



ASCPA STUDENT NEWS

ARKANSAS SOCIETY OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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THE 8 GREAT RULES OF PERSONAL FINANCE

- 1) Budget your money - Create a monthly budget to identify expected income and expenses, including savings. This will serve as a guide to help you live within your means.
- 2) Don't expect something for nothing - Be leery of advertisements, sales people, or other sources of financial offers promising anything free. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- 3) Know your take-home pay - Before committing to significant expenditures, estimate how much income is likely to be available for you. Your net income, after taxes and other deductions, is more important to estimate than gross income before deductions.
- 4) Start saving young - Recognize that your total savings are determined both by the interest you earn on those savings and the time period over which you save. The sooner you start saving, the more funds you'll be able to amass over time.
- 5) Compare interest rates - Shop around for the best rates on banking services, credit cards, and other financial services.
- 6) Pay yourself first - Before paying bills and other financial obligations, set aside an affordable amount each month in accounts designated for long-range goals and unexpected emergencies.
- 7) Money doubles by the "Rule of 72" -- To determine how long it will take your money to double, divide the interest rate into 72. For example, an account earning 6% interest will double in twelve years (72 divided by 6 equals 12).
- 8) Don't borrow what you can't repay - Be a responsible borrower who repays as promised, showing you are worthy of getting credit in the future. Before you borrow, compare your total payment obligations with income that you will have available to make these payments.

(Adapted from The Jumpstart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy)

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER IF YOU'RE A RECRUIT

You would be surprised at what is not taken for granted as common sense, even in a market where job recruits have the statistical advantage. Remember these basics:

- 1) First impressions do make a big difference. Always wear a suit to the first interview.
- 2) Do your research. Review the company's website. Google the company. Read the job description over more than once, thoroughly.
- 3) Be positive. Smile. Companies want people who have passion, who are excited, who feel they have something to offer.
- 4) Ask questions. Even if all your questions were answered, ask questions anyway.
- 5) Sell yourself. Match your strengths to the hiring manager's needs. Be prepared for the weakness question—start with a strength, which will lead to something you've struggled to overcome.
- 6) Conduct yourself professionally no matter what the circumstances are.
- 7) Be yourself. Present yourself based on who you are and what is important to you.
- 8) Send a thank you note and be sure to spell check it first.
- 9) Before you give notice at your current company, go to your manager and address your issues to see what can be done to change them. Many companies make counter-offers to retain their best staff.
- 10) Don't make a move based on salary alone—you will probably regret it.

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YOU CAN PASS THE CPA EXAM

You Can Pass the CPA Exam

Can you imagine a test in school where over half the people in the class got a failing grade? There must be something wrong with the teacher. The students didn't study hard enough. The test was too difficult.

That isn't what the graders at the CPA exam are thinking. The latest passing scores are about the same as they have been - from 42%-44%. That means that less than half of the people that go to take just one section of the four section exam do not pass just that one section of the exam.

Some might say that the CPA exam is too hard. No matter how much you study, if you are not a good test taker, there is no way that you can pass it. However, I think that there are some test-taking strategies that can help most to pass the exam.

It Takes Time

First, you have to understand that studying for the CPA exam will take time. The amount of time necessary will be different for everyone, but for everyone it will take time. When I took the exam, I did not want to take the exam twice for two reasons - I didn't want to look stupid in front of my peers and I didn't want to have to pay the exam fees twice. Because I didn't want to take the exam twice, I spent extra time studying. My goal was to pass the first time so my goal was to get a score in the 80's instead of just squeaking by with a passing score of 75. I spent between 50-150 hours studying for each section for a total of about 300-400 hours.

Finding the time to study for the exam may be the most difficult part of the exam for some candidates. There are many worthwhile things that compete for our time: our job, our family, or other responsibilities, and just time to relax. For everyone it will be different, but you will have to give up something, probably more than one thing, if you are going to have the time to spend on studying for the exam.

Add a Little Creativity

It helps to be creative when studying for the exam. I got the bulk of my studying done late at night when the kids had gone to bed and on weekends, but I also got a substantial amount done when I was traveling for work. As a new auditor, I spent a fair amount of time out of town, traveling. I got a lot of studying done in the car, at airports, and in the airplane.

It Isn't Just About Being "Smart"

Second, you have to understand that just being smart isn't enough to pass the exam, you have to understand about the exam itself. I was studying while traveling with a highly respected partner at the public accounting firm where I work.

We were in an airport and I was studying for the CPA exam. He was curious and asked what the question was that I was studying. I read him the question. He determined quickly that the answer was "C". I agreed. I chose "C". The answer was "D". How could a partner with over 20 years of experience get a multiple choice CPA exam question wrong? Aren't the questions for CPA exam designed for people who are new to the profession? If a partner with so much experience can't get the questions correct, how can I pass? You have to remember that working with CPAs or working in public accounting alone isn't enough to pass the exam. You have to know the information that is being tested on the CPA exam. In my mind, the best way to understand the information that is tested on the CPA exam itself is to study what was on the CPA exam in the past.

Use Available Tools

A large number of the CPA exam questions that have been tested in the past are now available and have been released to the public. The best way to prepare yourself for the exam is to expose yourself to as many of these questions as you can. Anyone who has had any experience with the exam will tell you that there isn't a huge difference between the questions that were on the exam in the past and the questions that you will see when you go take the test. Sure, there are new standards and rules that are tested on the exam, but all new questions have to go through a rigorous process in order to be included as part of your score on the CPA exam. Remember that there is a difference between what you see on the exam and what questions make up part of your exam score. Some questions are in a pilot period and will not be counted as part of your exam score.

The best advice I can give a CPA exam candidate is to study and learn about as many past CPA exam questions as you can. This will get you exposed to the types of questions you are likely to see when you go take the examination. You should become as familiar as you can with the official exam website, www.cpaexam.org. Learning as much as you can about the exam is probably more important than knowing the material that is tested on the exam.

Don't Put It Off

Last, believe that you can do it. A 40% pass rate on the CPA exam doesn't necessarily mean that over half the people that take the exam are failing - it might simply mean that it takes most people two tries to pass the exam. There is no reason to put the exam off because it is difficult. It is designed for people new to the profession. If you have just finished school, now is probably the best time because you are used to taking tests. (Continued on Next Page) →



YOU CAN PASS THE CPA EXAM (CONT'D)

Scheduling a lot of time in between exam sections may not help you as much as you think. The specific information that the exam requires you to know will not stay in your mind for long periods of time. If you can dedicate 70 hours to studying over a three week period, then that may be all the time you need in order to be ready for an exam section. There is no reason you cannot pass the CPA exam. You have accomplished many other significant goals in the past, and with the right amount of determination, you will accomplish this as well. Good luck! *By: Nate Jeppson*

FIVE HOTTEST JOBS IN ACCOUNTING

With accounting now the number 1 declared major on college campuses nationwide, new grads are flooding the market. There are five accounting and finance jobs positioned for strong growth this year, according to recruiting and staffing from Robert Half International.

Internal Auditors: Internal auditors are in demand to help companies comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, and competition is rising.

Compliance Executives: Companies are hiring executives to help with compliance for Sarbanes-Oxley and U.S. Securities and Exchange Corporation reporting requirements.

Financial Analysts: Financial analysts are needed to assist with budgeting and forecasting initiatives, especially as firms expand.

Staff Accountants: Accountants with at least three years of experience are often needed for general ledger maintenance, financial statement preparation, and budget development.

External Auditors: The demand for external auditors grows as public accounting firms must meet client demand for audit service. External auditors who are CPAs are in greatest demand.

More information on these positions, including changes in average salary, is available in the Robert Half Salary Guide. Request your free copy at www.roberthalf.com.

BECKER CPA REVIEW

Arkansas Society of CPAs associate and student members can receive a discount on the Becker Professional CPA Review for the full 4-part review course. Save \$250 off of the full 4-part review of either Live, Online, or CD-Rom self study review course format. Becker CPA Review classes correspond with the exam testing windows that you select.

For more information on this new member service, ASCPA members should click on the Becker icon in the Student Lounge section of the ASCPA website: www.arcpa.org or call Becker at (800) 868-3900.

EXAMMATRIX CPA REVIEW

Arkansas Society of CPAs associate and student members can receive a discount on the ExamMatrix™ CPA Review for both 4-part review course purchases, as well as individual exam sections.

The ASCPA associate and student member rate is \$795 full review (\$1195 retail), or \$245 per section (\$375 retail). The Full review includes ExamMentor, a free tool for Exam preparation guidance.

Click on the ExamMatrix icon in the Student Lounge section of the ASCPA website: www.arcpa.org.

KAPLAN CPA EXAM REVIEW

As an ASCPA student or associate member, you can take advantage of a 25% discount on Kaplan CPA Education's complete package learning system, which reduces the cost to \$359.25 for 1 section (\$479 retail), or \$1,199.25 for all 4 sections (\$1,599 retail) combined.

ASCPA members should click on the Kaplan icon in the Student Lounge section of the ASCPA website: www.arcpa.org or call Kaplan CPA Education at (605) 271-0593.

APPLICATION FOR STUDENT MEMBERSHIP



ARKANSAS SOCIETY OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

11300 Executive Center Drive, Little Rock, AR 72211-4352
501-664-8739 / 800-482-8739 in Arkansas / Fax 501-664-8320

Name _____
First Middle Last Suffix

Nickname _____ Spouse Name _____

Gender Male Female AICPA Member? Yes No Preferred mailing address Home Office

Date of Birth _____ E-Mail Address _____

Name of College or University _____

City / State _____

Class Level (Junior, Senior, etc.) _____

Residence Street Address _____ Zip+4 _____

Residence PO Box _____ Zip+4 _____

Residence City / State _____ County _____

Residence Phone () _____ Residence Fax () _____

Firm Name _____

Firm Street Address _____ Zip+4 _____

Firm PO Box _____ Zip+4 _____

Firm City / State _____ County _____

Firm Phone () _____ Firm Fax () _____

Job Title _____

You will be assigned to the Chapter in which your preferred mailing address is located. However, if you wish to participate in a different Chapter, please indicate your preference below:

- Central Delta Northwest Ozark Southeast Valley
 DeGray Northeast Ouachita South Texarkana Western

Please indicate the legislative districts (district number only) in which you reside for the following:

House _____ Senate _____ Congressional _____

Race / Ethnic Identification: (Optional Information) African American Caucasian
 Native American Asian Pacific Hispanic Other _____

I am fluent in the following foreign language(s) (Optional Information): _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM.

The ASCPA will bill for the \$25.00 Annual Dues when your membership becomes effective.

By signing this application, I hereby represent to the Arkansas Society of CPAs that I will be bound by the Society's Bylaws and Code of Professional Conduct. I further agree to comply with the rules of ethical conduct contained in the current version of the AICPA publication entitled, "Professional Standards, Ethics, Bylaws, Quality Control," the acceptance of which should not be construed as a denial of the existence of other standards of conduct not specifically mentioned.

Signature _____ Date _____

FOR ASCPA USE ONLY:

President _____ Date _____

Secretary _____ Date _____