



CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony – Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the profession! This document will provide answers to some questions you may have about the upcoming CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony. Note that the CPA Alberta Convocation event consists of two distinct parts: the Convocation Ceremony, where graduates are formally welcomed to the profession, and the Dinner & Dance, a chance to celebrate your success on the CFE with friends, colleagues and family. Reading the below FAQs will ensure you have the best possible experience at your convocation!

- 1) When will the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony for successful 2018 CFE writers be held?

Those individuals who successfully completed the CFE in 2018 will be honoured at the CPA Alberta Convocations in February, 2019, making them CPA Alberta's Graduating Class of 2019.

Convocation ceremonies will be held on February 1 & 2 in Calgary and February 22 & 23 in Edmonton.

In the case of a large number of graduates in a city, there might be two convocation ceremonies on the same day, and more than one day may be required to welcome all of the graduates to the profession. Graduates will be assigned a specific ceremony *after* the registration deadline.

Graduates should check their email approximately one week prior to the event to find out which ceremony they've been assigned to along with the time details. NOTE: Ceremonies held on Fridays are during the day and later afternoon and may require graduates, sponsors and guests to take time away from work or other commitments to attend.

2) Is there a cost to attend the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony?

The Convocation Ceremonies are complimentary for all graduates and their guests. All costs (venue rentals, staging, audio-visual) are covered by CPA Alberta.

Note: although the event is free, there is a charge for parking at the venues. Please visit this [page](#) for Calgary, and this [page](#) for Edmonton if you want more information on parking costs. Also, if you wish to check your coat, there will be a cost of between \$2-4 (cash only).

3) If the event is free for everyone, do you still have to register?

Yes, you do still need to register for the Convocation Ceremony, so CPA Alberta can properly present you to the profession at this event and also plan appropriately for the expected number of guests. Please register before the deadline and indicate whether you're attending and the number of guests you're bringing.

4) When will I find out what ceremony I have been assigned to attend?

Graduates should check their email approximately one week prior to the event to find out which ceremony they've been assigned to along with the time details. Graduates should share this information with their Graduate Sponsor.

5) What is a Graduate Sponsor?

The Graduate Sponsor is the person who will escort you across the convocation stage and present you to the profession. Your sponsor must be a CPA (or legacy CGA, CMA, or CA). They should be someone who has been a mentor, leader, or supporter for you, and who has encouraged, inspired, or helped you throughout your CPA education. The sponsor can be a family member, a professional colleague, a friend or partner, a mentor, or any CPA who has helped you reach this point in your career.

Your sponsor will not need to speak or perform any other duty than accompany you onstage and stand onstage with you while your citation is being read. Following the reading of your citation, you and your sponsor will shake hands with the platform party.

Sponsors may also assist graduates in writing their citations. To ensure a graduate knows what will be read as his/her introduction, we encourage a sponsor and graduate to write the citation together.

A sponsor may sponsor more than one graduate. If this is the case, the sponsor will need to inform the on-site staff in the graduate and sponsor-only area before the ceremony starts.

6) What will happen at the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony? What is the program?

The program for the event is outlined below.

- Graduates and Sponsor Check-in
- General guest arrival
- Doors open for general seating
- Ceremony commences with the processional (graduate and sponsor march)
- Formal program with introductions of the graduates
- Ceremony ends with the recessional (graduates and sponsor march)

Note that the formal ceremony will last approximately **2 ½ hours**, with no formal intermissions.

7) Where can attendees park?

Parking is available at TELUS Convention Centre [Parkade](#) in Calgary, ranging in cost from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per half-hour (depending on the day and time). For more details, visit this [page](#).

In Edmonton, parking is available on the street, select lots, and at the Canada Place Underground Parkade. For more details, please visit this [page](#).

8) What should graduates, sponsors, and other attendees wear?

The dress code for the ceremonies is business formal. A cap and gown is not provided nor required for the ceremony.

Graduates will be in the spotlight and on their feet for extended periods of time. We recommend graduates wear **professional yet comfortable shoes**, as there will be long periods of standing to wait for service, walking for the processional and recessional march, and ascending and descending stage stairs.

9) What are the seating arrangements for graduates, sponsors, and other guests?

Graduates and their sponsors have designated seating in the front of the room. Other guests will sit in the designated open seating areas. If a group wishes to sit together, they should arrive together to secure their own seats.

10) Can a graduate sit with family or friends?

No. Graduates will be sitting in a designated seating area away from their guests. The formal program requires graduates and their sponsors to move to and from the stage, and all graduates need to be seated where they can be prompted when the time comes to go backstage.

11) How long is the ceremony?

While the Convocation Ceremony itself will take approximately 2.5 hours, graduates and sponsors will need to arrive earlier than the stated start time of the Convocation Ceremony; their participation will take approximately 3-4 hours.

Depending upon the time of the graduate's assigned ceremony, he or she will be expected to arrive **1 ½ to 2 hours prior to the scheduled start time**, to allow time for registration, ceremony instructions, and assembly for the processional.

The ceremony itself will take approximately 2.5 hours. We ask that guests of graduates come on time and stay for the whole ceremony in order to be respectful of all graduates and their guests. Guests coming in and out of the ceremony can be disruptive and distracting for the people on stage and other guests in attendance.

Graduating classes can be very large, so CPA Alberta greatly appreciates your patience and understanding throughout the ceremony.

12) Why does a graduate need a Graduate Sponsor?

The Graduate Sponsor serves as a representative of the collective CPA profession. They represent the values of the profession that graduates are joining and are an embodiment of the expertise, integrity, and ethical standards the profession is known for.

13) What if a graduate can't find a sponsor?

We encourage graduates to seek out their own sponsors—a CPA mentor, leader, or supporter who has encouraged, inspired, or helped the graduate throughout the education program. However, if a graduate is unable to find a sponsor, please indicate as instructed during the registration process. CPA Alberta will then arrange a sponsor for you. You will meet your sponsor just prior to your assigned ceremony.

14) What is a citation for the convocation ceremony?

Your citation is a very short description about you that will be read aloud by a professional announcer while you and your sponsor are onstage at the Convocation Ceremony. A citation provides insight into the graduate, reflects their achievements, and provides thanks to those who have supported them.

Keep in mind:

- Your citation should be a maximum of 150 words in length. All citations will be edited by CPA Alberta staff for length, clarity, appropriateness, and grammatical errors.
- Your citation should be written in a respectful, tasteful, and positive tone. Remember, the Convocation Ceremony is attended by people of all ages, so inappropriate content or language will be removed by CPA Alberta staff.
- Use the “third person” voice to refer to yourself in your citation. For example, someone named Robin would write: “Robin thanks all of her colleagues at ZYZ Industries for the support they gave her while preparing for the CFE.” Don’t write: “I thank all of my colleagues at ZYZ Industries for the support they gave me while preparing for the CFE.”
- You might wish to discuss the content of your citation with your sponsor or a colleague, family member, or friend in order to get ideas for what to include.

Sample citations

Jack Mills

Jack is with Smith, Turner and Co. in Calgary, and is presented by Tom Lawrie. Today is a special day for Jack, but it’s an even luckier milestone for Porsche and BMW. As a CPA, Jack intends to pay good money to local premium car dealerships. As a student, Jack has owned seven sports cars (as opposed to the two beaters Tom has driven, even though he has had his designation for five years). Fortunately, Jack backs up his good taste in cars with a great work ethic, which Tom believes will make him a premium CPA. Jack would like to thank his mom, dad, sister Sheena, and brother Jason, as well as his friends for their support.

Sam Ruddy

It was a magical moment for Sam when he walked into the PWC office after passing the CFE. That came just a few short months after another amazing moment: the birth of his first baby in July. Sam is being accompanied by his coach at PWC, Lisa Shepard, who he would like to thank for her support. He would also like to thank his wife Gilda, sister Adele, and all of his colleagues at PWC.

Jenny Chu

Jenny works at Atco and is being presented by Michelle Dang. She has always been inspired by Albert Einstein, who was a slow learner, and consequently was expelled from school. Today, we know him as the father of modern physics. Thanks to that inspirational story, Jenny is standing here today to accept this accolade. Jenny would like to thank her parents for all their sacrifices; friends and coworkers for their constant words of encouragement; fiancé for being her backbone; and mostly her brothers for accompanying her on every step along this journey. Albert Einstein once said, "Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value." Jenny hopes to accept every accomplishment with a sense of humility, modesty, and gratitude.

15) Does a citation need to be submitted?

All graduates wishing to attend the CPA Alberta ceremony must submit a citation.

16) What is expected of the graduates and sponsors at the ceremony?

a) Before the ceremony, graduates and sponsors should:

- Eat before arriving
- Bring minimal personal items (everything should be able to fit into a pocket), and wear professional yet comfortable shoes
- Bring money for parking or **coat check (cash only)**

The graduate and their sponsor will be a part of the ceremony program. We recommend family, friends, and guests travel to the venue separately from graduates and sponsors as those guests will be required to wait (**approx. one hour or more**) in the foyer before the doors open to the hall if they arrive at the same time as the graduate.

Graduates and sponsors should wear comfortable shoes and carry minimal personal items (e.g., instead of a purse, wear a suit jacket with pockets to carry essential cards, or ask family to bring your personal items later). We also strongly recommend that graduates and sponsors have something to eat prior to arriving. The registration process, followed by the ceremony, will require graduates and sponsors to both be at the venue for approximately **three to four hours, depending on the registration numbers.**

b) We recommend sponsors and graduates arrive 1.5 hours prior to the start of the ceremony and once they arrive at the venue, they should:

- Go to the bathroom, check coats, and leave any personal items with family prior to registering (please note: coat check at the TELUS Convention Centre will only take your coats—no purses)
- Go through the registration process (graduates) and proceed to the "Graduate and Sponsor-only area" for more information (sponsors)

The Graduate and Sponsor-only area is reserved exclusively for sponsors and graduates. Once sponsors arrive to the area, there will be marshalls to assist and receive them. **Any sponsor representing more than one graduate should alert the marshalls.**

Graduates will be expected to check-in at registration to receive their Backstage Pass, which gives the graduate and a sponsor backstage access. **Graduates are to wear their passes immediately to gain backstage access with their sponsors. They MUST wear these passes at all times while backstage.** Graduates will see the name of their assigned announcer on their Backstage Pass. Graduates should go to their assigned announcer for citation review; the announcer **will only go through and clarify key points and pronunciations in the graduate's citation.**

Afterwards, graduates will proceed to the Graduate and Sponsor-only area to receive further direction for the ceremony. Marshalls will be there to direct graduates and provide further instruction. The wait time in this area will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes depending on the size of the group. There will be complimentary coffee, tea, and water available.

Bathroom breaks during this time must be prompt. The processional march of the graduates and sponsors will commence **promptly at the time specified, and all graduates must be in their place at this time.** Marshalls will provide direction to the graduates and sponsors throughout the march on where to go and where to sit. All seating has been designated in advance. Graduates and sponsors will be guided to the back of the stage, and directed by staff behind stage when the time comes.

c) During the ceremony:

- Graduates must wear their Backstage Pass for backstage access
- Graduates and sponsors should listen and follow directions from CPA Alberta staff during the processional, crossing of the stage, and the recessional

When graduates are brought backstage, **they must present their Backstage Pass, which ensures the proper citation is read by the professional speaker.** Graduates will receive a cue to go to the marked areas on the stage. At this time, a graduate's citation will be read aloud. After the citation is read the graduate will then turn towards the sponsor, shake their hand, and then shake the hands of the other dignitaries on stage. The sponsor will do the same before the graduate and sponsor both exit the stage. Staff will be waiting to direct them back to their seats.

The ceremony will come to an end when the recessional begins. At this time, each row with graduates and sponsors will be prompted by a marshall to stand up and leave in an orderly fashion. **To ensure a smooth and streamlined recessional out of the room, graduates and their sponsors must wait for the prompt before moving.**

d) After the ceremony:

Graduates can take pictures with family and friends. There will be media walls available for selfies and group photos. Please be mindful of other graduates and their families waiting for their turn to take photos. Kindly move along once you are done.

In order to allow CPA Alberta to prepare for the next ceremony, guests are asked to promptly exit to the foyer area after the ceremony. No pictures are allowed inside the ceremony room or on the stage once the ceremony is complete.

17) Must I have completed my practical experience hours in order to attend the Convocation Ceremony and Dinner & Dance events?

No. To be part of the Convocation Ceremony and Dinner & Dance (that is, to be a graduate), you must be a successful writer of the Common Final Exam (CFE) written in September 2018. Completion of practical experience hours is not required to attend these events; however, these hours are required to apply for your membership and, once admitted, be granted the right to use the CPA designation.