



ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS FOR CPAS

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The purpose of this article is to explore additional certifications available for Certified Public Accountants (CPAs).

Accounting is a highly respected profession that requires specialized knowledge and a skillset to follow and interpret standards and laws, as well as adhere to a strict code of professional ethics.

There are many career opportunities in the accounting profession. As such, accountants are in high demand and are employed in many venues, including public accounting firms, industry, nonprofit organizations and governments. There are approximately 1.28 million accountants in the U.S.¹

Within the U.S. accounting profession, there is a subset of accountants who elect to become CPAs. A CPA license is issued by a state board of accountancy. Although each state has its own unique requirements to become licensed as a CPA, common

requirements include: a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning, required number of upper level accounting and business courses, successful completion of the multi-part CPA Examination, relevant work experience, and demonstration of high ethical standards.

Once licensed, CPAs must maintain their license by meeting continuing professional education (CPE) standards that are set by state boards of accountancy. Today, there are 658,267 actively licensed CPAs in the U.S. (or roughly the population of Oklahoma City, OK).² A new CPA in the U.S. has an average starting salary of \$66,000, while the average salary for all practicing CPAs is approximately \$119,000 per year, excluding bonuses.³

In Texas, to become a licensed CPA, the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy (TSBPA) generally requires an individual to:

- Be of good moral character;
- Meet education requirements;
- Take/pass all parts of the CPA Exam;

- Meet accounting work experience; and
- Understand professional conduct.

Current education requirements are 150 semester hours of college credit, which must include at least 30 semester hours of upper-level accounting courses and 24 semester hours of upper-level business courses recognized by TSBPA, and a board-approved three-semester-hour ethics course.

The current work experience requirement is one year of full-time, non-routine accounting work under the direct supervision of a licensed CPA.⁴ An individual must also pass an exam on the Board's Rules of Professional Conduct.

A licensed CPA in the U.S. is looked upon by the public in a positive light.⁵ The CPA designation conveys to the public that an individual has been tested and verified to meet certain requirements to practice accounting publicly, and must continually

stay current in their profession by completing CPE.

Additional Accounting Certifications

As mentioned previously, there are a multitude of opportunities within the accounting profession where CPAs might be employed. Each requires additional specialized skillsets and thus, CPAs might benefit from obtaining additional certifications.

Having additional certifications along with a CPA license demonstrates

The authors have made a diligent effort to provide brief information about each of them. However, the reader should go to their websites for more detailed information about certification requirements, including education, exam, experience, costs and CPE.

International Accounting

Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA)

Sponsor: American Institute of CPAs (AICPA)

Purpose: A premier global management accounting credential for those with advance proficiency in finance, operations, strategy and management

Members: 150,000 CGMA members

Requirements: AICPA membership; complete and pass CGMA exam (an integrated, comprehensive strategic case study that

assesses the competencies required in today's business environment); and three years relevant work experience

Estimated Costs: \$780 with AICPA membership

CPE: Same as CPA maintenance

Other: A global management designation

Management Accounting

Certified Management Accountant (CMA)

Sponsor: Institute of Management Accountants (IMA)

Purpose: An international designation for management accountants and financial professionals

Members: 70,000 CMA members (4,000 new CMAs each year) in 150 countries

Requirements: IMA membership; bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or a related professional accounting certification (CFA, CIA, CFE, CTP); pass two-part exam (financial planning, performance

and analytics, and strategic financial management); and two years of professional experience in management accounting or financial management

Estimated Costs: \$910 for IMA membership and exams

CPE: 30 hours annually, including two hours of ethics training

Other: An important certification for those working in industry; about one in three CPAs are also CMAs; adds approximately \$509,000 net present value to cumulative lifetime earnings⁷

Internal Audit

Certified Internal Auditor (CIA)

Sponsor: Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA)

Purpose: A global specialty certification by which individuals demonstrate professionalism in internal auditing

Members: 160,000 CIA members in 170+ countries

Requirements: IIA membership; associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university or seven or more years of verified experience in internal auditing; pass three-part exam (essentials of internal auditing, practice of internal auditing and business knowledge for internal auditing); and one to five years of work experience based upon education

Estimated Costs: \$1,125 for IIA membership and exams

CPE: 40 hours annually, including two hours of ethics training

Other: A premier designation for internal auditors; can earn \$38,000 more annually with certification⁸

Accounting Information Systems

Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)

Sponsor: Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA)

Purpose: A globally recognized certification for information systems audit control, assurance and security professionals

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unique professional knowledge and allows CPAs to expand their service horizons and clientele base.

This article now turns to other certifications that CPAs may want to consider obtaining to increase their knowledge and marketability. Information on each designation's purpose and requirements will be provided to allow the reader the opportunity to determine if he/she should pursue one.

Our focus in this article is on providing information to help CPAs review whether the costs and time of obtaining an additional certification equals the benefits to be realized, and whether additional certifications will contribute to one's long-term career goals.

Although not all-exhaustive, following are eight specialized certifications regularly encountered among accountants, identified by accounting or finance area, that a CPA may want to consider obtaining based on their employment or career objectives.⁶

Professional Certifications for Accountants

Acronym	Certification	Acronym	Certification
ABA	Accredited Business Accountant/Advisor	CISA	Certified Information Systems Auditor
ABGOV	American Board Government Forensic Accountant	CISM	Certified Information Security Manager
ABV	Accredited in Business Valuation	CITP	Certified Information Technology Professional
AEP	Accredited Estate Planner	CMA	Certified Management Accountant
AFA	Accredited Financial Analyst	CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CA	Chartered Accountant	CPEA	Certified Professional Environmental Auditor
CAP	Certified Analytics Professional	CPFO	Certified Public Finance Officer
CBA	Certified Bank Auditor	CPSA	Certified Process Safety Auditor
CCSA	Certification in Control Self-Assessment	CRFAC	Certified Forensic Accountant
CCSA	Certified Cyber Security Accountant	CRISC	Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control
CEA	Certified Environmental Auditor	CRMA	Certification in Risk Management Assurance
CEIV	Certified in Entity and Intangible Valuations	CSX	Cybersecurity Nexus
CFA	Chartered Financial Analyst	CSX-P	Cybersecurity Practitioner
CFE	Certified Fraud Examiner	CTFA	Certified Trust and Financial Advisor
CFF	Certified in Financial Forensics	CTP	Certified Treasury Professional
CFP	Certified Financial Planner	CVA	Certified Valuation Analyst
CFSA	Certified Financial Services Auditor	DABFA	Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Accounting
CGAP	Certified Government Auditing Professional	EA	Enrolled Agent
CGEIT	Certified in the Governance of Enterprise IT	FABFA	Fellow of the American Board of Forensic Accounting
CGFM	Certified Government Financial Manager	FHFMA	Fellow of the Healthcare Financial Management Association
CGMA	Chartered Global Management Accountant	LHA	Licensed Healthcare Auditor
ChFC	Chartered Financial Consultant	PFS	Personal Financial Specialist
CHFP	Certified Healthcare Financial Professional	QIAL	Qualification in Internal Audit Leadership
CIA	Certified Internal Auditor	RFI	Registered Forensic Investigator

Members: 151,000 CISA members

Requirements: ISACA membership; pass five-part exam (information systems auditing process; governance and management of information technology; information systems acquisition, development and implementation; information systems operations and business resilience; and protection of information assets); and two to five years relevant work experience

Estimated Costs: \$720 with ISACA membership

CPE: 120 hours in three-year period

Other: Mark of excellence for information systems audit professional; with the advancement of automation in auditing, many public accounting firms highly recruit auditors and accountants who are knowledgeable in the information systems area

Governmental Accounting

Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM)

Sponsor: Association of Government Accountants (AGA)

Purpose: A certification that demonstrates competency in governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls and budgeting at the federal, state and local levels

Members: 14,000 AGA members

Requirements: AGA membership; bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; pass three-part exam (governmental environment and accounting, financial reporting and budgeting, and governmental financial management and control); two years relevant work experience

Estimated Costs: \$605 with AGA membership

CPE: 80 hours in two-year period

Other: Recognizes specialized knowledge and experience needed to be a government financial manager

Health Care Accounting

Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP)

Sponsor: Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA)

Purpose: A designation of competency in health care financial management for financial professionals, clinical and nonclinical leaders, and payers

Members: 56,000 HFMA professionals

Requirements: HFMA membership; must complete two distinct phases/modules and assessments (business of health care and operational excellence)

Estimated Costs: \$435 with HFMA membership

CPE: 60 hours in three-year period

Other: An important designation for those working in health care; this certification entails a deep understanding of health care accounting and cost analysis, strategic finance, risk mitigation and health care finance

Fraud Accounting

Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE)

Sponsor: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

Purpose: Credential denotes expertise in fraud prevention, detection and deterrence

Members: 85,000 ACFE members

Requirements: ACFE membership; bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; pass four-part exam (financial transactions and fraud schemes; law; investigation; and fraud prevention and deterrence) and two years relevant work experience

Estimated Costs: \$595 with ACFE membership

CPE: 20 hours annually

Other: The CFE is one of the most marketable credentials today; gold standard in the area of fraud⁹

Financial Planning

Certified Financial Planner (CFP)

Sponsor: Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards

Purpose: A designation for those qualified to help individuals pull their finances together, solve financial problems and make a plan to achieve their financial goals

Members: 87,000 CFP members

Requirements: Completion of college or university-level program of study in personal financial planning with a capstone course; bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; pass a comprehensive exam (professional conduct and regulation, general financial planning principles, education planning, risk management and insurance planning, investment planning, tax planning, retirement savings and income planning, and estate planning) and 4,000 - 6,000 hours relevant work experience

Estimated Costs: \$825

CPE: 30 hours in a two-year period, including two hours of ethics training

Other: This is a well-recognized designation for financial planners

Other Certifications

There are numerous other certifications that accountants can obtain (see Exhibit 1). Before pursuing any of these certifications, you should carefully review the costs, requirements and maintenance for each of them, and then determine whether the certification will enhance your career objectives.

A Summary and Wrap Up

The purpose of this article was to review additional certifications that CPAs may want to consider based on their long-term career goals.

A CPA is a highly valued certification in accounting; however, there are many opportunities within the accounting profession where active CPAs might benefit from having an additional certification to demonstrate a specialized skillset and enhance their marketability.

Although limited, this article outlined brief details about eight additional certifications in the areas of international accounting, management accounting, internal audit, accounting information systems, governmental accounting, health care accounting, fraud accounting, and financial planning. It also provided an exhibit listing numerous other available certifications.

In general, certifications demonstrate a stated level of competency to the public, and CPAs having additional certifications will increase their knowledge and possibly, their financial benefits.

For more detailed information, readers should visit the website for the certification. Further, it is always best to fully understand the education, exam, experience, costs and CPE requirements before undertaking any certification, as these requirements are dynamic and subject to updating and change.

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END NOTES:

¹ www.statista.com/statistics/317587/number-of-accountants-and-auditors-employed-us/ and www.statista.com/statistics/317599/states-with-the-highest-employment-level-in-accounting-and-auditing-us/ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/317599/states-with-the-highest-employment-level-in-accounting-and-auditing-us/>

² <https://nasba.org/licensure/howmanycpas/>

³ www.journalofaccountancy.com/news/2017/sep/cpa-average-salary-201717483.html

⁴ www.tsbpa.state.tx.us/exam-qualification/examination-requirements.html

⁵ <https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/accountant>

⁶ The authors have made a diligent effort to provide correct information. Please refer to the websites for the certifications for specific detail on costs, requirements and maintenance for each certification.

⁷ www.imanet.org/cma-certification?ssopc=1

⁸ <https://na.theiia.org/certification/CIA-Certification/Pages/CIA-Certification.aspx>

⁹ www.acfe.com/cfe-credential.aspx