



School of Business Administration

# *Accounting Advising Guide*

*What is an accounting professional?*

*What accounting careers are there?*

*What academic & administrative issues are there?*

*What classes do I need?*

*What else do I need to do?*

*How do I find a job?*

*When should I do things?*

*Who are the accounting faculty?*

*How can I get certified?*

*What scholarships are available?*

## **Contact Us:**

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SBA 240

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# Accounting Advising Guide

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

### ***What is an accounting professional?***

The development of double entry accounting in the fifteenth century was integral to the development of the modern capitalist society. From the earliest days of the joint stock companies to the most sophisticated twenty-first century financial derivative, accounting and the ability of individual accountants have enabled the flow of capital necessary for business to be done.

At Portland State University (PSU), we believe that the traits of *professional* accountants go beyond skills and learning. The traits of a professional accountant include a trust that the individual will act with integrity and recognize a duty to the public interest at all times while engaged in his or her work. This is sometimes called *accounting in the public interest*.

Accounting in the public interest is central to professionalism. It implies that accountants are aware of the consequences of their actions. Professional accountants are aware of serving more than their own and their employer's interest; they are aware of their responsibility to protect the integrity of business and society by the manner in which they practice accounting.

At PSU we believe that all accountants have a responsibility to be accountable to the public interest whether or not they belong to a formal professional organization. We also believe it is part of an Accounting School's charter to give students an opportunity to discuss and explore the idea of professionalism in the context of accounting. So throughout your accounting education at PSU, you will be exposed to not just the technical skills necessary to be an accountant, but also the responsibility and challenging issues you must wrestle with to become a *professional accountant*.

**Tip:** To get more information about entry level careers and career paths in accounting check out the web site [www.startheregoplaces.com](http://www.startheregoplaces.com)

## PART II: ACADEMICS

### ***What additional academic and administrative issues are there? There are a lot!***

**Admission:** You must first be admitted to the University and then, after meeting the necessary requirements, be admitted to the School of Business Administration (SBA). Each of these has different requirements and different application processes. See your SBA advisor in the Undergraduate Programs Office (SBA240) for details. Then, if you want to become an accountant, there are several decisions you need to make.

**What degree or certificate should you pursue?** Most importantly, before you move forward in your accounting classes, you need to decide whether you are seeking a degree or a certificate in accounting.

If you do not yet have a bachelor's degree, you should be pursuing an undergraduate accounting degree. Note that depending upon how many credits you may already have before coming to PSU, this may or may not be sufficient to sit for the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam. The section in this guide on "How can I get certified" provides more details, but in short, you will need a "fifth year" of education (225 university credits in total) to sit for the CPA exam.

If you already have a bachelor's degree, there are several options to obtaining your "fifth year" of education: (1) A second bachelor's degree in accounting, (2) a Post baccalaureate accounting certificate (hereafter called post-bac certificate), or (3) if you already have a bachelor's degree in accounting or finance, the Masters of Science in Financial Analysis (MSFA). So which academic route is best? This is a complicated question and one that depends upon your previous academic background, work experience, desired career path and desired location in which to work. In general, for students who have a non-accounting bachelor's degree and want to work in Portland when they graduate, a post-bac accounting certificate is the fastest way to qualify to sit for the CPA exam. In Portland, the post-bac accounting certificate is understood as an appropriate way to obtain the necessary accounting to become "CPA ready" to take the CPA exam. However, if you plan to leave the Portland area prior to obtaining your CPA, especially if you will be working internationally, the post-bac accounting certificate is not always well known or understood and you may want to consider pursuing a bachelor's degree in accounting or the post-bac certificate combined with the MSFA. For students with an accounting or finance degree, the classes included in the MSFA provide additional depth and breadth that will be helpful in your future career.

*Note:* Students cannot earn a second degree in accounting if their first degree was in accounting, no matter where the first degree was completed. Students who received an accounting degree outside the United States may earn the accounting certificate. Students who received an accounting degree in the United States are not eligible to earn an accounting certificate.

**Transfer Credits:** If you are bringing in credits from another university, the University Admissions Office will conduct the initial evaluation of your credits during the admissions process. If you have questions or concerns regarding how your credits have transferred to PSU, please see your SBA academic advisor. Accepting credits from another university to meet general or class specific requirements depends upon a variety of factors such as the content of the class, whether it was taken internationally or domestically, and whether the university was accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Your advisor will provide more specific information.

**Residency Requirement:** There are certain residency requirements that must be met regarding how many credits/classes are taken at PSU versus another university. Please see your advisor for details.

## ***What classes do I need?***

The following upper division class recommendations and requirements apply to accounting option undergrads and post-bac accounting certificate students.

**Accounting Option – Strongly Recommended:** **ACTG 281 Accounting Mechanics: Debits and Credits** (1 credit – pass/no pass only): This course is taken prior to Actg 381 and/or Actg 335. While not required, it is strongly encouraged, especially if there has been a gap between when you took your 200 level accounting and when you start your 300 level classes. Our studies have shown a positive correlation between students who have taken this class and success in upper division financial accounting classes.

If you've never had experience with the bookkeeping process (i.e. you are not comfortable doing journal entries), this class facilitates transition to Intermediate Accounting and Accounting Information Systems. This course covers journal entries, adjusting entries, closing entries, T-accounts and financial statement presentation.

ACTG 281 is offered every quarter, and is primarily an on-line class. Pass/no-pass grading is based on a proficiency exam.

**Accounting Bachelors Degree Requirements (in addition to SBA and PSU requirements):**

A minimum of 36 credits as follows:

- ACTG 335 - Accounting Information Systems (4)
- ACTG 360 - Management Accounting (4)
- ACTG 381, 382, 383 - Financial Accounting and Reporting (12)
- ACTG 421 - Introduction to Taxation (4)
- ACTG 430 - Governmental and Not-for-Profit Accounting (1)
- ACTG 492 - Auditing Concepts and Practices (4)
- ACTG 495 - Integrated Accounting Issues (4)
- One upper-division courses chosen from: ACTG 422, 460, 485, 490, 493

\*Students planning to take the CPA exam should take all of the following electives:  
ACTG 422, 485, 490, 493.

Non-business requirements as follows:

- Political Science (PS) 101 U.S. Government (4)
- Political Science (PS) 102 U.S. Politics (4)
- Philosophy (PHL) 308 or PHL 309 Elementary Ethics (4) **or** Business Ethics (4)
- 3-4 credits in Anthropology (ANTH), Psychology (PSY), or Sociology (SOC)

**RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCE**

<b><u>TERM 1</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 2</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 3</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 4</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 5</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 6</u></b>	<b><u>TERM 7</u></b>
Actg 281 BA 325	Actg 381 Actg 335	Actg 382 Actg 360	Actg 383 Actg 492	Actg 421 Actg 430  *Actg elective	Actg 492 Actg elective  *Actg elective	Actg 495  *Actg elective

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE – 2011/2012** (Subject to change)

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Hrs</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer ***</b>
Actg Mechanics: Debits & Credits	1	Actg281	Actg281	Actg281	Actg281
Fund. Financial Actg.	4	BA211	BA211	BA211	BA211
Decision Making w/ Actg. Info	4	BA213	BA213	BA213	BA213
Actg. Information Systems	4	Actg335	Actg335	Actg335	
Management Accounting	4	Actg360	Actg360	Actg360	Actg360
Financial Actg./Reporting I	4	Actg381	Actg381		Actg381
Financial Actg./Reporting II	4		Actg382	Actg382	Actg382
Financial Actg./Reporting III	4	Actg383		Actg383	Actg383
Intro. to Taxation	4	Actg421	Actg421	Actg421	Actg421
Adv. Taxation*	4	Actg422	Actg422	Actg422	Actg422
Gov. & Non-Prof. Actg.	1	Actg430	Actg430	Actg430	Actg430
Adv. Managerial Actg.**	4		Actg460	Actg460	
Business Law	4	Actg485		Actg485	Actg485
Adv. Financial Actg.	3	Actg490		Actg490	
Audit Concepts & Practices	4	Actg492	Actg492	Actg492	Actg492
Adv. Auditing*	4	Actg493		Actg493	
Integrated Actg. Issues	4	Actg495	Actg495	Actg495	

Required courses will generally be offered at least two terms per year during the evening.

\* Recommended for students planning to pursue careers in public accounting

\*\* Recommended for students planning to pursue careers in corporate accounting

\*\*\* Summer courses taught in a condensed time period. Check course bulletin for details.

## Who are the Accounting Faculty?

If you would like to talk to a member of the accounting faculty to discuss choice of a major, accounting careers, or other concerns, either schedule an appointment or drop by during office hours. Students are free to select any member of the faculty as an advisor. However, students who are unsure who to choose as an advisor have been tentatively assigned an advisor as indicated below.

For information about courses, transfer credits, admittance to the School of Business or graduation, please make an appointment with the Undergraduate Programs Office (503) 725-3712 or [info@sba.pdx.edu](mailto:info@sba.pdx.edu).

Faculty Member	Teaching Area	Email	Phone	1 <sup>st</sup> Letter Student Last Name
Elizabeth Almer, PhD, CPA	Financial, Auditing	<a href="mailto:elizabetha@sba.pdx.edu">elizabetha@sba.pdx.edu</a>	503-725-3729	A, B, C
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For more detailed information about faculty, see <http://www.pdx.edu/sba/faculty-discipline>

## What Scholarships are Available?

Your education is expensive...we all know that. However, you should be aware that all undergraduate, post-bac accounting certificate and graduate students who are admitted to the School of Business are eligible to apply for scholarships. Scholarships range in amount from \$500 to \$4,000!

**Tip:** You should apply for all possible scholarships even if you are not sure if you meet the requirements.

To see what scholarships are available to PSU Accounting students (undergrads, post-bac certificate and graduate students), go to <http://www.pdx.edu/sba/sba-scholarships#actg>. Applications can be completed by going to <http://www.pdx.edu/scholarships>.

The Oregon Society of CPAs also has a separate scholarship program administered directly by the society. This information is available at [http://www.orcpa.org/educational\\_foundation/scholarships](http://www.orcpa.org/educational_foundation/scholarships).

## PART III: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ***What else should I do? Hint...Professional Development!***

While we all know the importance of good grades in looking for a job, students should also know there are other things accounting employers also look for in new hires.

**Tip:** Maximizing your professional development is not something you can do overnight. There are some general rules about when you should start participating in the different *activities, and when they are available. So starting in your 300 level classes, you should carefully follow the timeline on page 16.*

#### **Basic Knowledge of the Accounting Industry and Economy**

Basic knowledge of the accounting industry is necessary. This means understanding the various categories of employers (i.e., public accounting, corporate, government, non-profit) and the “hot issues” in the accounting industry. This knowledge is necessary to know what jobs you want to target, as well as to talk knowledgeably with professionals during recruiting events or interviews.

**Tip:** Prospective employers often ask interview questions such as ‘What do you think is the most important issue facing the accounting industry?’ You need to be prepared to answer questions like these. Resources discussed below will help you get up to speed.

Below are great resources for finding news and information about the accounting industry.

[www.AICPA.org](http://www.AICPA.org): The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants provides a terrific overview of accounting careers at [www.startheregoplaces.com](http://www.startheregoplaces.com). The ‘AICPA Highlights’ and ‘Weekly News Updates’ at the main AICPA web site can keep you current with what’s new. The AICPA’s *The Journal of Accountancy* (JofA) monthly publication is provided free to student members. The JofA offers in depth information on many current issues.

[www.ORCPA.org](http://www.ORCPA.org): The Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountant’s (OSCPA) website always has up to date news and information. This website often has reports on issues that affect the local accounting industry that can’t be found anywhere else!

[www.imanet.org](http://www.imanet.org): The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) is the leading professional organization for corporate accountants in industry. The IMA has student memberships that provide opportunities to network with management accounting professionals, participate in conferences and meetings, and even scholarships.

It’s also important to be aware of business issues in Portland. For example, mergers of local companies usually impact accounting jobs in the corporate and public accounting sectors. Often these events will be discussed in the recruiting and interview process, and your knowledge (or lack thereof) may be viewed as an indicator of your enthusiasm and engagement as a future professional. A targeted source of local business and accounting industry information is *The Portland Business Journal*, [www.bizjournals.com/portland](http://www.bizjournals.com/portland).

**Tip:** Every year the Portland Business Journal publishes lists of largest employers (by number of employees) in a host of fields. Included is a list of *the top 25 public accounting firms* Portland. A compiled “book of lists” is available in SBA Undergraduate Programs Office SBA 240. Go familiarize yourself with the names of the firms listed. There is little doubt that you will be hearing those names again when recruiting.

Finally, you should stay up to speed on business and world issues. There's more to the world than just accounting! Here are some good sources:

*The Economist* ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com))

*The Wall Street Journal* ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)) – subscribers may also customize their user profile to target accounting industry information.

*Business Week* ([www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com))

*CFO.com* – look at the financial accounting, auditing and tax sections

**Tip:** Keeping up on all this reading can feel overwhelming. Pick one afternoon or evening a week and spend 45 minutes to catch up on industry news. After a few months you'll be amazed how much you know!

**SBA Advising and Career Services:** SBA 240 or <http://www.sba.pdx.edu/careersrvs/#>  
The SBA Advising and Career Services is a primary resource for professional development opportunities. Services include:

***Mentoring program:***

- The PSU business school sponsors the largest mentor program in the Pacific Northwest.
- The program provides students with opportunities to learn about the world of work from a business professional through one-on-one coaching and through opportunities to observe the workplace and develop networking contacts.

***Internships:***

- There are many internships available to accounting students. Students with at least a junior standing are encouraged to sign up to receive emails about internship opportunities. Register online at [www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html](http://www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html).
- If you have questions about internships, contact Becky Einolf at [beckye@pdx.edu](mailto:beckye@pdx.edu)

***Job Search Workshops:***

- *Resume Writing:* Learn how to develop your resume.
- *Cover letters:* Find out how to focus your cover letter to get noticed.
- *Interview Skills:* Covers the basics of interviewing and preparing for traditional and behavioral based interviews.
- *Mock interviews:* Gives you an opportunity to practice interviewing.

***Job Postings:***

- Over 500 internship and student job opportunities for business students are posted each year, of which approximately 100 specifically target accounting students.
- Over 100 entry-level jobs are posted each year for accounting majors.

**Action point:** To receive valuable up to date information about these events, as well as internship and job announcements, sign up for the SBA Listserve at <http://www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html>

**Tip:** Presumably if you received this accounting advising guide you have already decided on accounting as a major. However, if you want to reassess that decision, the PSU Career Center in USB402 provide useful career advising through computer based skills assessments, Meyers-Briggs (MBTI) testing and individual counseling appointments.

## Student Groups & Organizations

Joining a student group or organization is tremendously beneficial. It is a great way to learn about the industry, and it can put you into direct contact with professionals who can help you learn about the world of accounting and find a job. Student groups can also provide a useful support system throughout your education and recruiting, as well as later when you start working.

### ***Beta Alpha Psi (<http://www.betaalphapsi.pdx.edu>)***

Beta Alpha Psi (BAP or "Beta") is an honorary accounting organization for students. Here at PSU, Beta is THE student group providing information about accounting jobs and the profession, and networking opportunities with local accounting professionals. It also provides opportunities to gain leadership skills by being an officer or committee chairperson. Because BAP is a national organization with more than 300,000 students initiated since 1919, most accounting professionals were BAP members as students, or at least are aware of the importance of the organization.

Students should begin attending BAP meetings at the beginning of their first upper division accounting class (e.g., Actg381 or 335) or earlier if you are planning to pursue accounting. The meetings are a great way to learn about the accounting industry and current issues. Every quarter the Chapter holds 5-6 meetings at which professionals speak about topics affecting the industry. Meetings are announced throughout the quarter and include complimentary pizza or sandwiches!

Requirements to join BAP are on the BAP web site. However, ALL STUDENTS, even non-BAP members, may attend BAP events. The following events are generally held each year.

- Summer workshops on resume writing, interviewing and business etiquette.
- Resume book for fall recruiting: student resumes are compiled into a book that is sent to many Portland public accounting firms and corporations.
- 'Meet the Firms' in October: recruiting mixer for students seeking summer internships in their junior year or full time positions after graduation.
- Community service projects: join with local professionals on service projects
- Informal recruiting events with public accounting firms in August or September.
- 'Spring Transition Dessert': a social event between accounting students and professionals.

**Action Point:** The Beta Alpha Psi Listserv frequently sends out important information about recruiting events, meetings, tutoring, internship and employment opportunities. To sign up, go to <https://www.lists.pdx.edu/lists/listinfo/betaalphapsi>. It is free to sign up for the listserv. Use your '.pdx' email account to avoid technical problems with the listserv.

Advisors: Professor Tyee Carr, CPA at [tyee@pdx.edu](mailto:tyee@pdx.edu)  
Mr. Don Irving, CPA at [DonIrving@aol.com](mailto:DonIrving@aol.com)

### ***Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants (OSCPA)***

The OSCPAs offers student memberships, which provide networking opportunities, career building, professional updates and the OSCPAs monthly publication 'Oregon Certified Public Accountant' magazine. For information see <https://secure.orcpa.org/join>.

The OSCPAs also hosts a 'Career Showcase' event in early fall that is open to all students from all area universities. This event is separate from the PSU 'Meet the Firms' event, and often is attended by different firms.

**Tip:** If you are interested in working for a smaller local CPA firm, you should be sure to attend the OSCPAs 'Career Showcase'. Many smaller firms are active in the OSCPAs and view this event as their primary recruiting function of the year.

## ***What accounting careers are there?***

An accounting degree provides the background to pursue a variety of accounting positions. Within public accounting firms, you could do tax or external audit. Local and regional accounting firms typically have new staff perform both audit and tax work; the national and international (Big 4) firms generally have new staff specialize immediately in either audit or tax. In corporate or governmental settings you could work in financial accounting, cost accounting, treasury, internal audit, or tax. In a non-profit organization you could do financial and fund accounting. While the nature of the work and career paths vary considerably, all typically involve a high degree of challenge and responsibility, and are fairly well compensated. Below are some statistics on average salaries by type of employer and position.

<b><u>Tax Services/Tax Accountant</u></b>	<b><u>1<sup>st</sup> year</u></b>	<b><u>1-3 years</u></b>	<b><u>Senior</u></b>
Public Accounting - small firm	\$41,500-\$50,250	\$46,250-\$58,250	\$55,500-\$71,500
Public Accounting – med. firm	\$44,250-\$54,500	\$51,500-\$64,500	\$63,000-\$82,250
Public Accounting - large firm	\$50,000-\$61,250	\$56,250-\$72,500	\$69,750-\$90,500
Corporate - midsize co.	\$40,250-\$49,000	\$46,000-\$59,250	\$54,750-\$73,500
Corporate - large co.	\$41,500-\$51,250	\$48,500-\$64,250	\$65,250-\$82,500

<b><u>Audit/Assur./Internal Audit</u></b>	<b><u>1<sup>st</sup> year</u></b>	<b><u>1-3 years</u></b>	<b><u>Senior</u></b>
Public Accounting - small firm	\$41,500-\$50,000	\$46,750-\$58,000	\$55,250-\$71,500
Public Accounting – med. firm	\$44,000-\$54,750	\$51,750-\$64,250	\$62,000-\$81,750
Public Accounting - large firm	\$50,000-\$60,500	\$57,000-\$71,500	\$68,500-\$88,750
Corporate - small/medium co.	\$42,500-\$53,250	\$49,500-\$65,500	\$62,750-\$80,750
Corporate - large co.	\$44,500-\$55,500	\$53,250-\$70,750	\$69,750-\$90,250

Here are some examples of salaries for higher level positions in corporate accounting:

<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Small Co.</u></b>	<b><u>Med. Co.</u></b>	<b><u>Large Co.</u></b>
Assistant Treasurer	\$53,500-\$74,000	\$63,750-\$85,250	\$77,000-\$98,000
Assistant Controller	\$54,000-\$74,500	\$64,750-\$84,750	\$76,750-\$97,750
Controller	\$67,000-\$91,000	\$77,750-\$105,750	\$94,250-\$124,750
Chief Financial Officer	\$94,250-\$130,500	\$107,500-\$148,250	\$129,500-\$182,250

### **Key:**

Small = Revenues < \$25 million for firms, < \$50 million for corporations

Medium = Revenues from \$25 - \$250 million for firms, from \$50 - \$100 million for cos.

Large = Revenues > \$250 million for firms, from \$100-\$250 million for cos.

**Source:** 2011 Salary Guide – Accounting and Finance (US) from Robert Half. For more information or to download the full report, visit their online Salary Center at <http://www.roberthalffinance.com/SalaryCenter>

**Tip:** To get more information about entry level careers and career paths in accounting check out the web site [www.startheregoplaces.com](http://www.startheregoplaces.com)

## ***How do I find a job?***

### **When should I begin my job search?**

NOW! A job search does not begin by applying for jobs, but rather by preparing yourself to be successful when you do apply. Successful preparation includes having a strong resume, having good interview skills, and even knowing how to dress!

**Tip:** If you are a full time post-bac certificate student, it is imperative that you start participating in all the recruiting events no later than when you enter your first 300 level accounting class. Workshops and recruiting events start in the summer, and the primary recruiting season is at the beginning of October for students looking for internships or full time jobs the following year.

### **Resumes**

Your resume is critical and you need to make sure that it says all the right things about you. Your resume should not be thrown together at the last minute! You should start work on your resume months before you start recruiting.

Writing a good resume is tricky. On the one hand, it's your one chance to list all of your accomplishments and to impress potential employers. On the other hand, you don't want to overdo it by listing accomplishments or things which are not really pertinent. Avoid using templates to write your resume. The best thing to do is to look at several sample resumes, choose what you like about them and fit them to yours. Format is important. Firms prefer the chronological format as opposed to functional format. Resume packets are available in SBA 240, and are also available online at <http://www.pdx.edu/sba/resume-review>.

Most importantly, you need to have your resume reviewed numerous times for content, style and typos! The Business School holds resume workshops throughout the year when you can have your resume reviewed. Beta Alpha Psi also holds a Resume Critique event each summer in which you can get your resume reviewed by professional. You can also bring your resume to the PSU Career Center or SBA Undergraduate Programs to have it reviewed.

### **Interviewing**

Interviewing is an extremely important skill to develop. Get as much experience and practice as you can. The PSU Career Services holds interviewing workshops that cover the basics of interviewing. Beta Alpha Psi coordinates mock interviews with professionals during summer, too. Try to get in as much experience as you can. Search common and "Behavioral" interview questions on the internet and prepare yourself for what the interviewer might ask. Also, try to learn more about the interviewer if you can. Lists of traditional and behavioral questions are available on the SBA website at <http://www.pdx.edu/sba/interview-prep>.

### **Professional Dress**

When you are a student, you have the luxury of looking the way you want. But when you start your job search, you want to be aware that the market is very competitive and you need to decide if certain personal appearance attributes are worth risking not getting the job. In general, professional appearance in accounting is fairly conservative. For women and men, this means no visible tattoos or piercings other than small earrings for women. Men should wear conservative darker suits (this means black, charcoal or navy matching jacket and slacks). Women should also wear conservative darker suits, either with pants or a modest skirt. Many stores will give you good guidance on what to wear such as Men's Warehouse, Nordstrom, Ann Taylor, or Talbots. The Nordstrom Rack can be a good source of reasonable priced suits for men (the Rack even will do the tailoring for a small fee).

## Communications Skills

Everybody knows that communications skills are important, but there are a few additional things you should think about as you move through the job search process. When you interview for a job you need to be perceived as having the level of communications skills expected of a professional representing their employer. As such, you need to take great care that your written, email and oral communications are appropriate.

- Support for strong written communications such as cover letters and resumes is available through SBA Career Services (see above).
- Email communication is increasingly being used in the job search process. For some tips on appropriate email etiquette, see <http://www.emailreplies.com>. Then always be sure you have someone else read the email before you hit the send button!

## ESL Students

Strong oral and written communications skills are a requirement for all jobs in accounting. In a competitive job market, a heavy accent can be a disadvantage. If English is not your first language, you need to ensure that your written and oral communication can be easily understood by others. PSU's Intensive English Language Program offers credit and non-credit Pronunciation electives and can provide pronunciation assessments if you are unsure whether you need to work on your language skills. For more information see [www.ielp.pdx.edu](http://www.ielp.pdx.edu) or contact Judy Reed at [reedj@pdx.edu](mailto:reedj@pdx.edu). Registration for classes must be done in person at the IELP office in East Hall room 122.

## International Students

Many employers do not use their allotted visas on entry-level employees. It is important that you ask about visas, and in particular, whether other offices of an employer (perhaps in larger cities) are willing to sponsor entry level employee visas. Most international students can obtain authorization to seek employment lasting up to one year after graduation. This done through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program. OPT must be planned 3-6 months in advance of graduation. See your international student advisor for details on OPT.

Another option to gain experience while in school is an internship. Most international students can take paid internships through Curricular Practical Training (CPT). For information about internships for international students, contact Becky Einolf at [beckye@pdx.edu](mailto:beckye@pdx.edu)

## When are jobs posted?

Searching for a job is not something that should be left until after graduation! There is a fairly predictable recruiting cycle that should be understood to maximize your job options. As you will see, there are several points in time when some employers tend to post jobs, and other groups of employers that will post positions throughout the year.

To maximize your opportunities, you should begin the job search process during the summer and fall *prior* to graduation. (For example, students graduating between June and December 2012 should start looking for a job in September 2011). Students seeking Summer Internships in their junior year should attend the OSCP and Meet the Firms events their first year in 300 level accounting courses. The Beta Alpha Psi "Meet the Firms" and the Oregon Society of CPAs "Career Showcase" events mark the start of the "fall recruiting season". This is when jobs and internships are posted for the *following* summer and fall. Typically these are positions at the larger public accounting firms and some large corporations. Some of these employers will conduct initial screening interviews on-campus, whereas others will conduct interviews in their offices.

Also, later in the fall, smaller public accounting firms post jobs for positions beginning in January to meet seasonal tax preparation demands. Many of these positions are permanent, while others are only for tax season. Sometimes firms are willing to have students work part-time or on an internship basis if they are still completing coursework.

Throughout the year there is also on-going recruitment by corporate, governmental and non-profit organizations looking to make immediate hires of employees. Students who are near graduation should consider these positions even if the start date is before graduation. Some of these employers may be willing to defer start dates slightly or work with students who are near degree completion to accommodate scheduling both school and work.

Another important tip to consider in your job search is the timeframe for governmental jobs. If you even *think* you may seek a position in state or federal government, be sure to complete the necessary applications in advance, so that when you see a job of interest posted, you are already in the governmental agency's system. The time for applications to be processed can be up to three months. Below are the web sites you should consider applying to:

US Government jobs – all agencies: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) . This site will notify you when jobs fitting your criteria are posted.

IRS: <http://jobs.irs.gov/student/>

State of Oregon: <http://www.oregonjobs.org/>

FBI: <http://www.fbijobs.gov/>

Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/>

### Where are the jobs posted?

Employers can post open positions through either the **PSU** Career Center (USB402) or the **SBA** Career Services (SBA240). PSU Career Center postings are accessed through their online jobs database PSUCareerConnect <http://www.pdx.edu/careers/>. To receive jobs posted by the SBA, subscribe to the SBA Listserv <<http://www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html>>. It is important that you utilize the resources of both the SBA Career Services and the PSU Career Center to ensure that you are accessing all job posted on campus.

In addition, some larger public accounting firms also participate in the PSU Career Center's On-campus Recruiting Program in October. To access the firms recruiting on campus you must first register with PSUCareerConnect maintained by the PSU Career Center at [www.pdx.edu/careers](http://www.pdx.edu/careers). Once registered, you will use this web site to electronically submit resumes and other required materials, receive notification if you have been selected for an interview, and select an interview time.

**Tip:** The process of applying for on-campus interviews is very time consuming. Typically all resumes, cover letters, transcripts, and applications are due to the firms during the first week of October. You should begin the process of completing online applications to the firms in mid September. Do not wait until the deadline to apply!

Later in the Fall Term recruiting cycle there usually will be a few representatives from private industry and governmental agencies who conduct on-campus interviews. Realize, however, that many more of these employers will post jobs through the SBA or PSU listserv and will conduct the interviews at their offices rather than on-campus.

**Tip:** While many jobs are posted at PSU, some employers look for new employees through networking events such as the Oregon Society of CPAs "Career Showcase" event (see above), as well as on-line and print classified ads. These jobs typically have immediate start dates, whereas the on campus job postings may have either immediate or future start dates.

### What about Internships?

Public Accounting Internships follow a fairly predictable recruiting cycle. Many larger public accounting firms and corporations offer summer internships. These are made available through the SBA Listserv and PSU Career Center. Some firms will also participate in the On-campus Recruiting Program to fill their internships. You will apply to these firms in the fall through the PSU Career Centers' online jobs database — CareerConnect — in the same manner as described above. As mentioned above, some public accounting firms offer tax season internships.

### Career Information Day

Each February, the PSU Career Center hosts Career Information Day where you may talk with employers who may be seeking accounting majors. This is a great opportunity for you to access organizations that do not participate in the fall On-campus Recruiting Program. You can expect to see firms such as Tektronix, Oregon Dept. of Revenue, and Oregon Division of Audits at Career Information Day. A list of participating companies is made available on the PSU Career Center's website, [www.pdx.edu/careers](http://www.pdx.edu/careers), in the weeks leading up to Career

### Which employers have posted jobs at PSU in recent years?

The following tables provide a sample of employers which have posted positions at PSU in the last few years, along with general salary ranges.

**Tip:** Students should keep in mind however that the benefits accompanying the jobs and expectations of the number of hours to be worked can vary widely. Thus, to determine compensation for what is performed, students should carefully consider the full compensation package as well as overtime expectations.

<b>Public Accounting Firms Posting Positions</b>	<b>Salary Range mid \$30s to mid \$40s</b>
Alten Sakai & Co LLP	Entry Level Staff Accountant
Bogumil, Holzgang & Harris, PC	Accounting Associate
Brian K Kim CPA PC	Staff Accountant
Brown/Armstrong	Accountant
DeLap LLP	Staff Accountant (Audit & Tax)
Deloitte & Touche *	Staff, Audit Services
Edison, Hurley & Co	Staff Accountant
Fellner & Kuhn, PC	Accountant
Geffen Mesher *	Staff Accountant
Grant Thornton *	Tax Associate
Isler Northwest	Staff Accountant (Tax & Audit)
Jones & Roth, PC	Staff Accountant
KPMG LLP *	Staff Accountant (Audit or Tax)
Moss Adams *	Staff Accountant (Audit or Tax)
Perkins & Co *	Staff Accountant
PricewaterhouseCoopers *	Staff Accountant (Audit or Tax)
Scribner, Scribner and Sutton, CPA	Staff Accountant
The Billups Co CPAs Inc	Staff Accountant
Tom Dragicevic, PC	Staff Accountant

\* Interviews on campus

<b>Non-Profit Organizations Posting Positions</b>	<b>Salary Range high \$20s to mid \$40s</b>
Community Found. For SW WA	Accountant
Education Service District (Vancouver WA)	Grant Accountant
Meyer Memorial Trust	Accounting Associate
OHSU	General Ledger Accountant
PATH	Accounting Associate
Portfolio Financial Servicing Co	Tax Accountant
Regence	Accountant 3

<b>Corporations Posting Positions at PSU</b>	<b>Salary Range mid \$30s to low \$40s</b>
Avnera Corp.	Bookkeeper/Accountant
Evergreen Eagle	Staff Accountant
Intel (Intel Finance ) *	Accountant, Financial Analyst
LaCrosse Footwear	Staff Accountant
Lynden Inc (Seattle)	Accountant
Mt Hood Solutions	Accountant
Myers Container	Controller
Nike	Financial Analyst
Novellus	Corporate Accountant
PacifiCorp	Pricing and Cost of Service Analyst
PGE	Actg Analyst I/II, Rates & Regulatory Affairs Analyst
Precision Castparts	Finance/Cost Accountant II
Regence *	Cash Management Specialist, Accountant II
Schnitzer Steel Industries	Associate Staff Accountant
Sulzer Pumps (US) Inc	Accountant

\* Interviews on campus

<b>Governmental Agencies Posting Positions</b>	<b>Salary Range high \$20s to high \$40s</b>
Benton County	Sr Tax Deputy, Budget/Accounting Analyst
City of Portland	Sr. Financial Analyst
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission	Staff Accountant
FBI	Forensic Accountant
IRS	Revenue Agent
Multnomah County	Grant Accountant
OR Secretary of State	Staff Auditor, State Auditor I
Oregon Metro	Accountant I
Oregon University System	Assistant Auditor
State of WA Dept of Revenue	Revenue Auditor I
US Dept Health & Human Services	Staff Auditor
US Dept of Energy - Bonneville Power	Accountant, Auditor
US Dept of the Army, Veterans Affairs, VA Med Ctr	Accountant
US Dept of Transportation	Auditor
US Dept of Veterans Affairs	Auditor/Management Analyst

## When should I do things?

Events on this calendar detail career developing opportunities offered to Accounting students through the University, the SBA, Beta Alpha Psi, and professional organizations. Participation in these events is recommended for students to develop a polished and professional image when interacting with recruiters at professional networking events. Full and part-time students who will graduate in spring of the following year should follow the events for *2 years prior to time of graduation*. Full and part-time students who will graduate in spring of the current year should follow the events for 1 year prior to graduation. *Italicized* events are recommended for these students to gain experience with the job market and recruiting process.

<b>Time to Graduation</b>	<b>Mid July - August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November/December</b>
2 years	<i>Resume Workshop</i> <sup>1</sup>  <i>Sign up for Accounting Jobs Listserv</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Networking Workshop</i> <sup>1</sup>  Join Beta Alpha Psi <sup>3</sup> Read business periodicals regularly Evaluate need for accounting work experience	<i>BAP Meet the Firms</i> <sup>3</sup>  <i>OSCPA Career Showcase</i> <sup>5</sup>  <i>Apply for internships for the following summer</i>	Offers extended for internships from on-campus interviews
<b>Time to Graduation</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>February/March</b>	<b>April/May</b>	<b>June - July</b>
2 years	<i>Most tax season internships run approximately Jan - April</i>	Scholarship Application Due <sup>1</sup>		<i>Most accounting internships start in June</i>

<b>Time to Graduation</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November/December</b>	
1 year	Resume Workshop <sup>1</sup> Resume Critique with Firms <sup>2</sup> BAP Resume Book <sup>3</sup>  On-Campus Application Workshop <sup>2</sup>  Complete application for Government Jobs <sup>6</sup>  <i>Sign up for Accounting Jobs Listserv<sup>4</sup></i>	CPA Firms' Open House Events <sup>1</sup>  Networking Workshop <sup>1</sup>  Join Beta Alpha Psi <sup>3</sup>  Read business periodicals Regularly  Evaluate need for accounting work experience  Apply to SBA Mentor Program <sup>1</sup>	PSU Meet the Firms Event <sup>3</sup>  OSCPA Career Showcase Event <sup>5</sup>  Mock Interviews with Firms <sup>3</sup>  Accounting Recruiting <sup>2</sup>  Interview Workshop <sup>1</sup>  On-campus Interviews  Apply to Mentor Program <sup>1</sup>	Offers extended for jobs from on-campus interviews	
<b>Time to Graduation</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>February/March</b>		<b>April/May</b>	<b>June/July</b>
1 year	Resume Workshop <sup>1</sup>	Career Information Day <sup>2</sup>		Public Accounting Career Info Day <sup>1</sup>	

Key: <sup>1</sup> SBA Career Services (SBA240) [www.pdx.edu/sba/undergraduate-resources](http://www.pdx.edu/sba/undergraduate-resources)

<sup>2</sup> PSU Career Center (USB402) [www.pdx.edu/careers](http://www.pdx.edu/careers)

<sup>3</sup> Beta Alpha Psi [www.betalphapsi.pdx.edu](http://www.betalphapsi.pdx.edu)

<sup>4</sup> Listserv signup: [www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html](http://www.sba.pdx.edu/undergradlist.html)

<sup>5</sup> OSCPA <http://www.orcpa.org/>

<sup>6</sup> IRS: <http://www.jobs.irs.gov/>

FBI: <http://www.fbijobs.gov/>

State of Oregon: <http://www.oregonjobs.org/>

Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/>

## ***How can I get “certified”?***

A number of well recognized certifications exist for accountants who would like to demonstrate their expertise in a particular area. The most common certifications are Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) and Certified Managerial Accountant (CMA). Each is discussed below.

### **ROAD TO BECOMING A CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT (CPA)**

#### *Why become a CPA?*

Becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) significantly enhances both salary and advancement potential for young business professionals and can open a variety of doors in all sectors of the business world.

#### *Educational Background to Sit for the CPA Exam*

To be eligible to take the exam you need to have completed 225 quarter credit hours, including a Bachelor Degree from an accredited university. Included in the 225 hours are 36 hours in accounting AND 36 hours in accounting or related subjects (business, economics, finance, etc.). See the Oregon Board of Accountancy’s website for more details (<http://egov.oregon.gov/boa/index.shtml>).

Here at PSU, there are several ways to obtain the 225 hours. Importantly, each of these routes will provide both the needed hours and include course content relevant to the CPA exam.

- Undergraduate degree in any major plus the Post-Bac Certificate in Accounting
- Bachelors degree in Accounting plus an additional 45 credit hours. In Oregon, it is your choice as to how you get these 45 credits, thus if you already have these hours in any other field, you will meet the 225 requirement. If you are trying to decide how to get these hours, we have found that employers tend to look most favorably on additional classes or a second bachelor’s degree in Finance, or a Masters Degree such as PSU’s Masters of Science in Financial Analysis (MSFA) or a Masters in Accountancy (offered in Oregon only at U of O). Before making this important decision, however, you should weigh the extent to which the classes are personally interesting and/or increase your marketability to prospective employers.

**Tip:** Be aware that many public accounting firms will only hire under the condition that you are “CPA exam ready” and have completed your 225 credits. Check the employment requirements of firms you’re interested in to see if they only hire students that are “CPA exam ready.”

#### *The Exam*

The Uniform CPA Exam was developed and is maintained by the [American Institute of Certified Public Accountants](http://www.aicpa.org) (AICPA) ([www.aicpa.org](http://www.aicpa.org)). The exam itself is administered in all 50 states and U.S. territories by the [National Association of State Boards of Accountancy](http://www.nasba.org) ([www.nasba.org](http://www.nasba.org)).

The CPA exam is now entirely computer based and is taken at designated testing centers during certain times of the year. The testing ‘windows’ include all months except March, June, September and December.

The CPA exam has four sections: Auditing and Attestation (AUD), Business Environment and Concepts (BEC), Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR), and Regulation (REG) which covers federal taxation, ethics, professional and legal responsibilities, and business law.

Sections may be taken individually or in combination. Scoring is a fully automated process for exam components except the written communication portion of simulations which are scored by a network of readers (CPAs). After all four sections are passed, CPA candidates also must pass a "take home" Professional Ethics Exam.

**Tip:** Once a section is passed you have 18 months to complete the rest of the sections or you will lose credit for the passed section(s). In other words you must pass all four sections within an 18 month period after passing the first section. Any sections passed outside the 18 month period and for which credit has been lost must be retaken.

#### *How expensive is the CPA exam?*

The CPA exam is expensive! The application for first time candidate in Oregon is \$100 and \$50 for returning candidates. In addition candidates must pay an exam fee ranging from \$185 to \$230 per section.

The good news is that many employers have some sort of incentive program that reimburses you for passed sections. Unfortunately, they tend not to pay for failed sections. You should research the reimbursement policies of employers to see what they are.

#### *How to study for the exam*

School alone will not prepare you for the CPA exam! It is virtually unheard of for a student to walk right out of school and take all four sections and pass them. It is for this reason that you should plan on a systematic study plan, using either a self-study method or a review course. A number of self-study books are available on Amazon.com for a cost of around \$200 for books covering each section of the exam. More comprehensive review courses supplement books with a live instructor in a classroom while others are done through an online instructor or via CD-ROM. You should evaluate what works best for you before deciding. Each type has its benefits and drawbacks.

**Tip:** Many employers pay for a review course, offer significant discounts or will provide you with a self study course at no cost. It's a good idea to research what employers offer. There are also often various discounts for PSU accounting students and student members of the Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants ([www.orcpa.org](http://www.orcpa.org)) and of the AICPA ([www.aicpa.org](http://www.aicpa.org)).

Below is a list of some CPA review courses and their respective URLs.

Becker CPA Exam Review	<a href="http://www.beckercpa.com">www.beckercpa.com</a>
Bisk CPA Exam Review	<a href="http://www.CPAexam.com">www.CPAexam.com</a>
CPA Excel	<a href="http://www.cpaexcel.com">www.cpaexcel.com</a>
Kaplan CPA Review	<a href="http://www.kaplancpareview.com">www.kaplancpareview.com</a>
MicroMash CPA Exam Review	<a href="http://www.micromash.com">www.micromash.com</a>
Roger Phillips CPA Exam Review	<a href="http://www.rogercpareview.com">www.rogercpareview.com</a>
Yaeger CPA Review	<a href="http://www.YaegerCPAReview.com">www.YaegerCPAReview.com</a>

#### *The best time to take the exam*

The best time to take the exam is as soon as you are eligible! Studies have shown that the risk of not completing the exam increases with amount of time spent out of school. It also becomes harder the longer you wait. Many students opt to take the exam upon graduating, but before starting work. While this can be a costly option to take time off, experience has shown this can be very effective. The information from your accounting classes will still be relatively fresh in your mind which will help tremendously come exam time. Plus, when you

begin working it will become very difficult to find enough time to study. The point is to plan on getting the exam out of the way as soon as possible. Don't put it off!

*To become a licensed CPA*

So you have finally passed all four sections and the ethics exam. Unfortunately, you are still not a CPA. You still have to fulfill the 12 month experience requirement to become licensed. All experience must be under the direct supervision of a qualified supervisor licensee who is a CPA. The point of the experience requirement is to verify that you have learned and displayed a specified set of skills necessary to become a CPA. This may take longer than a year and it is not uncommon for it to take more than 18 months to be signed-off. For more information visit the Oregon Board of Accountancy website (<http://egov.oregon.gov/BOA/index.shtml>).

**Tip:** Oregon licensing rules allow for meeting the experience requirement while working in public accounting as well as government or private industry. However, before you assume that a prospective employer will be able to provide this experience requirement, ask specific questions about the program in place to do this and the employer's track record with providing it to employees in the past. Be aware that it may take longer than a year to meet the specific experience requirement if your employer is not a CPA firm.

After completing the experience requirement you will finally be a CPA. Realize, however, that to renew your license every two years, you must also complete 80 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) every two years. Many employers provide this CPE as part of their own ongoing training. State societies are also a good source of qualified CPE courses. In Oregon this can be obtained at [https://secure.orcpa.org/professional\\_development/](https://secure.orcpa.org/professional_development/).

**Certified Internal Auditor (CIA):**

For individuals who are interested in a career in internal auditing, the Certified Internal Auditor designation is a desirable certification. This exam is administered by the Institute of Internal Auditors, the worldwide leader, authority, and principal educator for internal auditing professionals. In contrast to the CPA exam, this exam is typically taken after working for a period of time. More information about becoming a CIA can be obtained at <http://www.theiia.org/certification/>, or by attending meetings of the Portland chapter of the institute of internal auditors. More information on the Portland IIA chapter can be obtained at <http://www.theiia.org/chapters/index.cfm?cid=49>

**Certified Management Accountant (CMA) EXAM REQUIREMENTS**

For students interested in a career as a cost or managerial accountant, the appropriate professional designation to pursue is the CMA. To take the CMA exam, students need a bachelors degree from an accredited college, must be a member of Institute of Management Accountants (IMA), pass all four parts of the exam, satisfy the experience requirement and comply with the Standards of Ethical Conduct. For more detailed information see [www.imanet.org](http://www.imanet.org) or contact the Portland IMA chapter at <http://www.ima-pdx.org/>.