

CPA USA Exam Structure

Compiled by HM Rana (16 Years Audit & Professional Teaching Experience)

Core Papers (must take all three)

1. AUD – Auditing & Attestation
2. FAR – Financial Accounting & Reporting
3. REG – Regulation

Optional Papers (choose one of three)

4. BEC – Business Environment & Concepts
5. IT – Information Technology (if offered in your state)
6. Other optional depending on state rules (typically BEC is the default optional)

Passing Criteria

- **Minimum score:** 75 out of 100 on each paper
- **Passing window:** Must pass all four papers (3 core + 1 optional) **within 18 months** from the date of passing the first section.
- **Credit carry-forward:** If a section is passed, credit is valid **for 18 months** only. After 18 months, the section expires, and you must retake it.

Question Types Across Papers

- **MCQ – Multiple Choice Questions**
- **TBS – Task-Based Simulations**
- **WCT – Written Communication Tasks** (only in BEC)

Exam-Level Examples

MCQ Example

Paper: REG

Question: Which of the following is deductible for federal income tax purposes?

- A) Charitable contributions
- B) Personal living expenses
- C) Both A and B
- D) None

Answer: A) Charitable contributions

TBS Example

Paper: FAR

Scenario: You are provided with a trial balance and additional info on a company's lease agreements.

Task: Prepare the journal entries for the leases under ASC 842.

Format: Spreadsheet calculations and journal entry submission

WCT Example

Paper: BEC

Scenario: Management is evaluating a new investment project.

Task: Draft a memo to the CFO explaining how interest rate changes affect the project's cost of capital.

Format: Business memo with introduction, analysis, and conclusion