

NASBA Releases Statistics on Exam Performance

Third-quarter national statistics released by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) indicate that all is going well with the revamped uniform CPA exam. The AICPA and NASBA ran a multitude of tests before putting the CBT-e in place last January and have continued to evaluate and fine-tune ever since.

In the third quarter of 2011, 47,916 individuals completed a total of 70,368 sections of the exam, averaging 1.47 sections per candidate. Sixty-three percent were taking the exam for the first time. In the last two quarters of 2010, numbers were particularly high before the new exam was introduced: 52,994 candidates completed 79,515 sections in the third quarter and 61,750 completed 95,154 in the fourth quarter of 2010. Only 33,133 tested in the first quarter of 2011, but the number climbed back up to 40,036 in the second quarter.

In the third quarter, the passing rate was 48.1 percent; the average of all scores was 71.5. NASBA includes 55 jurisdictions — 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the North Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Of those 55, the jurisdictions providing the most candidates were California (6,916), New York (4,304), and Texas (2,944).

The average age of all third-quarter candidates was 28.8. Seventy percent of candidates who tested in the third quarter held a bachelor's degree, 13.6 percent held an advanced degree, and the remainder had no degree or a different degree. Texas candidates were more likely to have an advanced degree than the national average: 54.4% held a bachelor's, 29.7% held an advanced degree, and 15.9% held none/other.

In Texas, 2,944 candidates tested in the third quarter of 2011, taking an average of 1.41 sections per candidate, and earning an average score of 72.2. The pass rate was 48.8 percent. Across the jurisdictions, Texas ranked 24th in pass rate, but 19th in average score. Sixty percent were first-timers taking the exam. Section performance figures for Texas candidates follow:

Section	# of Sections Taken	Average Score	% Passing
AUD	1095	73.9	51.0
BEC	921	72.6	50.9
FAR	1044	71.0	49.3
REG	1084	71.4	44.2



OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES honored at the December 3 swearing-in ceremony included, right to left, Shelby Ann Dover, Jenna Kathleen Pickel, Brett Edward Baucum, Mona Mahesh Rupani, Patrick Blaine Smith, Amy Nicole Brunner, Robert Henry Smith, III, Mary Beth Woods, Benjamin Taylor Colodney, Christopher C. Rozakeas, and Sharon Fern Stanley. These 11 CPAs scored the highest grades of all candidates registering as a CPA for the Dec. 3 swearing-in ceremony.

Professional Attire Can Help Spell Success in a Job Interview

Despite what you may see on television, and despite what you may be able wear to work once you snag the job, the appropriate attire for a job interview in accounting or finance is a dark business suit. If you don't think this is important, take a tip from someone who's been there:

A young CPA who has put his accounting career on hold to run his own Austin publishing business was featured in a recent article in the *Austin American-Statesman*. He told the reporter that when he graduated from college with a 3.0 grade point average, he had little expectation of getting a job offer from a top firm (at that point, it was the Big Six). To his surprise, he received offers from all six.

"I had shined my shoes, chosen the correct tie, the suit fit well, and I said 'yes, sir, no, sir' ... I was well put together." Meanwhile, he observed, some of his higher achieving colleagues were showing up for interviews in flannel shirts and jeans — and not getting offers. He credited his background in a military family and ROTC for teaching him how to present himself as a professional to the outside world and apparently it worked.

If you don't have a dark suit, now is the time to buy or borrow one, the experts say, even if it's secondhand, as long as it is clean, pressed, well fitting, and still in style. Consider this an investment in your future. Accounting is a fairly conservative profession. You will need a nice suit on other occasions, too.

First impressions, as you've often heard, make lasting impressions. You want your appearance to demonstrate that you have a sense of what is appropriate and that you take the interview seriously. It is a compliment to the interviewer to dress appropriately. Furthermore, the interviewer will probably assume that you are at your best when you come in for an interview, so you'll want to be at your best.

Dressing for Success for Men

Choose a suit in a conservative color and good quality fabric in a solid color and subtle pattern. Navy and dark gray are probably your best choice of colors, or black, if offset by a different color shirt.

Men should select good quality silk ties that are neither flashy nor funky, nor sporting a logo, like Tabasco, or a character from the popular culture, like the Tasmanian Devil. Avoid the trendy — a good suit should last 5-10 years. Choose a white or light blue shirt, or one with conservative stripes. Complete the look with dark socks that are long enough that no skin shows when you sit down; leather,

lace-up or slip-on business shoes, preferably in black or cordovan; and a matching leather belt.

Grooming is just as important as clothing selection. Men should have neatly trimmed hair and nails. Confine jewelry to a conservative watch. You are not sacrificing who you are, merely indicating that you understand the culture of the business world.

Dressing for Success for Women

Women should choose a tailored pants suit or a suit with a skirt that covers the thigh when they sit down. Before buying a suit, sit down in front of a mirror — that is the view the interviewer will get — and assess your appearance. Choose a solid or subtle weave, or a plaid that looks solid from a distance, in a high quality fabric. The blouse underneath should be tailored and in a color that is flattering to your face and that coordinates well with the suit. You don't want a blouse that clings or shows cleavage, even if TV has led you to believe that that is how professional women dress on the job. Wear a conservative watch and little or no other jewelry. Accessories should not be memorable or call attention to themselves.

Grooming is important for women candidates as well. Choose a hairstyle that is neat and conservative. This is not the time to try out unnatural colors for your hair or nails, nor is it the time to experiment with extreme hair styles or nails that call attention to themselves. Wear hose no matter how hot it is outside and choose a neutral color. Your shoes should be closed-toe pumps, no stilettos, chunky platforms, mules or other bareback styles. If you're not accustomed to wearing a skirt, practice sitting with your knees together and both feet on the floor or legs crossed at the ankle rather than the knee.

Final Words for Both Genders

Although your cell phone may often be found attached to your ear, leave it at home or in the car when you go for an interview. If you must take it with you, turn it off completely — you wouldn't answer it in the middle of the interview anyway. Ipods and Blackberrys also need to stay at home or in the car, although it is OK to carry a small portfolio or briefcase. Don't carry a cup of coffee or bottle of water into the interview, and be aware that secretaries and receptionists may be consulted for general impressions, so remember that you are "on the air" the minute you arrive. With that in mind, avoid making off-the-cuff remarks to the receptionist or others in the waiting room. Make sure your clothes are clean, neatly pressed, and odor-free, as well as free of lint, hair (yours and your pet's), tags, or pulled threads. Wear little or no fragrance. Cover your tattoos and get rid of the gum before you arrive.

Generations Getting Along in the Workplace

In the 1970s, common office-speak included such phrases as, "I know where you're coming from" and "I hear what you're saying." Even though you don't hear these phrases much any more, it is often important to know where someone is "coming from" in order to "hear" what they are saying. In today's workplace, you will have colleagues from three or four generations working to find common ground. Because managers and supervisors may be a generation or two away from the youngest employees, it is helpful to recognize the inherent differences between generations in order to work productively.

The Silent Generation

Although the majority have reached retirement age, they may be reluctant to retire and be "put out to pasture." They have worked hard to get to the top and are still feeling vigorous and in charge. This generation was molded by World War II and view a job as a lifelong commitment. They may be challenged by ever-changing technology.

Baby Boomers

Now 45-60, these folks are often workaholics not eager to retire because of the uncertainty of a future on a fixed income. They believe that any privileges that have come to them were well-earned. Having paid their dues, they expect you to as well. They are task-oriented, accustomed to challenging authority (having come of age in the '60s and the Vietnam War era), and motivated by money and respect. They are most comfortable with face-to-face communication and, although they've acquired some tech skills on the job, they are not as comfortable with technology as those who are younger. This generation was the first for whom it was common for a woman to hold a job outside the home and put her children in day care.

Gen X

Gen Xers, aged 30-45, have different priorities. They tend to seek a work-life balance and value time off to be with the family. They are generally more independent and less likely to make lifelong commitments to the company. This generation prefers to work alone rather than in teams. They are more tech proficient because they learned to use com-

puters at an earlier age. A recent article in *Today's CPA* points out that this generation developed more independence because they were more likely than their predecessors to be children of divorced parents and working mothers. The women of this generation were the first to expect they could have both a career and a family.

Gen Y

The so-called Gen Yers, aged 18-30, are so adept at using technology that they tend to be highly inquisitive and impatient because they are accustomed to having all the answers at their fingertips. Like the generation that immediately preceded them, they seek a work-life balance, but unlike the generation before, are more team oriented and willing to work closely with management. Gen Yers, according to *Today's CPA*, are very self-aware, achievement oriented, and socially conscious. They may come across as feeling "entitled," and they will move on if a job proves disappointing to them; they are also more into volunteerism and initiatives that protect the environment. This generation is self-confident and eager to accept responsibility. This is the online generation.

Agulnek, Arthur, CPA, and Brinn Serbanic, CPA. Cultivating young CPAs. *Today's CPA*, Nov.-Dec. 2011, pp. 24-27.

Rodriguez, Sharon. Getting Along: How the generations are working together. *Business Law Bulletin of Virginia*, Oct. 31, 2008.

Professional Literature Available Free

Examination candidates who have a Notice to Schedule from NASBA can get access to a free six-month subscription to professional literature used in the computerized CPA exam. To sign up, go online to <https://www2.nasba.org/NASBAWeb.nsf/ENCD> and complete the subscription form. The online package includes *AICPA Professional Standards*, *FASB Original Pronouncements*, and *FASB Accounting Standards Codification*.

Moving??

Be sure to keep your contact information current.

Use any of these methods:

- Online under "Online Services" at www.tsbpa.state.tx.us
- By email to: exam@tsbpa.state.tx.us
- By phone: 512-305-7853
- By mail: TSBPA
333 Guadalupe, Twr 3, Ste 900
Austin, TX 78701

NASBA Fee Schedule

Section	
AUD	\$195.35
BEC	\$176.25
FAR	\$195.35
REG	\$176.25

NOTE: You may now register and pay for only one section of the exam at a time.

\$ 10 Fee, Fines Fund 5th-Year Scholarship Program

Although the 5th-Year Accounting Student Scholarship Program was established in 1991, authority for administering the program was not transferred to the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy (the Board) until the 2009 legislative session. Prior to that, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board oversaw the funds, which are derived from a \$10 assessment added to each CPA's annual dues renewal.

The Board increased the annual allocation for the 5th-Year Scholarship Program from \$550,000 to \$1.6 million for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. The allocation permitted a significant increase in both the number of scholarship recipients and the size of the awards. With the success of the scholarship program and a recent rule change, the Board is now directing fees collected for disciplinary actions to the scholarship fund to ensure continued success of the program.

The awards go only to Texas residents who intend to take the CPA exam under Texas jurisdiction and may be used for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and living expenses. If you think you may be eligible for future scholarships, consult your school's financial aid office.

Editor's Note: *If you've been the recipient of a 5th-year scholarship and you want to thank the Texas CPAs who made the award possible, address a note or letter to Texas State Board of Public Accountancy, 333 Guadalupe Ste. 3-900, Austin, TX 78701.*

License Needed Before You Can Call Yourself an Accountant

Holding oneself out to the public as an accountant, auditor, or CPA before you have the CPA license constitutes the unauthorized practice of public accountancy and violates the *Public Accountancy Act (Act)*. Under Texas law, the terms "certified public accountant" and "CPA," as well as "accounting" and "auditing" and their derivatives, are reserved for the exclusive use of Texas licensees.

A recent survey showed that much of the public associates these terms with licensure and assumes that those offering to perform accounting services to the public are CPAs. Because the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy has been charged with protecting the public from unqualified practitioners of public accountancy, it is incumbent upon the Board to pursue persons who are suspected of practicing in violation of the *Act*. This can include bookkeepers who offer "accounting" or "auditing" services to the public; college graduates with a degree in accounting but no license as a CPA; or someone who has been licensed but who is not in good standing with the Board for one reason or another.

One cause of confusion may come from the use of these reserved terms by private businesses to refer to departments within their companies as accounting departments and to staff members within these departments as accountants. Neither practice violates the *Act* as long as accounting services are not offered to the public. If such an employee subsequently becomes employed by a CPA firm or other business, he or she may not offer "accounting" services to the public or refer to past "accountant" positions without gaining licensure, although it is alright to state that one has an accounting degree.

So, hold off on calling yourself an accountant until you have your license in hand. It will be worth the wait.

TEXAS STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY

333 Guadalupe
Tower 3, Suite 900
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Accounting/Administration
(512) 305-7800
FAX (512) 305-7854
accounting@tebpa.state.tx.us

CPE
(512) 305-7844
FAX (512) 305-7875
licensing@tebpa.state.tx.us

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(512) 305-7866
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Uniform CPA Exam Now Offered at International Locations

Examinees who meet certain criteria can now test in select international locations. International testing first became available in November and will be available again in February 2012 at Prometric testing centers in Bahrain, Kuwait, Japan, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Brazil. Subsequently it will be available for one month within each testing window. The exam is the same as that administered domestically and is in English only, regardless of where you test. Be-

ginning in February 2012, qualified applicants in Egypt, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen may sit for the exam in Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, and the UAE, and those in Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia may test in Brazil.

Who Is Eligible to Test at an International Location?

Those wanting to test at an international location must first establish eligibility to test by applying to a state board participating in the international program and meeting their requirements for licensure. (At this writing, Texas and 37 other states plus Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia are participating.) In addition to paying an added fee per section of the exam, you will be required to complete some additional procedural steps. Visit the international section of the NASBA website for more information. In general, international testing is available to U.S. citizens and permanent residents living abroad and citizens and long-term residents of the countries in which the exam will be administered. Those on short-term tourist or transit visas will not be eligible to test internationally.

Why Is My Country Not Included?

Countries where the exam is being offered were chosen based on specific criteria to ensure the integrity and security of the exam:

- (1) Number of candidates from the country testing in the U.S.
- (2) Absence of legal obstacles
- (3) Security threats, both at the test center and to exam content
- (4) Existence of established Prometric test centers

When Will I Get my Scores?

Scores for those testing at an international site will be released on nearly the same timetable as those testing at domestic locations.

For more information or specific requirements at a particular testing site, go to www.nasba.org/international. If you still have questions regarding eligibility, scheduling, or pricing, contact NASBA at iexam@nasba.org. For all other inquiries, contact the AICPA at cpaexam@aicpa.org.

Scheduling Your Exam

Once you receive your Notice to Schedule, you may schedule to take the Uniform CPA Examination at any Prometric testing center located in one of NASBA's 55 jurisdictions in the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, or North Mariana Islands. Prometric Testing Centers in Texas cities are listed below.

www.prometric.com/cpa

Schedule early, as dates, times, and locations may fill quickly.

Abilene
Amarillo
Austin
Beaumont
College Station
Corpus Christi
Dallas (2 locations)
El Paso
Ft. Worth/Bedford
Houston (2 locations)
Houston/Clear Lake
Houston/Greenspoint
Lubbock
McAllen
Odessa
San Antonio (3 locations)
Tyler
Waco
Wichita Falls

Read back issues of the
Candidate Chronicle at
www.tsbpa.state.tx.us.

Accountants Confidential Assistance Network

Confidential Assistance provided at no cost by CPAs for CPAs, exam candidates, and accounting students with alcohol or drug dependency problems or mental health issues. Accounting can be a stressful field. If you need help, call

1-866-766-2226

Administered by the Texas Society of
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Scoring the CBT-e and Releasing the Scores

Now that testing, analysis, and standard setting have been completed for the revamped CPA examination, scores will be released to candidates earlier than ever before. Understand, though, that target dates published on the AICPA website are the dates on which AICPA anticipates releasing scores to NASBA, but those dates are not guaranteed, and they are only the first step in a multistep process.

After NASBA receives the scores, they are processed and released to state boards, which, by law, are charged with the responsibility of reviewing the scores and releasing them to candidates. The entire process can take 3 to 5 business days beyond the target dates. Turnaround time for each state can vary by a day or two, and sometimes an external factor, such as a scoring inquiry that requires further psychometric analysis, can cause a delay. Candidates should allow for this before making inquiries of the Board.

Improvements in the scoring process allow release of the first round of scores (for those who test early in the two-month testing window) approximately one month from the beginning of the testing window. Subsequent releases will be made every two weeks after that. The table at right reflects the timeline that was published by AICPA for the 4th quarter of 2011. Target dates for 2012 will follow a similar timeline.

Because the longer simulations found in previous exams could not be pretested, scoring took longer. The shorter Task-Based Simulations that replaced them in the AUD, FAR,

Timeline for Score Release by AICPA to NASBA (11Q4)

Day in Testing Window*	Target Release Timeline	Target Release Date
Day 1 - 20	10 business days after day 20 of the testing window	Nov. 3
Day 21 - 45	5 business days following day 45 of the testing window	Nov. 21
Day 46 - close of window	5 business days following the close of the testing window	Dec. 7
After close of window	5 business days after receiving all scoring data for the testing window	TBA

*Records received by AICPA (usually the same day the candidate tested)

and REG sections of the exam can be pretested, analyzed, reviewed, and approved before they become part of the exam. Scoring of the BEC section, which is now the only section that includes written communication tasks, may take longer.

Should I Ask for a Review?

Although candidates, for a fee, may request a review of their exam, the Board advises that it is extremely unlikely a review will result in a change in the score. All sections of the exam are scored by computer, which is a totally objective process. Only the written communication portion of the BEC is subjectively scored. An exam score of 74 automatically triggers a review even before the candidate is notified of the score. There has not been a change in score made as a result of a review since 2005.



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