



Globalized accounting profession and the U.S. certified public accountancy

Recep Pekdemir

University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA.

Email: rpekdemir@uwlax.edu

Abstract

Globalization has affected the accounting profession most throughout the world. In today's environment, many international accountants have recently become Chartered Accountants (CA) of the United Kingdom or Certified Public Accountants (CA) of the United States and Territories, even though they do not live in those countries. In addition, the number of international candidates has been increasing gradually, and they should know how to be licensed for one or both of those designations. In this context, the paper argues how anglophone accounting institutes and associations of English-speaking countries overwhelmingly have impacted the global accounting profession during the last two decades. In addition, it discusses the requirements for international candidates to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the United States. Consequently, the paper summarizes and documents the education requirements for international candidates who want to be licensed as a certified public accountant in the United States. National and global stakeholders, such as accounting students, accounting organizations, and regulators, may find this helpful information.

Keywords:

Accountancy
Certified public accountant
Chartered accountant
CPA
Globalization
Licensure.

JEL Classification:

M40; M41; M49.

Copyright:

© 2024 by the author. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Publisher:

Scientific Publishing Institute

Received: 13 September 2024

Revised: 10 October 2024

Accepted: 23 October 2024

Published: 5 November 2024

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Transparency: The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, globalization has opened doors and broken barriers to rendering accounting services worldwide. It can be observed that the accounting profession has been greatly affected by globalization. English has been the dominant language of international business and accounting services worldwide. Consequently, anglophone accounting organizations (institutes and associations) have been spreading worldwide, increasing the number of members from other countries daily.

This paper summarizes how anglophone accounting organizations have been impacting accounting professions worldwide. In addition, the paper documents the requirements for international candidates who want to be licensed as a certified public accountant in the United States. The paper might interest national and international stakeholders such as accounting organizations, accounting students, and regulators.

As seen in Exhibit 1, 73.2% of sections attempted in the U.S. Uniform CPA Examination in 2018 were completed by in-state candidates who currently reside where they apply for the examination. On the other hand, 16.4% were out-of-state candidates, and 10.4% were international candidates who did not reside in the U.S. (NASBA, 2018). In some states and territories, the percentages of international candidates taking the Uniform CPA Exam were significant (Table 1). Guam and Puerto Rico have a high percentage expected; however, some other states having significant international candidates can be attractive, with geography, demographics, and state licensing rules potentially causing an impact. Inspired by the recent and global developments and initiatives in certifying or licensing international candidates for professional public accountancy, this paper focuses on exploring and documenting the U.S. requirements.

Table 1. Uniform CPA exam-2018 edition.

States & Jurisdictions	Total		In-State		Out-of-State		International	
	Number of Sections	%	Number of Sections	% of Total	Number of Sections	% of Total	Number of Sections	% of Total
Overall	206,858	100.00%	151,423	73.2%	33,846	16.4%	21,589	10.4%
Alaska	5,342	2.58%	287	5.4%	1,391	26.0%	3,664	68.6%
Arizona	3,335	1.61%	1,584	47.5%	323	9.7%	1,428	42.8%
Delaware	1,136	0.55%	207	18.2%	640	56.3%	289	25.4%
Guam	4,041	1.95%	23	0.6%	571	14.1%	3,447	85.3%
Maine	2,618	1.27%	235	9.0%	1,003	38.3%	1,380	52.7%
Montana	1,864	0.90%	365	19.6%	319	17.1%	1,180	63.3%
New Hampshire	2,540	1.23%	234	9.2%	490	19.3%	1,816	71.5%
North Dakota	812	0.39%	399	49.1%	200	24.6%	213	26.2%
Puerto Rico	1,283	0.62%	258	20.1%	24	1.9%	1,001	78.0%
Vermont	1,060	0.51%	181	17.1%	170	16.0%	709	66.9%
Washington	5,391	2.61%	3,042	56.4%	848	15.7%	1,501	27.8%

While living outside the U.S., international candidates may become CPAs from some states and territories. Thus, the paper documents how they may become CPAs in the U.S. and examines the education requirements of the states and territories for international candidates who are willing to be licensed as CPAs in the United States. To achieve the goals of the paper regarding U.S. CPA licensure, these questions are addressed in the paper:

- What significant differences exist among the states and territories regarding education requirements for international candidates?
- What states and territories have been accepting educational requirements provided from outside the U.S., and to what extent?
- Can international CPA candidates from the U.S. meet the educational requirements outside the country?

The paper first examines the International Accounting Education Standards since they have triggered the globalization and high-quality accounting profession. Then, it documents all educational requirements of the states and territories of the U.S. to address the questions raised for the paper.

1.1. Anglophone Supremacy in the Global Accountancy

The British Empire was the one on which the sun never set. It is roughly estimated that it controlled more than 25% of the earth's landmass, meaning there was always daylight in one of its territories (Ndegwa, 2022). This paper argues that current accounting organizations chartered by British Royal have recently dominated more than 25% of the global accounting profession. The figures and facts of some international organizations below can justify this argument.

The International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) was established in 1977. It has been a global umbrella for the accounting profession (IFAC, 2024). As of the beginning of 2024, The IFAC had 180 members and associate organizations in 135 jurisdictions. It means that the IFAC represents millions of professional accountants across the globe. One of the most prominent members of the IFAC is the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association) (AICPA-CIMA, 2024). This association is a joint organization of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). As of the beginning of 2024, it has 657,000 members and students in public and

management accounting (IFAC, 2024) worldwide. In addition, CIMA is one of the U.K. accounting organizations impacting the global accounting profession since its establishment more than a hundred years ago. Another anglophone global accounting organization is the ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants). As of the beginning of 2024, the ACCA had 247,000 members and 517,000 students in 181 countries (ACCA, 2024) and it works through a network of 110 offices and centers, 7,571 approved employers worldwide, and 328 approved learning providers. The ACCA is one of the U.K. accounting organizations on which the sun never sets (IFAC, 2024). The ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) is another global professional membership body with over 202,450 members and students in 148 countries (ICAEW, 2024). The CPA Australia (Certified Practising Accountant) is another sizeable professional accounting organization. It has more than 170,826 members in more than 150 countries and regions, with 19 offices worldwide (CPAAustralia, 2024).

In the global accounting profession arena, the AICPA and its predecessors have been impacted worldwide since 1887 when the American Association of Public Accountants (AAPA) was formed (Miranti & Goodman, 1996). In 1916, the American Association was succeeded by the Institute of Public Accountants, when there was a membership of 1,150. The name was changed to the American Institute of Accountants in 1917 and remained so until 1957 when it changed to its current name, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA, 2020). The American Society of Certified Public Accountants was formed in 1921 and was a federation of state societies. The Society was merged into the Institute in 1936, and at that time, the Institute agreed to restrict its future members to CPAs. The AICPA is one of the world's largest member organizations for professional accounting today, and it has more than 431,000 members in 130 countries and territories (AICPA, 2024a).

The membership figures of the large global accounting organizations above may provide evidence that the anglophone accounting profession organizations have impacted global accountancy throughout the world, resulting in greater importance for international candidates to become a CPA, a C.A., or a CMA in major developed countries including the United States, no matter where they live.

1.2. Global Professional Accounting Education Standards: International Perspectives and Expectations

More than two decades ago, accounting and financial reporting scandals such as Enron, WorldCom, and others caused the accounting profession to lose its global reputation. Arthur Anderson, one of the largest accounting firms, was no longer in the market. The global accounting profession had to rebuild public confidence. Thus, some global initiatives were developed and implemented for the global public interest. One of those was to develop and set high-quality international education standards. This initiative aimed to globally enhance professional accountants' competence (IFAC Reform, 2003).

The International Accounting Education Standards were developed and published by the International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB) of the IFAC (IAESB, 2017).

The International Education Standards aim to improve the quality of professional accounting education worldwide. The standards prescribe for (IAESB, 2017):

- Entry to professional accounting education programs.
- Initial Professional Development ("IPD") of aspiring professional accountants.
- Continuing Professional Development ("CPD") of professional accountants.

These requirements have been guidelines or benchmarks for almost all accounting organizations in developed and developing countries to establish their professional public accounting education programs. These standards provided opportunities for global accounting organizations to spread worldwide and increase their global membership figures.

1.3. The U.S. Professional Public Accounting Education Programs for Licensure

The CPA stands for Certified Public Accountant; all CPAs are professional accountants, but not all professional accountants are CPAs. Other professional accountant titles in other countries include chartered accountants, expert accountants, general accountants, accounting technicians, and others. As a title, CPAs have existed in the U.S. and other countries such as Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia, Japan, and some other countries. Certified public accountancy has spread out from the U.S. and chartered accountancy from the U.K.

In the U.S., the CPA is licensure granted by the State Boards of Accountancy. The Board determines the laws and rules for each state or jurisdiction, so they can vary from state to state. However, they commonly have three requirements as 3 Es: Education, Examination, and Experience.

1.4. Education

Educational requirements for the licensure of a certified public accountant can vary. However, they could be categorized into three groups:

1. 150 credit hour rule and degree requirements,
2. Exam sitting requirements,
3. Obtaining some credit hour coursework.

1.5. 150 Credit Hour Rule and Degree Requirement

Except for the U.S. Virgin Islands, all states in the U.S. have a 150-semester credit hour rule (Cumming & Rankin, 1999) which means a candidate applying for a license to practice as a CPA must have earned a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited educational institution and obtained 150 semester credit hours of coursework (Cpacredit.com, 2023). Many colleges and universities offer bachelor's and master's degree programs in accounting. To obtain 150 semester hours of education, candidates do not necessarily have to get a master's degree. They can meet the requirements at the undergraduate level or get a bachelor's degree and take some courses at the graduate level. Students can also choose any of the following paths (Mintz, Miller, & Shawver, 2023):

- Combining an undergraduate accounting degree with a master's degree at the same school or a different one.
- Combining an undergraduate degree in some other discipline with a master's in accounting or an MBA with a concentration in accounting.
- Enrolling in an integrated five-year professional accounting school or program leading to a master's degree in accounting.

In many cases, the additional academic work needed to acquire the technical competence and develop the skills required by today's CPA can be best obtained at the graduate level. Graduate-level programs could be an excellent way to develop skills more thoroughly, such as communication, presentation, and interpersonal relations, and integrate them with the acquired technical knowledge. For these reasons, leading professional organizations such as the AICPA, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) (Strickland, 2023) and the Federation of Schools of Accountancy have consistently supported the 150-hour education requirement for entry into the accounting profession (Mintz et al., 2023).

Exam Sitting Requirement: To be able to take the Uniform CPA Exam, national or international candidates should be eligible first. Some states require all 150 credit hours to be completed before taking the Exam, while others have fewer credit hours or course-specific requirements (Mintz et al., 2023). To take the Uniform CPA Exam or to be licensed as a CPA, states have different requirements (Becker, 2024) that national and international candidates must meet. For instance, some have requirements that at least 24 semester credit hours of coursework in accounting from an accredited educational institution at the undergraduate level or 15 semester credit hours of coursework at the graduate level, or an equivalent combination, must be completed within the total 150 semester credit hours of coursework.

Experience: Several states and jurisdictions across the United States mandate that candidates possess 1 to 2 years of experience under a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in a public accounting firm such as a large scale or a mid-size or small firm. In many states, experience may be considered in government, industry, academia, and law in fulfilling the experience requirement for licensure.

Examination: The AICPA developed the Uniform CPA Examination with input and assistance from NASBA and state boards of accountancy. It is designed to assess the knowledge and skills entry-level CPAs need to practice public accounting. The successful completion of the Uniform CPA Exam is a requirement in all 55 jurisdictions, where Education and Experience requirements may vary for each state or jurisdiction. Many jurisdictions also require an additional exam in ethics to obtain a license (sometimes called the 4th "E").

The Uniform CPA exam can be taken in the U.S. and outside the country. National candidates can take this Exam inside or outside of the country as well. It is the same for international candidates. However, some international candidates can take this Exam in the country or countries where their nationals are assigned.

Data management and data analytics have recently become more important for business management. Coffey (209) stated that public accounting firms have been hiring non-accounting professionals to provide services that the market needs. Also, non-accounting professionals have provided or delivered some public accounting services worldwide since identifying, measuring, analysing data, and reporting financial information. On the other hand, in today's environment, accounting professionals need to have analytics and critical thinking skills, professional judgment and scepticism abilities, problem-solving skills, competencies of understanding business systems, controls, and risks, data analytics, and data management knowledge and skills (NASBA, 2019b). As a result, in 2018, AICPA and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) jointly formed a working group to respond to developments and changes impacting public accountancy. The joint project is called the CPA Evolution and has essential and significant changes to the U.S. CPA licensure requirements related to the competencies. The CPA Evolution project has proposed a new CPA licensure model called "core + disciplines" or simply "core plus." In May 2020, an exposure draft was released to seek possible feedback from stakeholders (Evolving CPA, 2020). Other countries would follow U.S. practices soon, as seen in public oversight establishments on public accountancy (Pekdemir & Suer, 2021).

The CPA Evolution transformed the examination requirement starting in January 2024. The CPA Evolution is called "a core + discipline licensure model." It has a two-step approach for the examination requirement of CPA licensure in the U.S. The first step tests the candidates' accounting, auditing, tax, and information technology knowledge. For the second step, candidates choose one of the three disciplines: Business Reporting and Analysis, Information Systems and Controls, Tax Compliance, and Planning, as seen in Figure 1. The names of the disciplines can evolve and change in the future depending on circumstances. At

the end of this two-step approach, the candidate will be granted the CPA in the U.S. There is no doubt that many countries will follow the U.S. approach later. It appeared in the public accounting oversight establishment at the beginning of the Millennium.

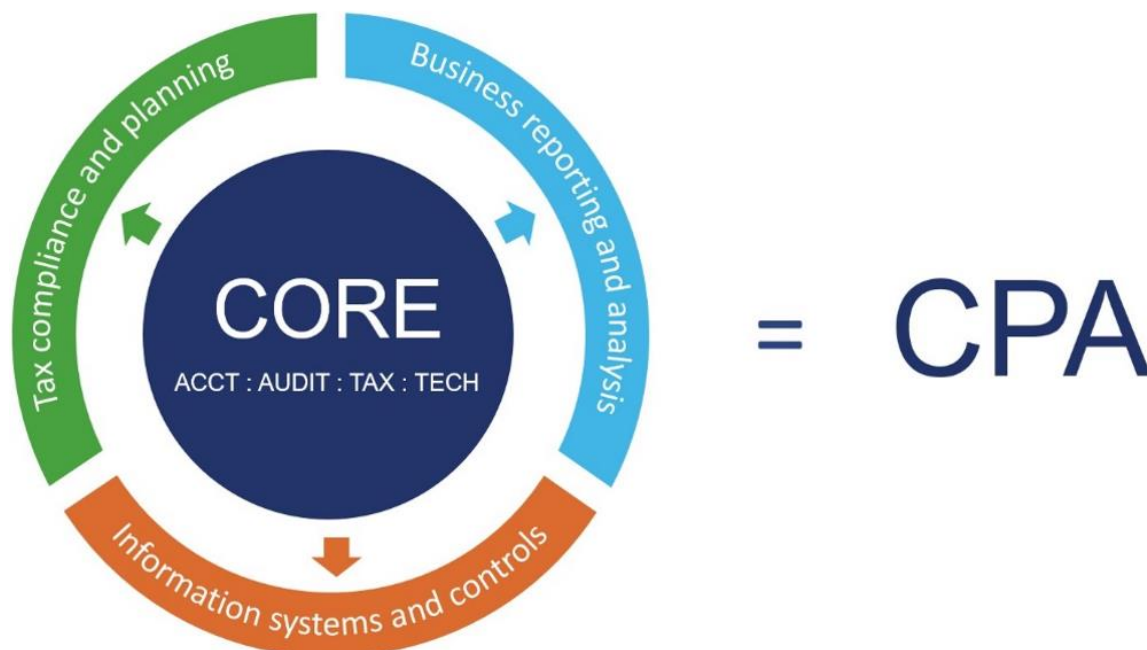


Figure 1. The CPA evaluation: Core + Discipline model.

Note: Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.evolutionofcpa.org/>.

Undoubtedly, the CPA Evolution has significantly changed the uniform CPA Exam structure over the years. The CPA Evolution has triggered significant changes and developments in accounting education. Higher education institutions, exam prep institutions, and resource providers started to make specific changes in their curriculum, the faculty profile, and the study materials. Specifically, graduate programs in the three disciplines of the project have been popping up because there is a new market for demand and supply (Mintz et al., 2023).

While the 150 credit-hour rule exists, there may be a variety of specific education requirements within that rule for CPA licensure. Just as employers often develop specific universities from which they recruit, there may be a plausibility of employers hiring young professionals to come from states with employer-preferred CPA licensing requirements. The CPA Evolution may be an excellent opportunity to get more uniform requirements of CPA licensure among the states and jurisdictions.

1.6. Institutions Involved in the U.S. Certified Public Accountant Licensure Process and Their Roles

The CPA credential is a license issued by one of the 50 states or U.S. territories that authorizes the holder to practice as a CPA in that jurisdiction. Licensing of CPAs helps protect the public interest because only those individuals who have met prescribed requirements are permitted to identify themselves as CPAs. One component of the licensing requirement designed to ensure only national and internationally qualified individuals become licensed as CPAs is the Uniform CPA Examination.

The Uniform CPA Examination Partners include the 55 Jurisdictions, AICPA, NASBA, and Prometric (Figure 2).

The 55 Jurisdictions: The CPA license is issued at the jurisdiction level in the U.S. To become a CPA, candidates must be declared eligible for the examination and subsequently licensed by the Board of Accountancy in one of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions. The Constitution of the U.S. grants each state or territory the power to regulate the practice of the professions within that jurisdiction's borders. In most jurisdictions, these powers are carried out by a "Board of Accountancy." These Boards of Accountancy are made up of appointed individuals and staff (many of whom are CPAs) who are charged with the responsibility of carrying out the laws promulgated by the legislatures and providing an appropriate examination for licensure. The Board of Accountancy is an administrative agency that handles the day-to-day operations relative to regulating the practice of accountancy, including activities involved with entry into the profession. In some cases, the Board of Accountancy contracts out specific examination-related tasks such as reviewing applications and collecting examination fees (NASBA, 2017).

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA): As mentioned above, the AICPA is the largest national professional organization for CPAs. The AICPA provides members with the resources, information, and leadership that will enable them to provide valuable services in the highest professional manner to benefit the public, employers, and clients. For the Uniform CPA Examination, the AICPA determines the content of the examination, prepares the examination questions, determines the method of scoring, prepares advisory scores, and conducts statistical analyses of examination results (NASBA, 2017). The AICPA does not license CPAs; State Boards of Accountancy do the licensing, which may vary from state to state.

The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA): NASBA serves as a forum for the nation's 55 State Boards of Accountancy, which administer the Uniform CPA Examination, license more than 650,000 Certified Public Accountants and regulate the practice of public accountancy in the United States (NASBA, 2019a). The 55 U.S. and territorial Boards of Accountancy are members of NASBA. NASBA takes on the role of a central clearinghouse where all jurisdictions submit information on eligible national and international candidates, from which all jurisdictions receive advisory scores and other examination data (NASBA, 2017).

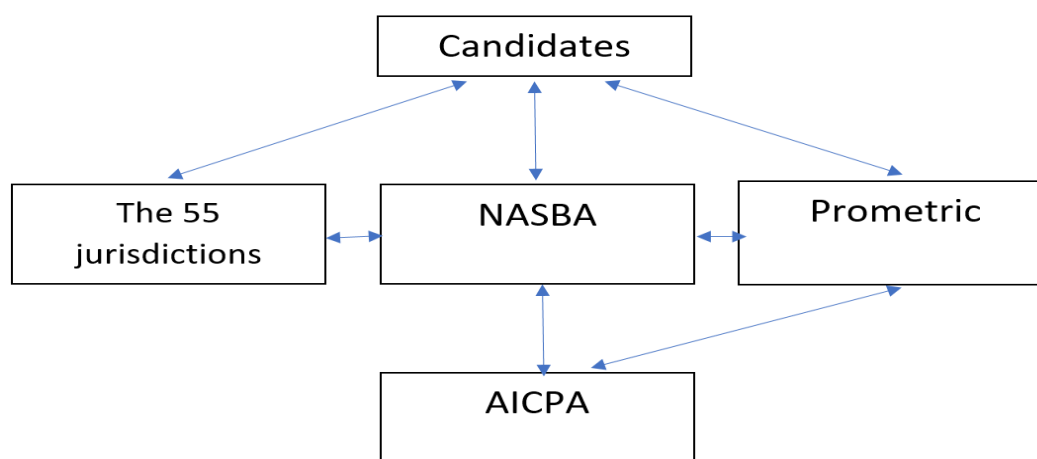


Figure 2. Institutions/Partners for the U.S. certified public accountant licensure process.

Source: NASBA (2017).

Prometric: Prometric operates a network of computer-based test centers worldwide (ERB Report, 2017). Among its many clients are the professional licensure examinations for physicians, architects, and pharmacists and educational examinations such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

1.7. What International Candidates Should Know to Get Started

Besides the three Es of education, examination, and experience, each state or jurisdiction may have its own set of other requirements for licensure as a CPA. Demographic requirements such as citizenship, residency, or the requirement of a social security number (Appendix 1) vary. As of April 27, 2023, such requirements are summarized below (Thiswaytocpa.com, 2024):

- The states of Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, North Carolina, and Puerto Rico have citizenship requirements.
- The states of Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, The U.S. Virgin Island, and Wyoming and the jurisdictions of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico have residency requirements.
- The states of Alaska, Guam, Michigan, Illinois, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Island, and Wisconsin do not have the requirement of a social security number.

As mentioned above, even not being a citizen of the U.S., anyone from outside of the country may qualify as a licensed U.S. Certified Public Accountant upon meeting Board of Accountancy eligibility requirements in one of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions as states and territories. An international candidate should first identify a jurisdiction that fits his or her demographics and specialties. Then, the candidate should contact the State's Board of Accountancy and the CPA Society of the State for details of their requirements. At this phase, it is essential to understand the coursework the candidate must complete before taking the Uniform CPA Exam.

National and international candidates may have taken their coursework outside of the U.S. Thus, their documents should be evaluated for credentials. For this purpose, NASBA provides such services through the NIES NASBA International Evaluation Services. Some jurisdictions accept such services from only the NIES (NIES, 2020). Some others can accept such services from other evaluation agencies or companies besides the NIES. The NIES can evaluate education documents from all over the world. However, the documents required

by the NIES may vary from country to country since the education system may vary (<http://nasba.org/products/nasbainternationalevaluationservices/requirements/>).

After an international candidate's educational qualifications have met the requirements of the State Board already chosen, she/he has now become eligible to sit for the Uniform CPA Examination, which is the same worldwide. Some states are two-tier; they provide a certificate stating that the candidate passed the Uniform CPA Examination. In the second phase, after all the requirements, including practical experience and the Ethics Exam, are met, the jurisdiction licenses the candidate.

1.8. Taking the Uniform CPA Exam outside the U.S

The CPA Exam is the same no matter where it is administered; it is only offered in English. The CPA Exam is administered at Prometric Testing Centers in selected international locations. Usually, candidates need to be citizens or permanent residents of the country in which the Exam is offered to be able to be tested in that country. In some cases, they may qualify for regional eligibility, which means they can take the CPA Exam in a country close to where they live. International testing centers have increased and improved recently due to interest from all over the world (Tables 2 and 3). There has been a remarkable increase in international candidates taking the CPA exam from 2017 to 2020. Currently, in conjunction with the AICPA and Prometric, NASBA provides the opportunity for international administration of the Uniform CPA Examination (Exam) to be offered in India, Nepal, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Israel (NASBA, 2024). The following jurisdictions do not currently participate in the international program (Appendix 1): Alabama, Delaware, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Jersey, Northern Mariana Islands, North Carolina, and The Virgin Islands. Certain jurisdictions have specific rules and requirements for sitting for the Exam and qualifying for CPA licensure after passing the Exam.

Table 2. International testing center eligibility table.

Status	Can test in these countries						
	The U.S.	Japan	Brazil	Bahrain	Kuwait	Lebanon	UAE
C=Citizen							
PR=Legal status of permanent or long-term resident							
U.S. C/PR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japan	✓	✓					
Argentina	✓		✓				
Bolivia	✓		✓				
Chile	✓		✓				
Colombia	✓		✓				
Ecuador	✓		✓				
French Guiana	✓		✓				
Guyana	✓		✓				
Paraguay	✓		✓				
Peru	✓		✓				
Suriname	✓		✓				
Uruguay	✓		✓				
Venezuela	✓		✓				
Bahrain	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Egypt	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
India	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Jordan	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Kuwait	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Lebanon	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Oman	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Qatar	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Saudi Arabia	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
UAE	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Yemen	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: NASBA (2017).

Table 3. International testing center eligibility table.

United States of America: All eligible international candidates for the CPA exam may take tests in the United States and Guam. There is no residency or citizenship requirement for international candidates who wish to test at centers in this country.				
Testing center located in:		Testing center located in:		
Japan	Bahrain	Lebanon	Kuwait	UAE
Citizens or long-term residents of: Japan and the U.S.	Citizens or long-term residents of: Bahrain, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, U.S., and Yemen			
Testing Center Located in:		Testing Center Located in:		
Brazil	England	Scotland	Ireland	Germany
Citizens or long-term residents of: Antigua/Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, /Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, U.S., and Venezuela	All eligible CPA Exam international candidates may take a test in these European countries. There is no residency or citizenship requirement for international candidates who wish to test at centers in these countries.			

Note: NASBA (2017).

1.9. International Qualification Examination (IQEX)

International accounting professionals willing to practice in the U.S. have had another unique opportunity provided by mutual recognition agreements between AICPA/NASBA and some of the accounting institutes or associations around the world. On behalf of the U.S. accounting profession, the International Qualifications Appraisal Board (IQAB), which is a joint organization of the AICPA and the NASBA, has recommended that AICPA/NASBA enter into mutual agreements with non-U.S. accounting organizations (NASBA, 2023). Mutual recognition agreements can provide opportunities for qualified professional accountants from other countries to practice in the U.S. without having to wholly re-credential, and similar recognition as the right to practice in the same country is provided to U.S. accounting professionals. Currently, the AICPA and the NASBA have agreements (NASBA, 2023) with the Chartered Professional Accountants Canada (CPAC), Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ), CPA Australia (CPAA), Instituto Mexicano De Contadores Publicos (IMCP), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI), Certified Public Accountants in Ireland (CPA Ireland), Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS), South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, and the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants (NZICA).

The International Qualification Exam (IQEX) is shorter than the U.S. Uniform CPA Exam. In addition, the IQEX can be taken outside of the U.S.

Some states and territories of the U.S. require additional education and experience in conjunction with passing the IQEX. The international audience should investigate each jurisdiction's rules and regulations for additional information regarding licensure applications based on IQEX qualifications.

1.10. The Social Security Number (SSN) Matters

The Social Security Number (SSN) became a de facto national identification number for taxation and other purposes (Kouri, 2005) in the U.S., even though the original purpose had been for the Social Security Administration to track the earnings histories of U.S. workers, for use in determining Social Security benefit entitlement and computing benefit levels (Puckett, 2009). Many State Boards of Accountancy do require SSN for the CPA licensure. It is impossible for international candidates living outside the U.S. to obtain an SSN. They should have immigration relationships, such as temporary studying or working engagements in the U.S.

In the most preferred jurisdictions mentioned above in the 2018 Uniform CPA Examination, some of those do require SSN: Arizona (1,428), Delaware (289), Maine (1,380), New Hampshire (1,816), Vermont (709),

Washington (1,501), and Puerto Rico (1,001). Some of those do not, such as Alaska (3,664), Montana (1,180), North Dakota (213), and Guam (3,447), with the numbers of CPA parts/sections taken by international candidates shown in parentheses.

2. Limitations

The context of the paper includes rules, legislation, and regulations, which policymakers, legislators, and regulators can change at any time. Thus, readers of this paper should investigate the information provided in the paper. Some of the information in the paper was scanned and reviewed more than five years ago.

3. Summary and Discussion

The paper argues that accounting organizations from anglophone countries dominate more than 25% of the global accounting profession and are increasing their membership worldwide. Thus, without living abroad, international candidates should consider becoming a Chartered Accountant (CA) of the United Kingdom or a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) of the United States and its territories. Candidates should know English very well since those organizations offer the exam requirements in English.

The paper argues that international candidates interested in U.S. CPA licensure have relationships with the U.S., such as international studentships or visiting positions. They must meet the exact eligibility requirements and complete the same licensure requirements as their U.S. counterparts. Applicants from countries other than the U.S. must follow the same basic steps as U.S. applicants. This means they must select the state or jurisdiction in which they wish to qualify and file an application with the Board of Accountancy (or CPAES) in that state or jurisdiction. Any special instructions or requirements for candidates who have completed education outside the U.S. are available from each state's Board of Accountancy.

References

- ACCA. (2024). *We're the world's forward-thinking professional accountancy body*. Retrieved from <https://www.accaglobal.com/us/en/about-us.html>
- AICPA-CIMA. (2024). *Association of international certified professional accountants, American institute of certified public accountants & chartered institute of management accountants*. Retrieved from <https://www.aicpa-cima.com/home>
- AICPA. (2020). *Start your CGMA journey now with extra months of membership*. Retrieved from <https://www.aicpa.org/about/missionandhistory/history-of-the-aicpa.html>
- AICPA. (2024a). *American institute of certified public accountants*. Retrieved from <https://us.aicpa.org/forthepublic>
- Becker. (2024). *Qualifications and requirements for the CPA exam*. Retrieved from <http://becker.com/cpa-review/requirements/>
- CPAAustralia. (2024). *Certified practicing accountants of Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/about-cpa-australia>
- Cpacredit.com. (2023). *Understanding the 150 credits requirement*. Retrieved from <https://cpacredits.com/resources/understanding-the-150-credits-requirement/>
- Cumming, J., & Rankin, L. J. (1999). 150 hours: A look back. *Journal of Accountancy*, 187(4), 53-58.
- ERB Report. (2017). *Report of the CPA examination review board on the 2017 uniform CPA examination and international qualification exam*. Retrieved from <https://nasba.org/app/uploads/2018/06/ERBReporton2017Examination.pdf>
- Evolving CPA. (2020). *New model for CPA licensure*. Retrieved from <https://www.evolutionofcpa.org>
- IAESB. (2017). *International accounting education standards*. Retrieved from <https://www.iaesb.org/iaesb/publications/2017-handbook-international-education-pronouncements>
- ICAEW. (2024). *Institute of chartered accountants of England and Wales*. Retrieved from <https://www.icaew.com/about-icaew/who-we-are>
- IFAC. (2024). *International federation of accountants, who we are*. Retrieved from <https://www.ifac.org/who-we-are/our-purpose>
- IFAC Reform. (2003). *IFAC reform proposals executive summary*. Retrieved from https://ipiob.org/timeline/2003_IFAC-reform-document.pdf
- Kouri, J. (2005). *Social security cards: De facto national identification*. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20120626231206/http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/kouri/051129>
- Mintz, S., Miller, W. F., & Shawver, T. J. (2023). Rethinking 150-hour requirement for the CPA licensure. *The CPA Journal*, 93(9/10), 28-35.
- Miranti, J. M., & Goodman, L. (1996). American institute of certified public accountants, the history of accounting: An international Encyclopedia, Ed. By M. Chatfield and R. Vangermeersch. In (pp. 34-42). New York & London: Gerland Publishing.
- NASBA. (2017). *Candidate bulletin*. Retrieved from <https://nasba.org/app/uploads/2010/06/CandidateBulletin2017Final09212017.pdf>
- NASBA. (2018). *Candidate performance on the uniform CPA examination, 2018 edition*. Retrieved from NASBA Report on the CPA Exam:
- NASBA. (2019a). *Annual report 2019*. Retrieved from https://nasba.org/app/uploads/2009/07/Annual-Report-2019_Final.pdf
- NASBA. (2019b). *Considering the core plus model*. Retrieved from <https://nasba.org/blog/2019/12/19/considering-the-core-plus-model/>
- NASBA. (2023). *IQEX guide new design*. Retrieved from https://nasba.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/IQEX-Guide_New-Design-09212023.pdf

NASBA. (2024). *CPA exam international administration*. Retrieved from <http://nasba.org/internationalexam/>

Ndegwa, S. (2022). *The sun finally sets on the British Empire*. Retrieved from <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2022-09-11/The-sun-finally-sets-on-the-British-Empire>

NIES. (2020). *NASBA international evaluation services*. Retrieved from <https://nasba.org/products/nasbainternationalevaluationservices/>

Pekdemir, R., & Suer, A. Z. (2021). History of Specialization in the U.S. Public accountancy and the cpa evolution project. *Journal of Accounting and Finance, 21(2)*, 144-152.

Puckett, C. (2009). The story of the social security number. *Social Security Bulletin, 69(2)*, 55-74.

Strickland, B. (2023). NASBA upholds 150-hour education requirement for CPA licensure. *Journal of Accountancy*.

Thiswaytocpa.com. (2024). *State & territory directory*. Retrieved from <http://www.thiswaytocpa.com/licensure/state-requirements/>

Appendix 1. Demographic requirements for the U.S. CPA licensure.

AICPA - <http://www.thiswaytocpa.com/licensure/state-requirements/>

(Last Updated: 4/27/2023) [Retrieved on February 5, 2024]

States/Territories	Citizenship requirement	Residency requirement	SSN requirement	Participating international program
Alabama	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alaska	No	No	No	Yes
Arizona	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	No	No	Yes	Yes
California	No	No	Yes	Yes
Colorado	No	No	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	No	No	Yes	Yes
Delaware	No	No	Yes	No
District of Columbia	No	No	Yes	Yes
Florida	No	No	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Guam	No	No	No	Yes
Hawaii	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Idaho	No	Yes	Yes	No
Illinois	No	No	No	Yes
Indiana	No	No	Yes	Yes
Iowa	No	No	Yes	Yes
Kansas	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	No	No	Yes	No
Louisiana	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maine	No	No	Yes	Yes
Maryland	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	No	No	Yes	Yes
Michigan	No	No	No	Yes
Minnesota	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	No	Yes	Yes	No
Missouri	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montana	No	No	No	Yes
Nebraska	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada	No	No	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	No	No	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	No	No	Yes	No
New Mexico	No	No	No	Yes
New York	No	No	No	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
North Dakota	No	No	No	Yes
Northern Mariana Islands	No	No	No	No
Ohio	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oregon	No	No	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	No	Yes	Yes
Puerto Rico	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

AICPA - <http://www.thiswaytocpa.com/licensure/state-requirements/>
 (Last Updated: 4/27/2023) [Retrieved on February 5, 2024]

States/Territories	Citizenship requirement	Residency requirement	SSN requirement	Participating international program
Rhode Island	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	No	No	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	No	No	Yes	Yes
Texas	No	No	Yes	Yes
The U.S. Virgin Islands	No	Yes	Yes	No
Utah	No	No	Yes	Yes
Vermont	No	No	Yes	Yes
Virginia	No	No	Yes	Yes
Washington	No	No	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	No	No	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	No	No	No	Yes
Wyoming	No	Yes	Yes	Yes