

Accountant (CPA)

The money behind every business. A degree, a national exam, and a designation that travels.

TYPICAL PAY

\$80,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$50k to \$150k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Accounting firms, corporations,
government, self-employed**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Math is essential. Business and accounting courses are a bonus.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Usually a business or commerce degree with accounting courses covering the CPA prerequisites. Any degree works if you add the prerequisite courses after.
- 3 CPA Professional Education Program (PEP)** About 2 years
 Part-time modules while you work full time. Six modules over about two years.
- 4 Common Final Examination (CFE)** 3 days
 A three-day national case exam. Pass rates have been about 67 to 74% in recent years.
- 5 30 months of practical experience** 30 months
 Overlaps with the PEP program. Must be in an approved role or pre-approved program.

Pros and cons

- + Every organization needs one, in every economy
- + Clear promotion ladder with predictable raises
- + Designation recognized across Canada and abroad
- Busy season means 60-hour weeks for months
- Detail-heavy, repetitive work early on
- The CFE (final exam) is a genuine hurdle

Good to know

The final exam (CFE) is three days long

Day one is a single four-hour case. Days two and three are more cases. It is offered in May and September.

Over 220,000 CPAs

CPA (Chartered Professional Accountant) Canada is one of the largest accounting bodies in the world. About a third of members work in industry rather than accounting firms.

Optional boosts

Tax specialization (CPA In-Depth Tax). CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst). Forensic accounting (the CFF credential). Data and analytics skills.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Financial auditors and accountants, wages (updated Nov 2025)

CPA Western School of Business: Program costs and fees

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/accountant>



Scan for the full clicker