

# How to Apply for the CPA Exam



What to have on hand before you start the online application as a first-time Exam candidate in Massachusetts.

Applying for the CPA Exam is a bit like getting your driver's license or passport—it's just easier if you have everything already with you to save yourself the time and frustration of trying to find things on-the-fly.

What to have on hand before you start the online application as a first-time Exam candidate in Massachusetts:

- School contact info to request your academic transcripts (all schools attended)
- ID
- Payment
- Exam plan
- Copy of your transcript(s)

Candidates apply for the CPA Exam in two parts: first the CPA Exam Eligibility Application and second the CPA Exam Section Application. See below for the steps you'll need to complete to obtain your Notice-to-Schedule.

## CPA Exam Application Process: Part I

- 1 Create a NASBA Application Dashboard Account**  
Go to [dashboard.nasba.org](https://dashboard.nasba.org) to get started. Create an account by entering your current contact info—you will be asked to verify your account by checking your email. You will also be asked to set-up multi-factor identification.
- 2 NASBA Application Dashboard**  
Once logged-in, you'll select "CPA Portal" and then "New Candidate." You'll then be asked to select your jurisdiction. To apply in Massachusetts, select that.
- 3 Verify Your Name & Contact Info**  
Here you will verify the enrolling candidate information (name, address, contact information) and verify the account through the link that will be emailed to you. Important: Your name on the application must be exactly the same as what's on your ID. If the ID you present at the testing center doesn't match what's on your application, you will not be allowed to take the CPA Exam, which would be soul-crushing, and we don't want that for you!

## 4 Education Section

While you will have your official transcripts sent directly to CPA Exam Services (more on that in Step 6), the application still asks questions that you may have already forgotten—like the name of your college/university, the degree you earned, the date it was earned and the name on your transcript. This is why having your own copy of the transcript comes in handy.

**PRO TIP** If you have a degree or education credits that have been completed internationally that are NOT part of a study abroad program, this education will need to undergo an international credential evaluation by either NASBA International Evaluation Services or The Center for Educational Documentation (CED) prior to beginning the CPA Exam application. Visit NASBA International Evaluation Services for more information at [nies.terradotta.com](https://nies.terradotta.com).

## 5 Supporting Documents

Massachusetts candidates will be prompted under the supporting document section to upload a Massachusetts Certificate of Enrollment. It is NOT a requirement to apply for the Exam with this document. However, if you are in-progress with your education you will need to download the document under the forms section of the Massachusetts NASBA page [nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/massachusetts](https://nasba.org/exams/cpaexam/massachusetts).

## 6 Transcripts

You'll need to submit an official transcript for each college/university you included in step 4.

Transcripts can be emailed or mailed directly from your school's Registrar's office to CPA Examination Services. Email is the preferred method.

**Email transcript to:** [etranscript@nasba.org](mailto:etranscript@nasba.org)

**Mail transcript to:** CPA Examination Services, P.O. Box 198469, Nashville, TN 37219

**PRO TIP** The majority of colleges/universities utilize third-party providers for ordering and delivering a candidate's transcripts. The most popular are **Parchment** and **National Student Clearing House**. Candidates can search their college/university on these websites to see if their educational institution utilizes one of these third-party providers to have their transcript delivered to NASBA.

## 7 Payment

The Eligibility Evaluation application fee is \$133. You'll pay this and then wait 4–6 weeks for your eligibility to be determined. Once you are deemed eligible to sit for the CPA Exam, you'll proceed to Part 2, completing the Exam Section Application.

## 6 Candidate Exam Section ID

At the top of each Exam section box on your home screen in CPA Portal, you will see your Candidate Exam Section ID number (CES ID: #####), this can assist when scheduling your Exam appointments through Prometric. If you do not see the green View NTS button, you will not be able to schedule your Exam through Prometric, even if you have a CES ID number issued. As a reminder, you are required to present your actual NTS at the testing center when going to take the Exam.

## 7 Candidate Exam Section ID

Once logged in, you'll select "CPA Portal." The system is intuitive and will know what stage of the application process you are in.

## 8 Start the Exam Section Application

Next you will apply for an Exam section. Under Evaluation Status, you'll see your jurisdiction and status. If eligible, you'll be able to click on a green Apply Now button.

## 9 Calibration and Quality Control Survey

Before you select an Exam to apply for, you'll complete the Calibration and Quality Control Survey. The responses you provide are kept strictly confidential and the information will be used in aggregate only for important research regarding the Exam. The answers are for statistical purposes and are not used to determine eligibility for the Exam.

- Demographic information (ethnicity/gender identity)
- Education (major, minor, number of accounting hours taken, total hours taken, degree type, overall GPA)
- Review course (if you are using a review course, what is it?)

## 10 Apply for an Exam Section

You may only apply for one Exam section per Exam Section Application. If you want to sit for another Exam section, you can log back in and submit another Exam Section Application after you complete the first. You should only apply for the Exam section if you are ready to take it within the next 6 months.

## 11 Payment

You'll now pay for the Exam section (\$407.64 each section) and then wait for your NTS to be issued.

## 12 View Your NTS

Once you are issued an NTS, you will see this, along with all score notices on your CPA Portal homepage. These will be in the Exam Section Status section. You'll see the Exam section, the NTS issue date and a green button to view your NTS.

## CPA Exam Application Process: Part 2

### 1 Visit your NASBA Application Dashboard Account

Go to [dashboard.nasba.org](https://dashboard.nasba.org) to get started. Enter your login information. Be prepared to follow the multi-factor identification process.

### 2 Certificates of Enrollment (COE)

If you want to apply for the Exam early—prior to meeting the 120-hour education requirement—you will need to submit a COE and can apply 90 days prior to meeting the 120-hour education requirement.

### 3 Timing After Application Submission

Once all application materials are received it takes about 4 weeks to process a Notice to Schedule (NTS). In May/June, this can take even longer, up to 6–8 weeks.

It's recommended you have your transcripts submitted by email to [etranscript@nasba.org](mailto:etranscript@nasba.org). Once the transcripts are received, it typically takes 3–5 business days to match the transcripts with your application file. Next, your education is evaluated. This includes a quality control check that takes 5–10 business days. Lastly, a final check for any other requirements is done.

### 4 Notice to Schedule (NTS)

Once your Exam Section Application has been processed, you will receive an email from NASBA directing you to the CPA Portal where you will be able to view/print your NTS.

Your NTS will list the section of the Exam you're approved to take, which enables you to contact Prometric to begin the scheduling process.

Confirm the name appearing on your NTS matches the name on your identification EXACTLY. You will need this for check-in at the testing center. If the information is incorrect, immediately contact CPA Exam Services.

Your NTS includes the Exam section identification. This number is also used as the Exam "Launch Code" (password). You will enter your Launch Code as a part of the online login process.

### 5 NTS Expiration Date

Each NTS includes an expiration date. If 1) your NTS expires prior to taking the Exam section; 2) you don't attend your scheduled testing appointment; or 3) you don't complete the Exam, you will not be able to reschedule or receive a refund.

Candidates impacted by these situations will have to reapply and pay the appropriate fees for another testing opportunity and a new NTS.

**Questions?** Contact MassCPAs Director of Academic and Career Development Allie Orlando at [aorlando@masscpas.org](mailto:aorlando@masscpas.org) or 617.556.2991.