Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

Overview

Certified public accountants are state licensed or certified. They analyze financial data and prepare reports for individuals or organizations in order to describe the financial soundness of business operations. These reports are used for management decision making.

Education Requirements

Public accounting firms and business organizations require CPA accountants to have a bachelor's degree in accounting and a familiarity with computer accounting programs. CPA's must be licensed in all states and requires that the applicant pass a two-day written examination.

People can enter this occupation with more than one type of credentials. The following are the most common:

Bachelor Degree
Masters Degree

Most Common Majors/Areas of Study:

Accounting
Accounting and Business/Management
Accounting and Computer Science
Accounting and Finance
Business Administration and Management

Duties

They design procedures and computer-based methods to capture business transaction data such as sales, purchases and accounts payable and receivable. They report the flow of money and assets.

They monitor and audit their clients' contracts to determine if contract terms have been satisfied before authorizing payments to suppliers and vendors.

They design and implement financial controls and checking methods to protect their clients against embezzlement, fraud, theft and waste.

They prepare balance sheets to reflect a business' assets, liabilities and capital for purposes of calculating taxes owed the government and for evaluating management's success.

Skills

Decision Making

Weighing out the options in a situation or a problem and logically choosing the best course of action.
Managing Money
Determining how much money is required to get a job done, allocating those monies, and then accounting for all expenditures.

Mathematics
Using mathematics and/or statistics to solve problems.

Reading Comprehension
The ability to understand complex written paragraphs, instructions, or reports.

Values
Income
Having a level of income that will afford you with luxuries, and which will allow you to become financially independent.

Independence
Being able to decide on how to get something done without significant direction from someone else.

Prestige
Gaining the respect of others by the nature and/or level of responsibility of your work.

Stability
Having a routine job where the duties are very predictable and not likely to change over a long period of time.

Outlook
Employment in this field is projected to grow 9% to 13% from 2014 to 2024, which is faster than the average projected growth for all occupations.

Earnings
People established in their career generally earn between $52,000 and $89,550 per year. Exceptional performers can earn in excess of $127,550.

Advancement
In accounting firms, beginning public accountants usually start by working on a few accounts. They may advance to jobs with more responsibility in one or two years. They may advance to senior positions in another few years. Some become supervisors, managers, and partners. Others open their own firms. Still other accountants may transfer to executive jobs in management accounting or internal auditing in private firms.

Interest Scores
The graph below displays the typical interests for someone who is working in this occupation. Their profile is displayed in coral. Your interest profile is displayed in green. If the pattern is similar, this may be a good match.

You
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

**Working Conditions**

**Accuracy** Accuracy or *Being Exact* in this job is considered to be very important.

**Authority to Make Decisions** A worker in this job has the authority to make decisions without consulting their supervisor.

**E-Mail** A fair amount of time will be spent in front of a computer composing and responding to E-Mail.

**Face to Face Communication** This job requires having frequent face to face discussions with other people.

**Sitting** A significant amount of time is spent sitting at a desk.

**Structured** The tasks to be performed by the worker are generally pre-determined. That is, this job is relatively structured.

**Telephone** A fair amount of time will be spent on the telephone.

**Working Inside** Most of the work day is spent indoors.

**Contacts**

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036
Website: [http://www.aicpa.org](http://www.aicpa.org)

American Accounting Association, 5717 Bessie Drive Sarasota, FL 34233
Website: [http://aaahq.org/index.cfm](http://aaahq.org/index.cfm)