

542.5 Qualifications for a certificate as a certified public accountant.

1. A certificate as a certified public accountant may be granted to a person of good moral character who makes application pursuant to [section 542.6](#) and who satisfies the education, experience, and examination requirements of [this section](#) and rules adopted pursuant to [this section](#).

2. An applicant for a certificate who has been convicted of forgery, embezzlement, obtaining money under false pretenses, theft, extortion, conspiracy to defraud, or other similar offense, or of any crime involving moral character or honesty, in a court of competent jurisdiction in this state, or another state, territory, or a district of the United States, or in a foreign jurisdiction, may be denied a certificate by the board on the grounds of the conviction. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “conviction” means a conviction for an indictable offense and includes a guilty plea, deferred judgment from the time of entry of the deferred judgment until the time the defendant is discharged by the court without entry of judgment, or other finding of guilt by a court of competent jurisdiction.

3. An applicant for a certificate who has had a professional license of any kind revoked in this or any other jurisdiction may be denied a certificate by the board on the grounds of the revocation.

4. A person who makes a false statement of material fact on an application for a certificate, or who causes to be submitted, or has been a party to preparing or submitting a false application for a certificate, may be denied a certificate by the board on the grounds of the false statement or submission. A certificate holder found to have made such a false statement or who has caused to be submitted, or was a party to preparing or submitting any false application for a certificate, may have the holder’s certificate suspended or revoked by the board on the grounds of the false statement or submission.

5. A certified public accountant shall notify the board of such accountant’s conviction of an offense included in [subsection 2](#), within thirty days of such conviction. Failure of the certified public accountant to notify the board of the conviction within thirty days of the date of the conviction is sufficient grounds for revocation of the certificate.

6. The board, when considering the denial or revocation of a certificate pursuant to [subsections 2 through 5](#), shall consider the nature of the offense; any aggravating or extenuating circumstances which are documented; the time lapsed since the revocation, conduct, or conviction; the rehabilitation, treatment, or restitution performed by the applicant or certificate holder; and any other factors the board deems relevant. Character references may be required, but shall not be obtained from certified public accountants. An applicant shall not be denied a certificate because of age, citizenship, race, religion, marital status, or national origin, although the application may require citizenship information.

7. An applicant shall complete at least one hundred fifty semester hours, or the trimester or quarter equivalent of one hundred fifty semester hours, of college education, and receive a baccalaureate or higher degree conferred by a college or university recognized by the board, the total educational program to include a concentration in accounting or what the board determines to be substantially equivalent.

8. An applicant must pass an examination which shall be offered at least twice per year and which shall test the applicant’s knowledge of the subjects of accounting and auditing, and such other related subjects as the board may specify by rule, including but not limited to business law and taxation. The examination shall be held at a time determined by the board and may be changed from time to time. The board shall prescribe by rule the methods of applying for and conducting the examination, including methods for grading and determining a passing grade required of an applicant for a certificate. However, the board, to the extent possible, shall ensure the examination, grading of the examination, and the passing grades are uniform with those applicable in all other states. The board may make such use of all or any part of a nationally recognized uniform certified public accountant examination and advisory grading service, and may contract with third parties to perform such administrative services with respect to the examination as it deems appropriate to perform the duties of the board with respect to examination.

9. The board may admit to the examination a candidate who will complete the

educational requirements for a baccalaureate degree with a concentration in accounting or what the board determines by rule to be substantially equivalent to a concentration in accounting within one hundred twenty days immediately following the date of the examination or who has completed those requirements. However, the board shall not report the results of the examination until the candidate has met the educational requirements for a baccalaureate degree and shall not issue the certificate until the candidate has fully satisfied the requirements of [subsection 7](#).

10. Applicants who fail the examination once shall be allowed to take the examination again at a time determined by the board. Applicants who fail the examination twice shall be allowed to take the examination again at the discretion of the board. The board may by rule prescribe the terms and conditions under which a candidate who passes two or more subjects of the examination conducted in this state or by the licensing authority of another state may be reexamined in only the failed subjects and receive credit for the passed subjects. An applicant who has failed the examination may request in writing information from the board concerning the applicant's examination grade and subject areas or questions which the applicant failed to answer correctly, except that if the board administers a uniform, standardized examination, the board shall only be required to provide the examination grade and such other information concerning the applicant's examination results which are available to the board.

11. The board, by rule, may establish an examination fee to be charged each applicant by the board or by a third party administering the examination.

12. An applicant for initial issuance of a certificate must have no less than one year of experience. The experience shall include providing any type of service or advice involving the use of accounting, attest, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, or consulting skills, as verified by a licensee, meeting requirements prescribed by the board by rule. The experience is acceptable if it was gained through employment in government, industry, academia, or public practice.

13. A person holding a certificate as a certified public accountant issued by the state prior to July 1, 2002, is deemed to have met the requirements of [this section](#).

[2001 Acts, ch 55, §5, 38; 2008 Acts, ch 1031, §60](#)

Referred to in [§542.6](#), [542.7](#), [542.8](#), [542.10](#), [542.19](#)

For future amendment to subsection 7, effective July 1, 2026, see 2025 Acts, ch 40, §1, 9

For future strike of subsection 12, effective July 1, 2026, see 2025 Acts, ch 40, §2, 9

For future amendment to subsection 13, effective July 1, 2026, see 2025 Acts, ch 40, §3, 9