

University of Nebraska at Omaha
Department of Accounting

Steps to Receiving and Maintaining a CPA License in Nebraska

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) is a licensed professional who is deemed to have expertise in various areas of accounting. These individuals are held to high standards legally, professionally and ethically. To be a successful accountant, you do not have to have a CPA license; however, the license does open the door for more opportunities and advancement in an accounting career locally, domestically and internationally.

CPA licenses are granted by the states. The Nebraska Board of Public Accountants issues CPA licenses to those that want to practice public accounting in Nebraska. To receive a license in Nebraska, an individual must pass a four-part exam and meet experience requirements. This process takes years. Every state has different requirements but there are reciprocity opportunities to transfer licenses and/or gain licenses in other states once a CPA license has already been granted by another state.

Follow these 6 Steps:

1. Pass the Uniform CPA Exam
2. Pass the Professional Ethics: AICPA's Comprehensive Course
3. Apply for certification
4. Meet experience requirement
5. Submit Permit to Practice application
6. Complete continuing professional education requirements

STEP #1: PASS THE UNIFORM CPA EXAM

- Before anyone can pass the four-part Uniform CPA Exam, they must be eligible to sit for the CPA exam. To sit for the exam in Nebraska, education requirements must be met. Candidates must have 150 semester credit hours from an accredited college or university and have received a baccalaureate degree or higher. The 150 hours of semester credit must be made up of accounting, business, and general education courses. Please see "Guidelines for sitting for CPA Exam" for the required courses as they apply specifically to UNO classes.
- Once the education requirement is completed candidates can then apply to sit for the exam. Candidates must apply to take the exam with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) online at <https://cpacentral.nasba.org>. Once an account is set up with NASBA, candidates have the option to complete a NASBA Advisory Evaluation before submitting

the actual CPA Exam application. This Evaluation includes a fee but may reduce the candidate’s uncertainty about any deficiencies in required courses or other requirements.

- Once the NASBA Advisory Evaluation indicates that the candidate is eligible to sit for the exam, the actual CPA Exam application should be submitted with NASBA online at <https://cpacentral.nasba.org>. The application will require a fee for each exam being applied for as well as an overall application fee. Please note, the candidate can choose which parts of the exam they want to take with this application. They can apply to take only one part, two parts, or they can apply to take all four parts. **When applying for the exam, candidates should only apply and pay for the exams they are planning to complete within the next six months.** The most cost effective approach is to apply for all four exams at once and pass all four exams within the six months allowed. The fees are different for each exam and it’s important to be prepared for the expense. The cost of applying for one exam to all four exams could be anywhere between \$500 - \$1,500. These fees are nonrefundable.

- When the exam application is approved, the candidate will receive the “Notice to Schedule”. This form indicates which exams the candidate has applied to take and is now eligible to schedule with a Prometric testing center. The Notice to Schedule will expire after six months. Therefore, if someone is not able to take the exams they have applied for within that six month period of time, they will have to re-apply to take those exams at a later date. That application is the same as above including the payment of the application fee and exam fees.

- Once the Notice to Schedule is received, it’s advised that the candidate schedule their exam dates as soon as possible with Prometric. Exam dates and times fill up quickly, so the sooner this is done the more flexibility the candidate has at choosing a date and time that fits in their schedule.
 - There are certain months out of the year when exams cannot be scheduled. The testing windows below are when candidates can schedule to take their exams.

		OFF			OFF			OFF			OFF
January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Testing Window			Testing Window			Testing Window			Testing Window		

- Candidates can only take the CPA Exam at a Prometric testing center. To schedule exams and to find a testing center candidates can go to: <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/Pages/home.aspx>. Candidates can take the test at any testing center listed. In Nebraska, there is a testing center in Omaha, Lincoln, and Kearney.

- After the exam is completed, the score will be calculated and sent to the Nebraska Board of Accountancy within a certain period of time. Candidates will also have the capability to view their exam scores online when they become available. A score of 75 or above must be received in order to pass.

- An individual has 18 months to pass all four parts of the CPA exam. If someone does not pass all four exams within that time frame, then any previously passed exam scores will be erased and the candidate will have to start the process all over again.
- Please download and read through the “NASBA Candidate Bulletin” found at: <https://cpacentral.nasba.org/>. This document is updated frequently and provides valuable information on the content of the different exams as well as steps to get through the CPA Exam process.
- Other resources on CPA Exam:
 - Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy: <http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/index.html>
 - American Institute of CPAs (AICPA): www.aicpa.org
 - National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA): <http://nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/>

STEP #2: PASS THE “PROFESSIONAL ETHICS: THE AICPA’S COMPREHENSIVE COURSE”

- This ethics course is provided by the American Institute of CPAs and can be found at: http://www.cpa2biz.com/AST/Main/CPA2BIZ_Primary/Ethics/PRDOVR~PC-732302/PC-732302.jsp
- This course covers the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct.
- The cost is approximately \$150-\$200.

STEP #3: APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION WITH THE NEBRASKA BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY

- Download and submit the “Application for Certificate Issuance” form from the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy: http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/pdf/issuance_certificate.pdf

STEP #4: MEET EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

- Nebraska has two options to fulfill the experience requirement for CPA licensure.
- Option #1: Public experience: the candidate must have at least 4,000 hours of public accounting experience obtained in a period of not less than two years. The experience must be under direct supervision of a CPA who has an active permit to practice with a registered CPA firm.
 - Once the public experience requirement is met then download and complete the “Public Accounting Experience Form” from the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy at: http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/pdf/cpa_experience.pdf. This form must be signed by the supervising CPA and notarized. Multiple forms may be necessary.
- Option #2: Private/Governmental/Academia experience: the candidate must have at least three years’ experience under direct supervision of a CPA who has an active permit to practice.
 - Once the Private/Governmental/Academia experience requirement is met then download and complete the “Government, Business, and Academia Work Experience

Form” from the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy at:

<http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/pdf/BGA-FORM.pdf>. This form must be signed by the supervising CPA and notarized. Multiple forms may be necessary.

- Please note the experience does not have to be obtained under one CPA. Many candidates have the opportunity to work for different businesses while gaining experience. Hours obtained through an internship or other short-term employment opportunity would still qualify as long as the candidate was supervised by a CPA who has an active permit to practice.
 - Notice! It would not be possible to mix private accounting experience with public accounting experience.
- See the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy for other information on the experience requirement: <http://www.nbpa.ne.gov/index.html>

STEP #5: SUBMIT PERMIT TO PRACTICE APPLICATION

- The Permit to Practice application should have been mailed along with the “Certificate of Completion” after approval of the Application of Certificate from step #3.
- Be sure to attached all the experience forms from Step #4.

STEP #6: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Once the board approves your application for permit to practice you will receive your official “Permit to Practice” document that must be displayed in your workplace. **Congratulations! This is your CPA license.** This document will be valid for a two year period of time.
- When that license expires it will be renewed if the CPA has completed and reported to the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy the continuing professional education (CPE) requirements. In Nebraska, every active CPA must complete 80 hours of CPE every two years. Four hours of that 80 hour CPE requirement must cover ethics.