

# Discover life as a decision-maker.

Become a Chartered Professional Accountant



**Navigating change.**

[cpaalberta.ca](http://cpaalberta.ca)

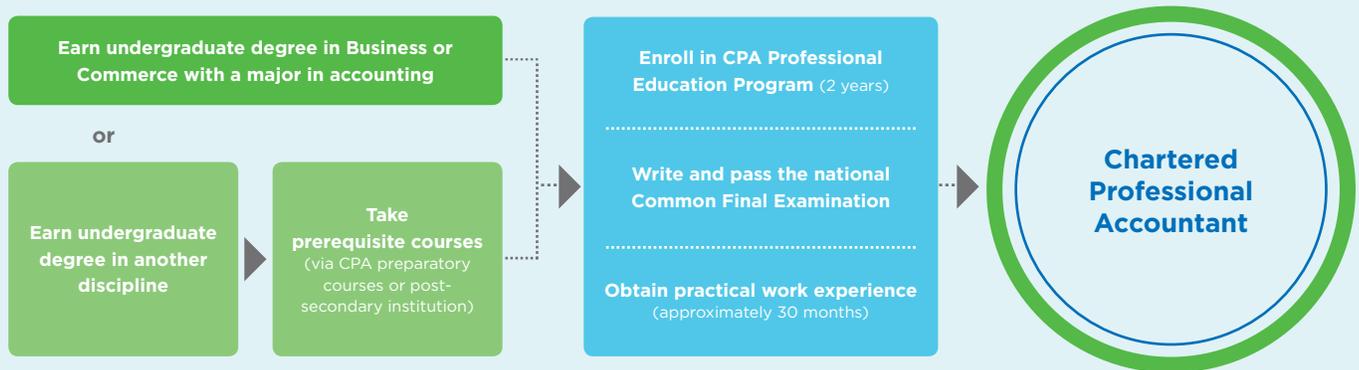
# What is a CPA?

Chartered Professional Accountants are trusted business leaders. In Alberta, across Canada, and around the globe, CPAs bring their education, training, expertise, and high ethical standards to careers in all areas of the economy and the community.

CPAs possess the expertise and ethical fortitude to navigate through disruptive change by anticipating the unexpected, making sense of complexity, and analyzing data to make business decisions that drive success.

Regardless of where their careers take them, all CPAs earned their designation by completing rigorous education and training. As part of a profession that is regulated by provincial legislation, CPAs meet high standards of competency and professional conduct. Those standards help distinguish CPAs in the workplace, and bring distinction to those who hold the CPA designation.

## FOLLOW THIS PATH TO BECOME A CPA



# Why Become a CPA?

## Gain Influence

Be part of a self-regulated profession and join a network of 200,000 nationwide and 28,000 here in Alberta.

## Acquire a Powerful Skillset

As a CPA, your education and training equips you with the knowledge and understanding of business that will help you in any position or sector.

## Be in Demand

As recognized business leaders and strategic thinkers, CPAs have a competitive advantage in the Canadian workplace. CPAs have secure, prosperous careers that help them achieve their personal and career goals.

## Pursue Endless Opportunities

CPAs contribute to successful organizations in every business sector and the CPA designation can create a path to the C-suite in any industry of choice. CPAs also have the background and capabilities to work as entrepreneurs and put a fresh spin on various business sectors. They routinely turn solid foundations into ground breaking concepts.

## Work Anywhere in the World

The CPA designation is your passport to opportunities at home and abroad, as you can become one of the many Canadian CPAs applying their expertise across Canada and in 100 countries worldwide.

## Make a Positive Difference

With a unique and diverse set of professional skills, CPAs are recognized in their communities for their commitment to helping out and making a positive difference.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Each year, CPAs must take relevant Continuing Professional Development to enhance their knowledge and expertise to remain at the forefront of today's competitive market.

*"A CPA brings a grounded, very rational perspective to decision making that's critical. The ability to understand numbers, cash, and the role of effective governance and fiscal management—all of those things are fundamental for an organization."*

**Pedro Carriel** CPA, CMA



# Where Do CPAs Work?

As a CPA, you will be able to pursue opportunities across a wide range of career paths.

## Public Practice

You can work in public accounting for a wide variety and size of firms, locally and globally, providing audit, assurance, financial planning, tax and business advisory services to clients. You can also work with clients to plan mergers and acquisitions and develop business plans.

## Industry

You can work in the corporate world—private and public companies—developing strategies and evaluating a company’s financial and business policies, managing and directing departments, and contributing skills and expertise to the overall success of the business.

## Public Sector

CPAs can be found working at all levels of government or public sector. Your accounting expertise would help to guide financial planning and maintain fiscal control.

## Startup/Small Business

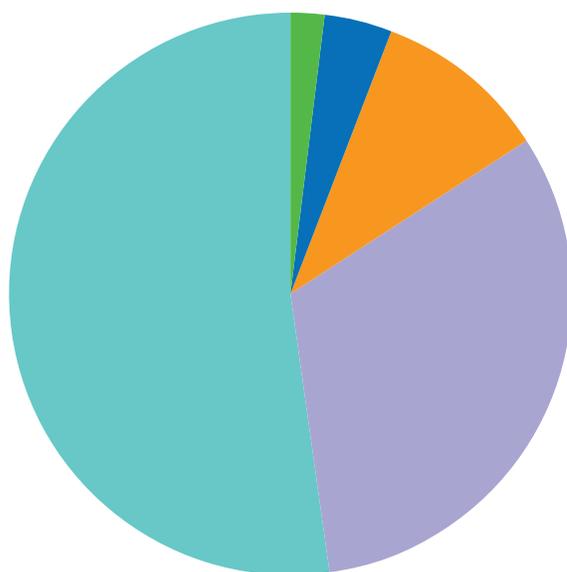
As a CPA with business insight and the technical know-how of what it takes to run a successful business, you can combine your own personal passions and become an entrepreneur who owns his or her own company and heads up successful business ventures.

## Education

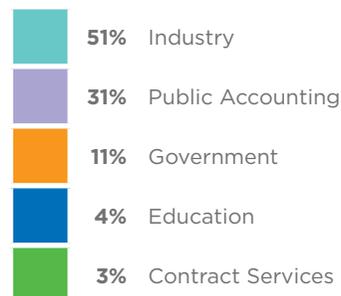
Working in education, you would teach future leaders about business, values and ethics. You might also try your hand at research on accounting practices or innovations in accounting education.

## Not-for-profit

You can find valuable and fulfilling career opportunities in the not-for-profit sector for causes that you believe in.



**Alberta CPAs by Employment Sector**



# How to Start Your Career in Business and Accounting



## Earn a Degree

The most direct route to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is to earn a degree with an accounting major, while at the same time obtaining the CPA academic prerequisites. Check with your undergraduate program advisor or CPA Alberta to find out what the prerequisites are at your post-secondary institution.

If you have completed a degree but have not yet obtained the necessary prerequisite courses, you can fulfill those prerequisites through CPA preparatory courses or through a recognized post-secondary institution. Visit the CPA Alberta website for a complete list of recognized institutions and course requirements.

### CPA Preparatory Courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. CPA preparatory courses are designed to be flexible and intensive courses for those who have a non-accounting undergraduate degree or diploma; or lack some or all of the entry courses for CPA PEP.

CPA preparatory courses are available in an accelerated format and delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require. If a student has taken any accounting or finance courses at a post-secondary institution, they may be eligible for course exemptions. Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

More information on cost, schedule and program details regarding CPA preparatory courses is available on the CPA Alberta website ([cpaalberta.ca](http://cpaalberta.ca)) by searching 'preparatory courses.'



## Complete the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP)

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a two-year graduate-level program delivered on a part-time basis. Using a blended-learning model, CPA PEP combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning. CPA PEP provides the flexibility to customize training toward a specific industry or focus area.

CPA candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant, paid position that is progressively challenging. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

The education portion of the program culminates in the writing of the Common Final Examination (CFE). CPA Canada uses examinations to measure whether candidates have acquired the knowledge and developed the skills and competencies expected within the modules and courses. The CFE is a three-day exam that is written annually in September by all CPA candidates that have completed the education requirements.

CPA PEP intakes are offered three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) to provide candidates with the flexibility to choose their start date. For more information on the CPA PEP schedule and application deadlines, please visit [www.cpawsb.ca/cpa-pep/schedule](http://www.cpawsb.ca/cpa-pep/schedule).

### DID YOU KNOW?

If you are currently a university student completing your degree and prerequisites, you can apply for the CPA PEP. Your CPA candidate status will be conditional, pending receipt of your official transcripts.

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## Complete Your CPA Practical Experience Requirements

In addition to formal education and the Common Final Examination (CFE), the CPA certification program requires CPA PEP candidates to complete 30 months of relevant practical experience.

There are two routes to obtain this experience and future CPAs can gain experience through either route, or a combination of both:

### 1. Pre-approved Program Route

- CPA candidates will be employed in positions that are pre-approved by CPA Alberta.
- Employers offering these programs have had them approved by the profession in advance.
- The programs have been designed to provide future CPAs with all the required experience within 30 months.
- Pre-approved Program positions are available with a wide variety of employers in various sectors such as public practice, industry, and the public sector.

### 2. Experience Verification Route

- CPA candidates submit their experience for evaluation directly to the profession.
- This flexible route allows future CPAs to demonstrate competence and have relevant work experience recognized, as it is gained, with an employer that is not pre-approved.
- This route provides candidates with a diversity of potential employers.

### Both routes are based on the same principles:

- Opportunities for advancement and progression;
- Developing the required technical, ethical, and professional CPA competencies;
- Appropriate supervision and mentorship; and
- The approval of candidates' practical experience by the profession.

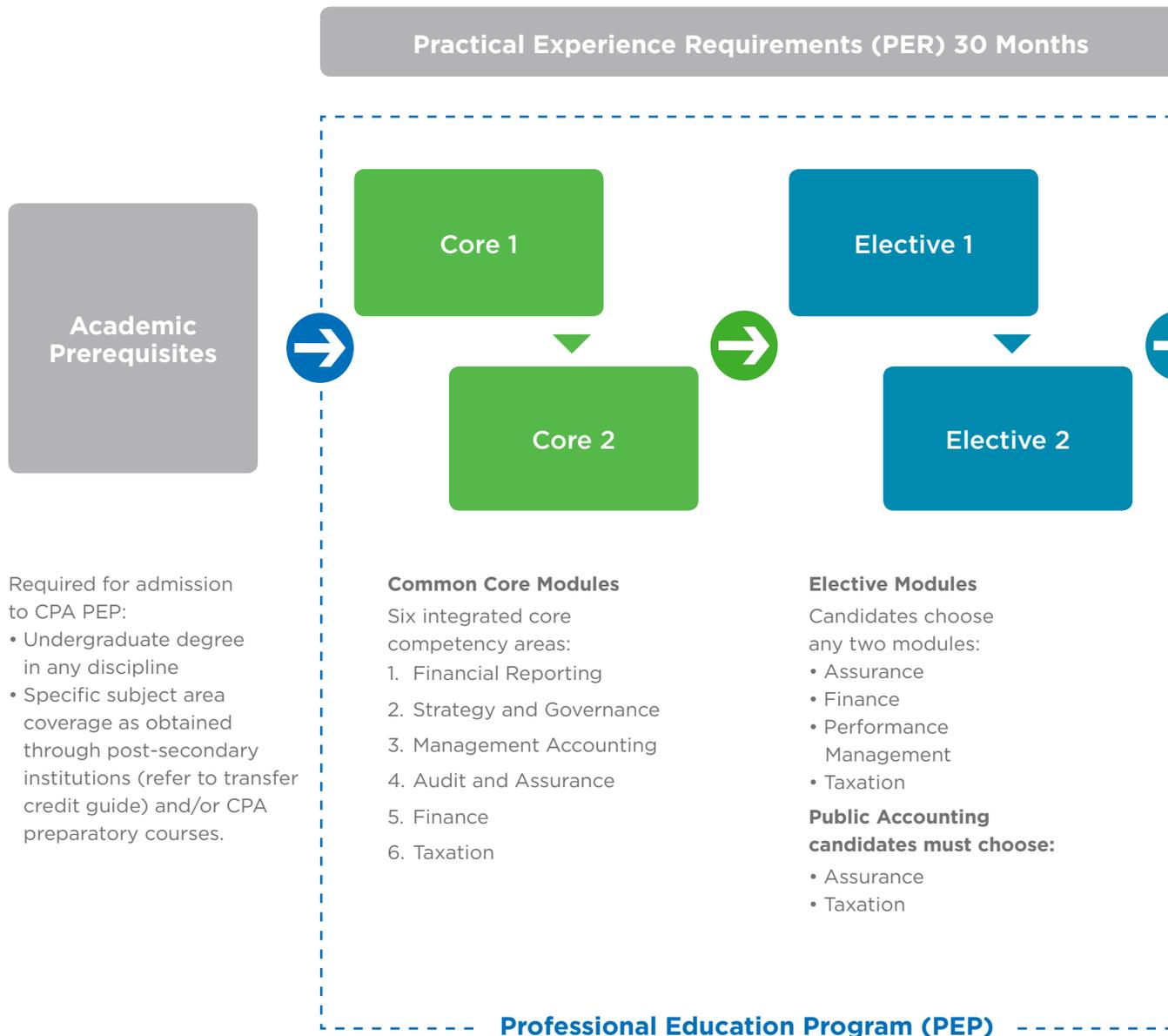
### There are five common requirements that support both routes:

1. Gain experience
2. Appropriate supervision
3. Reporting and self-assessment
4. Discussion with a mentor
5. Assessment by the profession

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Candidates may be able to claim up to 12 months of prior relevant practice experience.

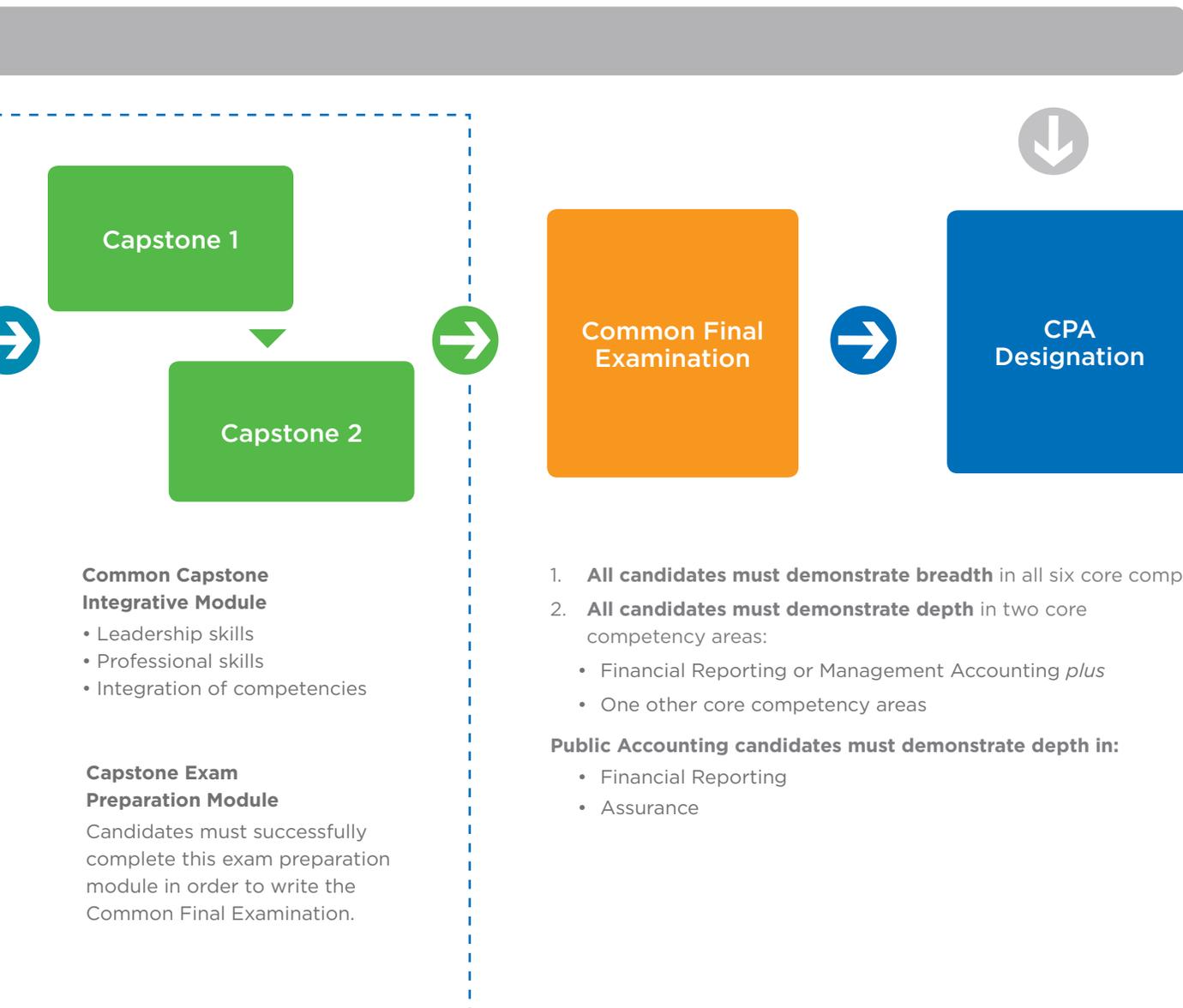
# The Professional Education Program in Detail



*"A CPA is not just about accounting, it encompasses a variety of skills—such as ethics, your business sense, your knowledge, your logic, etc. So, having a CPA not only demonstrates that you have the technical accounting knowledge, it demonstrates that you are a business-savvy person and have that business mind-set that you can apply in different situations."*

**Betty Bai Xin CPA**

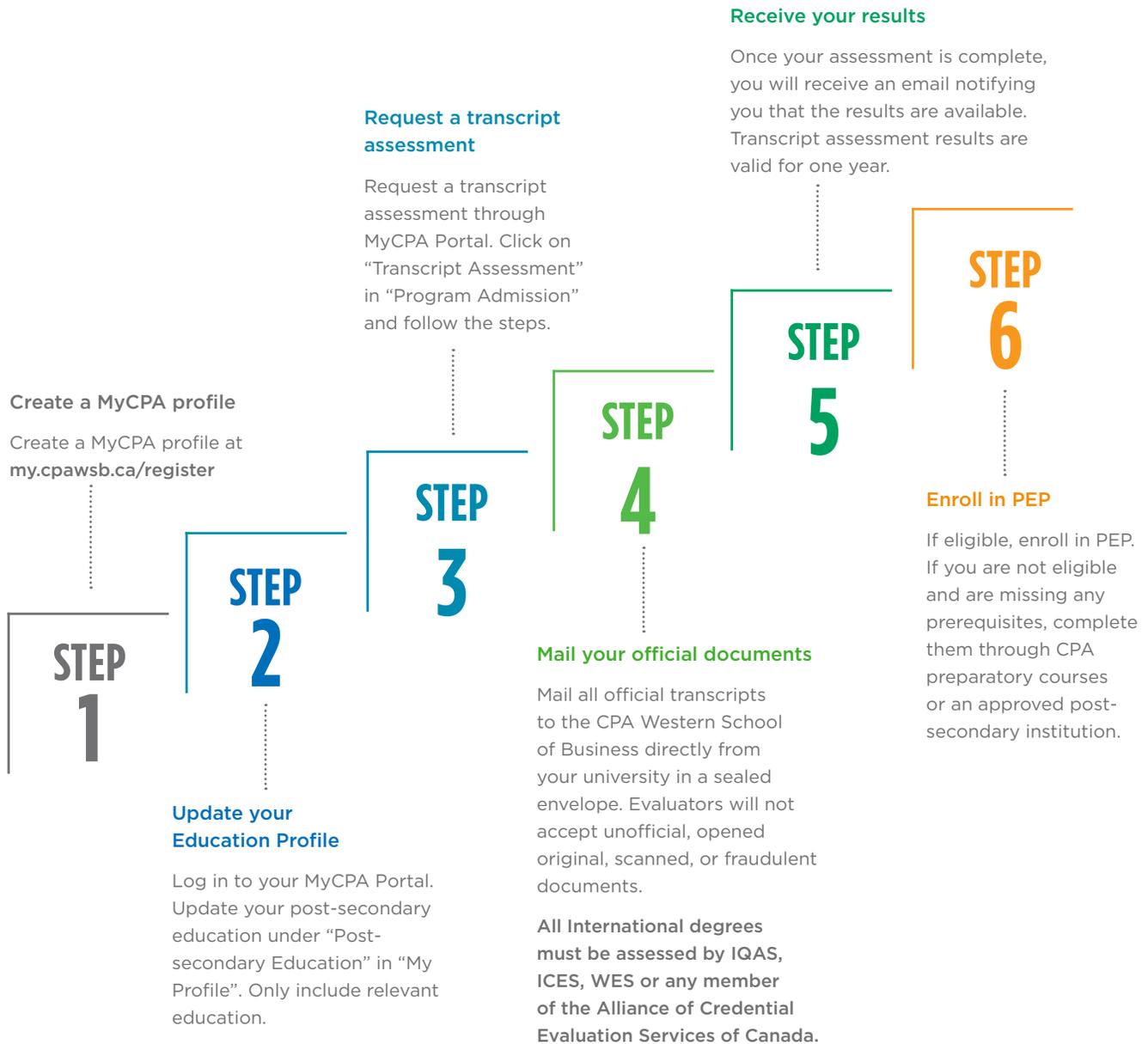




*“If accounting is an interest, obtaining the CPA designation is a must. Most employers require this if they are looking for a professional accountant. If you don’t have a CPA designation, your accounting career can be limited. For the three-year investment, the rewards last a lifetime.”*

**Patrick Sanders** CPA, CA, CGA

# Steps to Getting Started



## DID YOU KNOW?

One of the many benefits of creating a CPA profile is invitations to exclusive events and networking opportunities hosted by the profession.

*“The role of a professional accountant has grown bigger over the past few decades; CPAs are ‘business partners’ who provide a financial perspective on innovation, and who see beyond the numbers to increase efficiencies, identify opportunities to add value, and participate in evaluating strategies.”*

**Priya D’Souza** CPA, CA



# Two Organizations with One Goal in Mind

## Helping you succeed in your future endeavors as a CPA

As someone pursuing the CPA designation, you'll likely hear two organizations' names mentioned quite often: CPA Alberta and the CPA Western School of Business. But what are the differences between these two organizations? How are they both important to your career?

### CPA Alberta

The Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta is the only regulated professional accounting body in the province of Alberta.

As part of the CPA profession in Canada (with over 200,000 members), CPA Alberta is the professional organization for more than 28,000 designated accountants across the province. CPA Alberta operates under the provincial *Chartered Professional Accountants Act*, and is mandated to: protect the public; protect the integrity of the accounting profession regulated under the Act; promote and increase the competence of registrants; and regulate the conduct of registrants.

CPA Alberta is the body that assesses and approves your CPA practical experience training requirements.

CPA Alberta hosts conferences, workshops, and chapter events to support the professional development and networking of our members. Along with our member services, CPA Alberta is also responsible for promoting the accounting career path to prospective CPAs, and informing them about the steps for getting designated.

### CPA Western School of Business

Once you've decided that you want to become a CPA, CPA Alberta will connect you with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB supports and educates CPA candidates enrolled in the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. Once you register to become a candidate, you'll start receiving the education you need to write the Common Final Examination (CFE).

When pursuing the CPA designation, candidates may choose to either complete the profession-delivered CPA PEP or they may choose to go through an accredited program delivered by a post-secondary institution.



### DID YOU KNOW?

CPA Alberta hosts many networking and recruitment events to help connect you with employers and CPAs?

For more information visit [cpaalberta.ca](http://cpaalberta.ca)

### DID YOU KNOW?

In Western Canada, two programs are accredited: the Master of Professional Accounting program at the University of Saskatchewan and the Master of Accounting program at the University of Alberta. Please check their respective websites for more information.

# Before applying to become a CPA, you should:

- **Attend an online or in-person information session**

These free one-hour online or in-person information sessions cover all aspects of the CPA programs in detail, including prerequisites, examinations, work experience, and other requirements. Attendees will also be given the opportunity to have their questions answered by a knowledgeable CPA program representative.

- **Create your My CPA Profile**

Creating your profile is free and gets you started on your journey to becoming a CPA holder. Simply fill out the form at [my.cpawsb.ca](http://my.cpawsb.ca).

## Contact us

For information about the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) program, please contact CPA Alberta at:

**Toll-free** 1.844.454.1245

**E** [gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca)

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP, and for admission support, please contact the CPA Western School of Business at:

**Toll-free** 1.855.306.9390

**E** [admissionadvising@cpawsb.ca](mailto:admissionadvising@cpawsb.ca)

## Stay Informed

Visit [cpaalberta.ca](http://cpaalberta.ca) for the latest news and details on the CPA programs in Alberta.



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**CPA**

CHARTERED  
PROFESSIONAL  
ACCOUNTANTS  
ALBERTA