



Guidelines for Accreditation of Educational Institutions

The Virginia Board of Accountancy has adopted the following guidelines in order to clarify its processes related to Code of Virginia §§ 54.1-4400, 54.1-4409.2 and related regulations.

Guidelines for CPA applicants

Persons who hold a CPA license from a substantially equivalent jurisdiction, as determined by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), or whose license was issued by an organization with a Mutual Recognition Agreement recommended by the International Qualifications Appraisal Board (IQAB), may be granted a privilege to practice in Virginia per VBOA Policy #3.

All other persons, in applying for a Virginia CPA license, must meet the education requirements described in Virginia statute and regulation.

Credit hours obtained to fulfill VBOA's education requirements must be earned from an accredited degree-granting institution, as defined by Code of Virginia § 54.1-4400. Accredited degree-granting institutions are typically colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities are deemed to be "accredited" if they are recognized by an accreditation body listed in Virginia statute or regulation, or by an accreditation body recognized by the VBOA as upholding the same level of quality control within the education process, as listed in Appendix A.

For graduates of educational institutions not accredited by the aforementioned bodies, including foreign colleges and universities, VBOA utilizes education evaluation firms to provide assistance in determining whether a degree-granting institution is properly accredited per the standards established by 18VAC5-22-60. VBOA will maintain a list on its website of currently-accepted evaluation firms.

VBOA retains final discretion on whether or not to accept recommendations from evaluation firms regarding foreign educational accreditation.

In addition to Virginia statute and regulation, consult VBOA's [Education Handbook](#) for guidance on education required to become a Virginia CPA.



Guidelines for education evaluation

The following is presented as general guidance to clarify expectations for education evaluation.

- Applicants who have a credential that allows them to apply via VBOA Policy #3 do not need to verify education.
- Degree-granting institutions are colleges and universities that are authorized to issue degrees to students upon successful completion of degree requirements.
- Vendors, private companies, and professional organizations that issue credentials are not degree-granting institutions.
- Professional accountancy credentials issued by foreign jurisdictions are not degrees for the purposes of VBOA education requirements.
- If an academic transcript contains transfer credits that are used to fulfill educational requirements other than minimum-credit requirements, the institution where those credits originated must be evaluated as well.
- All academic transcripts of CPA applicants will be reviewed by the VBOA to ensure educational requirements have been met.

The purpose of education evaluation is to evaluate the accreditation of degree-granting institutions to ensure the quality control of education is consistent as determined by previously recognized accreditation bodies.

VBOA will no longer utilize foreign education evaluation firms that are consistently unable to act in compliance with the above guidance. Approved firms are listed on the VBOA website.



Applicable Laws

§ 54.1-4400. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Accredited institution” means a degree-granting institution of higher education accredited either by (i) one of the six major regional accrediting organizations-Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges-or their successors; or (ii) an accrediting organization demonstrating to the Board periodically, as prescribed by the Board, that its accreditation process and standards are substantially equivalent to the accreditation process and standards of the six major regional accrediting organizations.

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§ 54.1-4409.2. How a person may obtain a Virginia license.

A. A person who has not held the license of any state may obtain a Virginia license under this subsection.

1. To be considered for a Virginia license, the person seeking licensure shall:

a. Provide documentation that he has obtained from one or more accredited institutions at least 150 semester hours of education, a baccalaureate or higher degree, and an accounting concentration or equivalent, as defined by the Board;

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B. A person who does not hold the license of another state but has previously held the license of another state may obtain a Virginia license under this subsection.

1. To be considered for a Virginia license, the person seeking licensure shall:

c. Describe the semester hours of education he has obtained from institutions of higher education. The Board shall determine whether the education obtained is substantially equivalent to the education that would have been required by the Board when the person passed the CPA examination;

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C. A person who holds the license of another state may obtain a Virginia license under this subsection.

1. To be considered for a Virginia license, the person seeking licensure shall:

d. Describe the semester hours of education he has obtained from institutions of higher education. The Board shall determine whether the education obtained is substantially equivalent to the education that would have been required by the Board when the person passed the CPA examination;



Guidelines for Accreditation of Educational Institutions Appendix A

This is an appendix to VBOA Guidelines for Accreditation of Educational Institutions. This appendix lists all educational accreditation bodies recognized by the Virginia Board of Accountancy.

Approved providers of accreditation include the following:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Commission of Higher Education
 Successor to New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Higher Learning Commission
 Successor to North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- WASC Senior College and University Commission
 Successor to Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Any organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- Others as approved by the VBOA.