

CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Must I have completed my practical experience hours to attend the Convocation Ceremony?
2. When will the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony be held?
3. What will happen at the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony? What is the agenda?
4. Is there a cost to attend the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony?
5. If the event is free for everyone, do you still have to register?
6. When will I find out what ceremony I have been assigned to attend?
7. What if I cannot attend the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony?
8. Will the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony be live-streamed?
9. What is a Graduate Sponsor?
10. Why does a graduate need a Graduate Sponsor?
11. Where can attendees park?
12. What should graduates, sponsors, and other attendees wear?
13. What are the seating arrangements for graduates, sponsors, and other guests?
14. Can a graduate sit with family or friends?
15. How long is the ceremony?
16. Can my sponsor be a member of the profession from out of the province or out of the country?
17. What if a graduate needs help finding a sponsor?
18. What is a Convocation Ceremony graduate citation?
19. Does a citation need to be submitted?
20. What is expected of the graduates and sponsors at the ceremony?
21. Can I bring my family on stage with me?

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

1. Must I have completed my practical experience hours to attend the Convocation Ceremony?

To be part of the Convocation Ceremony and Dinner & Dance (that is, to be a graduate), you must be a successful writer of one of the Common Final Exams (CFE) written in 2023. You are not required to complete practical experience hours 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.

2. When will the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony be held?

Those individuals who successfully completed the CFE in 2023 will be honoured at the CPA Alberta Convocations planned around January 19 in Edmonton and January 26-27 in Calgary.

Note that there are a number of ceremonies held in each city to accommodate the number of graduates and provide a more personal introduction for each graduate. Graduates will be assigned a specific ceremony *after* the registration deadline. **Graduates should check their email approximately one week before the event to find out their assigned ceremony—the time and date of the ceremony itself—and other time details.** NOTE: Ceremonies may be held on Friday during the day and evening and may require graduates, sponsors, and guests to take time away from work or other commitments to attend.

3. What will happen at the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony? What is the agenda?

Event agenda:

- a) Graduates and sponsor check in and find their seats in designated area
- b) General seating for other guests opens
- c) Ceremony commences
- d) Formal program with introductions of the graduates
- e) Ceremony ends

The formal ceremony will last approximately **2 hours**, with no formal intermissions.

4. Is there a cost to attend the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony?

The Convocation Ceremonies are complimentary for all graduates and their guests. CPA Alberta covers all costs (venue rentals, staging, audio-visual). *Note: although the event is free, there is a charge to park at the venues. Please visit the venues' sites for more information on parking costs.*

5. If the event is free for everyone, do you still have to register?

Yes, graduates must complete a graduate registration form to be presented at the Convocation Ceremony so CPA Alberta can properly introduce you to the profession at this event. Please complete the form before the deadline and indicate whether you are attending and the number of expected guests you intend to bring. You will not require an entry ticket after completing the form.

6. When will I find out what ceremony I have been assigned to attend?

Graduates should check their email approximately one week before the event to find out their assigned ceremony—the time and date of the ceremony itself—and other time details. Graduates should share this information with their Graduate Sponsor.

7. What if I cannot attend the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony?

The CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony is a celebratory event that is optional attendance. We do not provide official documents or certificates at the event; these will be handled separately as part of the membership application.

8. Will the CPA Alberta Convocation Ceremony be live-streamed?

Yes, the ceremonies will be live-streamed and available for viewing on the event day. Access will be available on the CPA Alberta website.

9. 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 Graduate Sponsor must be a member in good standing of the profession and is ideally an Alberta CPA. They should be someone who has been a mentor, leader, or supporter for you and 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 anyone who has helped you reach this point in your career.

Sponsors may also assist graduates in writing their graduate citations. We encourage a sponsor and graduate to write the citation together to ensure a graduate is aware in advance of the content of their introduction,

Your sponsor will not need to speak or perform any other duty than accompany you onstage and stand with you while your citation is being read. Following the reading of your citation, you and your sponsor will head off-stage.

A sponsor may act for more than one graduate. If this is the case, the sponsor will need to inform the on-site staff of this in the "graduate and sponsor seating area" before the start of the ceremony.

10. Why does a graduate need a Graduate Sponsor?

The Graduate Sponsor represents the collective CPA profession. They represent the values of the profession that embody the expertise, integrity, and ethical standards the profession is known for.

11. Where can attendees park?

Parking is available at TELUS Convention Centre Parkade in Calgary. Parking in Edmonton is available at Canada Place, which is close to the Edmonton Convention Centre. For more parking information, please visit the respective websites.

12. What should graduates, sponsors, and other attendees wear?

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

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

13. What are the seating arrangements for graduates, sponsors, and other guests?

Graduates and their Graduate Sponsor have designated seats. Other guests will sit in the designated open seating areas. If a group wishes to sit together, they should arrive together to secure their seats.

14. Can a graduate sit with family or friends?

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.

15. How long is the ceremony?

While the Convocation Ceremony will take approximately 1.5 hours, graduates and sponsors must arrive earlier than the stated start time of the Convocation Ceremony; their participation will take approximately 2 hours.

Depending upon the time of the graduate's assigned ceremony, they will be expected to arrive **one hour before the scheduled start time**, allowing time for registration, ceremony instructions, and assembly for the processional.

The ceremony itself will take approximately 1.5 hours. We ask that graduate guests come on time and stay for the whole ceremony to respect 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.

16. Can my sponsor be a member of the profession from out of the province or out of the country?

An ideal sponsor would be an Alberta CPA member. They represent the profession's values that graduates are joining and embody the expertise, integrity, and ethical standards the profession is known for.

For those graduates who want to have a sponsor who is a member of the profession from another jurisdiction, we will require an official letter or correspondence from that individual's regulatory body to confirm their membership. This information must be emailed to events@cpaalberta.ca before the registration deadline of December 15, 2023. Otherwise, we reserve the right to assign an Alberta CPA to stand with the graduate and act as a Graduate Sponsor at the ceremony.

17. What if a graduate needs help finding a sponsor?

We encourage graduates to seek out their own sponsors by asking a colleague, mentor, supervisor, leader, or supporter who has encouraged, inspired or helped the graduate throughout the education program. However, if a graduate is still looking for a sponsor, please complete the form according to the instructions provided during the registration process. CPA Alberta will then arrange a sponsor for you. You will meet your sponsor onsite at the event just before your assigned ceremony.

18. What is a Convocation Ceremony graduate citation?

Your citation is a brief 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 thanks those who have supported them. **No changes other than your employer or sponsor can be made after the deadline or submission, so you will also want to keep the following in mind:**

- A) 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 grammar.
- B) Write your citation in a respectful, tasteful, and positive tone. Remember, people of all ages attend the Convocation Ceremony, so inappropriate content or language will be removed by CPA Alberta staff.
- C) 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." **Do not use the first person; for example:** "I thank all of my colleagues at ZYZ Industries for the support they gave me while preparing for the CFE."
- D) Consider discussing your citation with your Graduate Sponsor or, colleague, family member, or friend 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 an even luckier milestone for Porsche and BMW. As a CPA, Jack intends to pay a local premium car dealership good money. 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 excellent taste in cars with a great work ethic, which Tom believes will make him a premium CPA. Jack would like to thank his family and 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 incredible moment: the birth of his first baby in July. Sam is being accompanied by his coach at PWC, Lisa Shepard, whom he would like to thank for her support. He also thanked his wife, sister, and all 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 encouragement, her 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.

19. Does a citation need to be submitted?

All graduates wishing to attend the CPA Alberta ceremony must submit a citation by the December 15, 2023 registration deadline.

20. What is expected of the graduates and sponsors at the ceremony?

Before the ceremony, graduates and sponsors should:

- Bring minimal personal items (everything should be able to fit into a pocket) as you will be on stage.
- Wear professional yet comfortable shoes.
- Ensure they have a means for payment for parking, if necessary.
- Graduates and sponsors should wear comfortable shoes and carry minimal personal items. They will be a part of the ceremony program, so they will be seated in a separate area from guests who can keep an eye on personal items while graduates are behind and on stage.

Before the ceremony:

We recommend sponsors and graduates arrive an hour before the start of the ceremony. Early arrival will allow time for the graduate and their sponsor to check in at the registration table and then find the designated seats at the "graduate and sponsor seating area" in the room.

Graduates will be expected to check in at registration to receive a name tag, which gives the graduate and their sponsor backstage access and ensures the correct citation is being read at the right time.

Graduates must always wear their name tag. It is an identifier that will ensure the proper citation is read while the graduate is onstage. Note that you will not need to wear the name tag on stage; it will be taken from you backstage just before ascending to the stage.

The Graduate and Sponsor-only area is reserved exclusively for sponsors and graduates. Upon arrival, there will be staff to ensure all graduates and sponsors are seated in the correct order. **Any sponsor representing more than one graduate should alert the staff, who will then provide instructions on how to proceed and where to sit.**

Graduates and sponsors will be guided to the back of the stage and directed by staff behind the stage when the graduate is presented.

During the ceremony:

When graduates are brought backstage quietly, **they must wear their name tag, ensuring the proper citation is read by the professional speaker.** Conversations should be kept to a minimum backstage. Graduates will receive a cue when it is their turn to be presented. They will proceed to a marked area on the stage. Then, a graduate's citation will be read aloud. After the citation is read, the graduate will turn towards their Graduate Sponsor, shake their hand, and then exit the stage. Afterwards, they will return to their seats for the rest of the ceremony.

After the ceremony:

Graduates can take pictures with family and friends. There will be a few CPA backgrounds available for selfies and group photos. If using the background, please be mindful of other graduates and their families waiting for their turn to take photos, and kindly move along promptly once you are finished your photos.

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

21. Can I bring my family on stage with me?

No family will be permitted on the stage (except, of course, for a family member who is a member of the profession and Graduate Sponsor). This formal event is meant to spotlight your tremendous achievement only. The only other individual on stage with you is your Graduate Sponsor. They represent the profession's values that graduates are joining and embody the expertise, integrity, and ethical standards the profession is known for.