigrant or permanent resident, what permits would I require to study in the CPA Program?**

The CPA Program is longer than six months in duration and has a mandatory in-person component. To enroll into the CPA program, you must reside in British Columbia and hold both a **study permit** and **work permit**. For more personalized permit and immigration related guidance, consider seeking counsel from a professional. Learn more at [college-ic.ca/protecting-the-public](http://college-ic.ca/protecting-the-public).

#### **When is the next Information Session about the CPA Program?**

Learn more about the CPA program, as well as upcoming information sessions and events at [gocpabc.ca](http://gocpabc.ca).

#### **Who can I contact for more information?**

Contact CPABC at [gocpabc.ca/advisor](http://gocpabc.ca/advisor) or call us at 604.872.7222 or toll free at 1.800.663.2677.