



Rock the CPA Exam!

The journey to becoming a CPA takes tenacity and grit. While it's not easy, the benefits of licensure outweigh the challenge of passing the exam. Plus, millions of accounting professionals have done it—and you can, too!

The good news: you have control over many factors of the exam prep process!

Becker has honed these tips and strategies throughout nearly 70 years of experience to help you take control of your CPA Exam prep journey.



Step 1: Start While You're Still in School

- **Become a tutor** for accounting classes. The best way to learn and remember concepts is to teach them to someone else!
- **Know the educational requirements** to take the exam and the earliest date you can take it. Plan your classes so you can take a section during your last semester, if possible.
- **Attend accounting club or society meetings** to learn more about the profession and the exam. Join Beta Alpha Psi or another honor society if your school has it! These meetings give you opportunities to learn and help you hone networking skills that will pay off throughout your career.

Step 2: Plan for the Exam

- **Take the exam as soon as possible** when your knowledge is still fresh, and you're still in study mode. This is the number one suggestion from candidates!
- **Get to know the National Association of State Board of Accountants (NASBA) website**. This is where you will find exam information and application details, especially for those states that use NASBA for the application.
- **Choose a state board of accountancy for the CPA Exam and licensure process**. Each state board sets its own requirements; knowing where you'll sit for the exam is a vital first step in your planning.
- **Know the application process, timeline, and requirements** for your state board of accountancy and incorporate this information into your plan.
- **Know your exam timeline**. You have to apply for a Notice to Schedule (NTS) for each exam section. In most states, it's valid for six months.
- **Create a realistic study plan**. Map out a realistic schedule for when and how much you can study, factoring in your learning style and planning for any major life events.

Becker's CPA Exam Review packages include a fully customizable study planner where you can set your planned exam date and how many hours per day and week you can study. Then, you'll receive a full plan of what you'll study each day, when to take simulated exams, and more! And if anything changes these plans, you can stay on track by automatically rescheduling the review you've missed.



Step 3: Establish Study Strategies

- **Keep your eye on the end goal.** This isn't just another exam; it's a gateway for your career, so embrace it. Focus on the benefits of being a licensed CPA to stay motivated!
- **Prioritize CPA Exam prep.** We all have things in our lives that we don't compromise (e.g., working out, walking the dog). Make this one of those top priorities.
- **Let your family and friends know your goal.** Ask for their support by asking for help in taking things off your plate, respecting your study time, etc.
- **Put in the time to be fully prepared.** You can't "hack" the exam. The only way to pass is by understanding the content.
- **Find a study partner.** Knowing someone else who is going on the same journey helps you feel less alone, and a partner can be a resource for questions and encouragement. Becker offers private Facebook study groups for each CPA Exam section to help you build this study community.
- **Have a structured study routine** and stick to it.
- **Create a dedicated study area with minimal distractions.** Studying on your couch with the television on or checking social media won't help you retain the material.
- **Practice, practice, practice!** Answer as many multiple-choice questions as you can to get familiar with how questions are asked and to improve your speed. Do the same with task-based simulations.
- **Determine the "call" of each question.** Read the last paragraph/sentence first, then read through the entire question so you're focused on what you need to do.
- **Understand why you got a question wrong.** Make sure you understand why you missed a question or how to correctly work through a task-based simulation, so you don't repeat your error later. Becker's AI study tool, Newt™, can help by telling you exactly where you went wrong and what you need to remember to get it right the next time.
- **Reach Exam Day ReadySM status in your Becker LMS.** Exam Day ReadySM (EDR) is the proven metric that helps you measure your ability to pass the exam. Watch 80% of lecture videos, correctly answer 80% of practice questions, and score at least 50% on mini and simulated exams to reach EDR status.



Tip: Becker offers unlimited, personalized practice tests that target your specific areas for improvement.

- Adapt2U technology customizes each test to hone in on areas of weakness.
- When reviewing your answers, SkillBuilder solution videos walk you through step-by-step solutions.
- Newt™, Becker's AI assistant, helps you understand why you get questions wrong and how to fix it for next time.



Step 4: Prior to Exam Day...

- Take the Becker simulated exams at the time you've scheduled your exam** in strict, exam-like conditions. You'll know what it "feels" like taking the exam at that time.
- Schedule the exam when you're most "on."** If you're not a morning person, schedule your exam in the afternoon. Prometric (the testing company) has morning and afternoon options.
- Visit the Prometric test center** so you know how to get there and where to park. You can even walk in and talk to an administrator so it's familiar on exam day.
- Have a valid, state-issued ID.** You have to show your valid ID (driver's license, passport, or non-operator's ID) to sit for the exam, so make sure you know where it is and that it's still valid.
- Have your NTS.** Like your ID, you need to have your Notice to Schedule (NTS) to take the exam. Print several copies and keep one in the glove box of your car as a backup.
- Get plenty of sleep** the week before your exam. You may not sleep well the night before taking it.

Step 5: Take the Exam

- Treat this like a normal day.** Don't do anything you wouldn't do on any other day. For example, if you don't normally eat breakfast, don't on exam day. You can bring a snack to eat during your break.
- Know how to get to Prometric.** Use your GPS to guide you to the Prometric test center. It will reroute if there's an accident or other delay.
- Dress comfortably.** This is a four-hour exam so be sure to wear layers in case it's too cold or too hot and don't wear anything that could distract you or cause discomfort.
- Arrive early.** Ideally, you'll arrive 30 minutes prior to your exam time to avoid lines. If you're ready to go, and the center is ready, they will seat you immediately.
- Use the locker.** Prometric provides a locker for your personal items, like your phone, purse, and snack. You will receive a key and can access the locker during breaks, but you are not allowed to turn on your phone or review study materials until you have completed the entire exam.
- Know the screening procedures.** You'll go through a metal detector or a proctor will use a scanning wand and you will be asked to pull up your shirt sleeves and pant legs. They'll also scan your fingerprints and check your ID to ensure security.
- Use the restroom.** Think of it like a long car trip and make sure you're ready to enter the exam room.



Step 5: Take the Exam (Continued)

- Answer every question.** Don't leave anything blank; guess if you're unsure.
- Answer the "easy" questions first.** If you get stuck, mark the difficult ones and answer them later.
- Use the 15-minute break** after Testlet 3 to grab a snack, use the restroom, and walk around to get your blood flowing. This break does not go against your time, so make sure to take these free minutes!



Final Words of Wisdom

- Review the Candidate Guide on NASBA's website.** This resource from NASBA is essential to get a better feel for the entire process.
- Take the exam as soon as possible.** We said it once, we'll say it again: life gets busy once you start working, and having the exam in your rearview mirror will allow you to focus fully on your career.
- Change your mindset** from seeing the exam as a difficult obstacle to an opportunity to change your trajectory. Many firms have bonuses if you pass within a certain timeframe, and earning your license will open up more career opportunities!
- Keep in mind that this is a marathon, not a sprint.** Pace yourself throughout the process; don't work until you drop!
- Reward yourself along the way.** It's a great accomplishment to pass each section, so treat yourself at each juncture.
- Give yourself a break as you wait for your score.** No one skips out of the testing center convinced they nailed it!

Passing the CPA Exam is an achievement that will pay off for years to come. Knowing what to expect and controlling the factors throughout the process will give you the confidence to succeed. Best wishes on your journey to becoming a CPA. You'll never regret getting those 3 letters after your name!

Becker has helped nearly two million CPA candidates pass the exam and earn their license. Discover how we can help you achieve your goals through

comprehensive curriculum, expert instruction, and unlimited support.



Try Becker's CPA Exam Review free for 14 days!

becker.com      

© 2026 Becker Professional Education. All rights reserved.

Becker[®]+