



Renewal Registration & CPE for CPAs in Iowa

To assist members with annual CPA certificate registration and reporting of CPE credits, ISCPA has prepared the following questions and answers.

Renewal Registration Process

1. When must I renew my certificate?

You must renew your certificate annually with the Iowa Accountancy Examining Board (IAEB). Online renewal is typically available May 15–June 30. There is an annual registration fee.

2. Must I complete my certificate renewal online?

Yes. A licensee shall submit an electronic renewal with the IAEB by the June 30 deadline. An application shall be deemed filed on the date of electronic renewal.

3. When I renew my certificate, must I submit evidence that I completed the required continuing professional education?

No, however you must verify that you have satisfied the CPE requirements as outlined in Chapter 10 of the Iowa administrative code on continuing education for CPAs. The IAEB may request detailed proof during random audits of CPE credit claimed.

4. What happens if I fail to renew my certificate by the expiration date, but do so within 30 days following the expiration date?

Both active and inactive certificate holders are subject to a penalty fee if renewing during the 30-day grace period (July 1 – July 30).

5. I am an active certificate holder. What happens if I fail to renew my certificate during the 30-day grace period?

Your certificate will lapse. The IAEB may reinstate a lapsed certificate upon the applicant's submission of an application to reinstate and the payment of a penalty, as well as the current registration fee. If a licensee wishes to reinstate to active status, he or she must also provide evidence of completed continuing education, as well as provide a written statement outlining the professional activities of the applicant during the period in which the certificate was lapsed.

6. Can an inactive certificate that has lapsed be reinstated?

Yes, upon payment of a reinstatement fee and the current registration fee. A written statement outlining the professional activities of the applicant during the period in which the applicant's license was lapsed is also required.

7. What will happen if I continue to practice public accounting as a CPA after my certificate has lapsed?

You will be subject to disciplinary action and the IAEB may deny your application for reinstatement. A licensee is not authorized to practice public accounting during the period of time that the certificate is lapsed, including the 30-day grace period.

8. If my certificate is lapsed, may I continue to use the title "CPA"?

No, the title may not be used in any context in which the certificate holder is practicing public accounting, which includes attest or compilation services, or any accounting, tax, consulting, or financial or managerial advisory services while using the title "CPA."

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9. How often must a CPA firm renew its permit to practice?

Firm permit renewal is a yearly obligation.

10. My address has recently changed. What do I need to do?

A licensee shall notify the IAEB within 30 days of any change of address or firm affiliation.

11. I'm a new CPA. When must I renew my certificate?

The initial CPA certificate is valid through June 30, at which time it will expire and must be renewed.

12. How can I change my certificate status from active to inactive?

A CPA must provide written notification to the IAEB should he or she choose to go from active to inactive status. You will not be refunded fees for any remaining time in the renewal period.

13. If I do not renew my CPA certificate, will it be recalled by the Iowa Accountancy Examining Board?

No. Except in disciplinary cases, a certificate holder is entitled to retain possession of his/her certificate even when the status is considered lapsed.

14. Will my membership in the Iowa Society of CPAs be terminated in the event I do not renew my certificate?

No. The Iowa Society of CPAs will only terminate membership in those instances when a certificate has been revoked or suspended in a disciplinary action.

CPE Reporting

15. What is the continuing professional education (CPE) requirement?

A CPA must obtain 120 hours of CPE credit during the three-year period preceding annual renewal of an active CPA certificate, including at least 4 hours of CPE in ethics and, when applicable, at least 8 hours of CPE in financial statement presentation.

16. What constitutes a CPE credit?

Credit is measured with one 50-minute period of CPE equaling one hour of credit. Half-hour credits may be allowed (equal to no less than 25 minutes) after the first hour of credit has been earned.

17. What is the reporting period for continuing education requirements to be completed by?

Starting with the 2013 renewal cycle, a CPA may self-select June 30 or December 31 as the date by which continuing education requirements must be satisfied. The cycle may vary from year to year. Certificate holders should maintain continuing education records in a manner that complies with the self-selected declaration in any particular renewal cycle.

18. Is there a minimum number of CPE hours required each year?

No. Certificate holders may complete as few or as many hours as desired each year as long as a minimum of 120 hours has been earned during the three-year period ending on June 30 or December 31 preceding renewal of the CPA certificate.

19. How do I know if I am required to maintain an active certificate?

CPAs who supervise or perform compilation services or otherwise issue compilation reports, as well as those who supervise or perform any attest services such as audits, reviews, or agreed-upon procedures, must meet the CPE requirement and must maintain an active certificate.

A certificate holder performing any accounting, tax, consulting, or financial or managerial advisory services for any client, business, employer, government body, or other entity while holding out as a CPA must maintain an active certificate and must meet the CPE requirement.

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20. I have never worked in public accounting. If I meet the CPE requirement, will I be entitled to use the CPA designation?

Yes, any certificate holder meeting the CPE requirement at the time of renewal will be permitted to use the CPA designation on an unrestricted basis regardless of whether he or she has ever worked in public accounting.

21. As a CPA certificate holder, must I meet the CPE requirement?

No. However, a CPA who does not meet the CPE requirement is prohibited from placing the CPA designation after his/her name on a business card, letterhead, etc. A CPA who opts out of CPE may renew his/her certificate as inactive, thus keeping it in good standing.

22. If I decide not to meet the CPE requirement, will my certificate automatically lapse?

No. CPAs who do not meet the CPE requirement may renew as inactive. CPAs who renew as inactive will receive renewal notices, newsletters, and other communications from the IAEB. CPAs registered as inactive will renew their certificate annually and pay a renewal fee. A certificate will lapse if not timely renewed.

23. If my certificate is inactive and I wish to convert to active status, what must I do?

An applicant who wishes to restore a certificate to active status must meet and report the basic requirement of 120 hours of continuing education credit earned in the preceding three-year period prior to the date of application to restore active status.

24. What types of CPE courses will be accepted by the Iowa Accountancy Examining Board?

The overriding consideration in determining whether a specific program qualifies as acceptable continuing education is that it be a formal program of learning that contributes directly to the professional competence of the certificate holder. Courses that assist a CPA in performing his or her job will qualify, whether the CPA is employed in public accounting, industry, business, government, or education.

25. Will the Iowa Accountancy Examining Board pre-approve CPE courses?

No. It is left to each certificate holder to determine the appropriate course of study to be pursued.

26. Do self-study programs qualify?

Individual study (i.e., self-study) programs contributing to the professional competence of the certificate holder (job related) are considered to be acceptable. However, the amount of credit allowed for individual study programs is limited to 50% of the renewal requirement.

27. How will I know if the group study program (including in-house educational seminars) I attend will qualify?

Continuing education programs will qualify if the following have been met.

- *The program contributes to the professional competence of the certificate holder (job-related).*
- *An outline of the program is prepared in advance and preserved.*
- *The program is at least one hour (50-minute period) in length.*
- *The program is conducted by a qualified instructor.*
- *A record of attendance is maintained.*

28. How does self-study differ from live instruction?

“Live instruction” means an educational program delivered in a classroom setting or through videoconferencing whereby the instructor and student carry out essential tasks while together. Examples include distance learning and Webcasts.

“Self-study” means a computer-generated program, such as CD-ROM, or written materials or exercises intended for self-study that do not include simultaneous interaction with an instructor but do include tests transmitted to the provider for review and grading.

29. What types of CPE records must be kept?

The IAEB may allow for a statement that the certificate holder has met the CPE requirement in lieu of documenting the courses taken. If requested to provide a listing of continuing education completed, the documentation shall include:

- Organization conducting the course and their contact information.
- Location of course.
- Title of course or description of content.
- Principal instructor.
- Dates attended.
- Hours claimed.
- Certificate of completion.
- Name of participant.
- Course field of study.
- Type of instruction or delivery method.
- Amount of recommended CPE credit.
- Verification by CPE program sponsor representative.

30. How long must CPE records be retained and who keeps them?

Primary responsibility for documenting the CPE requirement rests with the licensee, and evidence to support fulfillment of that requirement must be retained for a period of three years subsequent to submission of the report claiming the credit.

31. Will ISCPA help me keep track of my continuing professional education?

Yes, if you are a member of the Iowa Society of CPAs, you may access My CPE Transcript (www.iacpa.org/login) in the Professional Education section of the website. This helpful time management tool automatically uploads the necessary information for all the ISCPA-sponsored courses you take. You may also add information for the non-ISCPA sponsored courses you take. However, you will be responsible for providing any proof of the courses you add.

32. Are there specific types of education required?

The IAEB mandates the following:

- Every active certificate holder shall complete a minimum of four hours of continuing education devoted to ethics and rules of professional conduct during the three-year period prior to the June 30 renewal deadline.
- Every CPA certificate holder who is responsible for supervising compilation services or who signs or authorizes someone to sign the accountant’s compilation report on the financial statements on behalf of a firm shall complete, as a condition of certificate renewal, a minimum of eight hours of continuing education devoted to financial statement presentation, such as courses covering the statements on standards for accounting and review services (SSARS) and accounting and auditing updates. When required, this type of continuing education shall be completed within the three-year period preceding the June 30 renewal deadline.

33. Does nontechnical education meet the continuing education requirement?

CPE in nontechnical skills may be accepted by the IAEB if it improves the CPA’s competence in his/her current employment. Nontechnical CPE credit is limited to 50% of the total renewal requirement.

34. Can dinner, luncheon, and breakfast meetings of recognized organizations qualify for CPE credit?

Yes, if these meetings meet the appropriate criteria and are no more than two hours long. Such meetings are limited to 25% of the total renewal requirement.

35. Can CPE credit be claimed for successful completion of professional examinations?

Yes. Credit is calculated at the rate of five times the length of each examination, which is presumed to include all preparation time, claimed in the calendar year of the examination, and limited to 50% of the total renewal requirement.

36. Can firm meetings for staff or management groups qualify for CPE credit?

No. Meetings for the purpose of administrative and firm matters do not qualify.

37. Must a retired CPA meet the continuing professional education requirement?

No. CPAs registered as inactive holders of a certificate who do not reasonably expect to return to the workforce in any capacity for which a certificate is required, due to bona fide retirement or disability, may use the title "CPA, retired" in the context of non-income producing personal activities. Retired CPAs may allow their certificate to lapse and not use the title.

38. How will the CPE requirement be enforced?

The IAEB will verify on a test basis information submitted by CPAs for renewal of the certificate. Random audits of CPE credit claimed may be conducted. Verification of CPE is also required to reinstate to active status

39. What if I have more questions?

The IAEB handles all certificate renewals for CPAs in Iowa. Should you have a specific question regarding the renewal process or continuing education requirements, the IAEB may be reached at 515-725-9021 or via <https://plb.iowa.gov/board/accountants..>

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