

The Practical Work Experience Requirement*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the work experience requirement for the CGA program of professional studies?

Before qualifying for certification as a CGA, candidates must demonstrate that accumulated work experience has progressed to positions requiring a high degree of knowledge and responsibility. A candidate's work experience should reflect application of the concepts, skills, and judgmental abilities learned through the CGA program of professional studies.

Candidates must achieve and report the following minimum requirements for assessment:

- 36 months of full-time work experience in accounting and/or financial management.
- Of the 36 months, 12 months must be in Canada at the professional/senior level.
- Verification and attestation of their work experience report and competencies by a current employer, who:
 - Has an arm's length relationship with the candidate.
 - Holds a position senior to the student.
 - Holds an acceptable professional accounting designation.
- Verification and attestation of their "core competencies" by a current employer, who:
 - Has an arm's length relationship with the candidate.
 - Holds a position senior to the student.
 - Holds an acceptable professional accounting designation.

2. What is considered professional/senior level work experience?

Professional/senior level work experience is defined by a set of competencies that a student may demonstrate through employment. Examples of professional level competencies are listed in CGA Canada's Competency Framework. This document can be found on CGA Canada's website (www.cga-canada.org).

Professional level competencies are evaluated in the following categories:

- **Professional Technical Knowledge:** including Financial Accounting and Reporting, Management Accounting, Assurance and other related services, Finance and Financial Planning, General Business, Information Technology, and Taxation
- **General Management:** including Planning, Allocating and Managing Resources, Measuring, Monitoring, and Communicating
- **Leadership:** including Strategic and Organizational Leadership, Organizational Effectiveness, Individual and Team Leadership and Development, and Staff Coaching and Training

- **Professionalism:** including Client/Stakeholder focus, Ethics and Trust, Integrative Approach, Problem Solving, Professional Development, Professional Self-evaluation

In consideration of the profession's broad scope, students are not expected to have achieved experience in all listed sub-categories.

3. What is not considered professional/senior level work experience?

Foundation experience is not considered professional/senior level experience. Foundation experience prepares students with the competencies that are normally prerequisite for advancing to professional level responsibilities. Students' foundation competencies typically range from entry level accounting-related activities that may often be technical and routine in nature (e.g., A/P, A/R, bank reconciliations), to intermediate level positions that may increasingly rely upon higher order abilities – analytical, forecasting, planning, decision-making, and communication responsibilities.

4. What are the essential “core competencies”?

An employer/verifier may be asked to confirm that a student in the CGA program:

- Expresses and exchanges information in a clear and concise manner.
- Listens, encourages feedback and follows up to ensure that communications are clearly understood.
- Maintains positive, productive relationships with clients, stakeholders, colleagues, supervisors and staff.
- Ensures confidentiality with respect to organizational or client information and data.
- Applies professional ethical standards.
- Exercises a consistently high level of professional judgment.
- Acts within the scope of their professional competence.

5. Will my past experience outside of Canada satisfy the work experience requirement?

Your past work experience outside of Canada can count towards the work experience requirement, but it cannot fully satisfy the requirement since you must also achieve a minimum of one year in Canada at a professional/senior level. When you submit your work experience for assessment, as a student in the CGA program, the Association may request documents confirming your international work experience.

6. Must I have a management title to satisfy the work experience requirement?

Work experience is not assessed based on position titles. Work experience is assessed based on the competencies you are able to demonstrate through the duties, responsibilities and achievements reached during employment.

7. How can I know what job opportunities will meet the work experience requirement?

Every student will have a unique, individual work history and set of accomplishments. You are encouraged to review the CGA Canada Competency Framework to compare your experience and career path to the list of competency examples. You can consider if a potential job will provide you the exposure, opportunity and experience to gain and demonstrate the competencies.

Students in the CGA program are encouraged to discuss the work experience requirement with their employer so that employers can support their program goal of achieving additional competencies.

8. Who assesses students' work experience?

Work experience assessors are CGAs who have been selected for their expertise in various employment sectors, such as banking, government, manufacturing and professional services. Work experience submissions are also subject to audit by a committee.

9. When do I submit my experience for assessment?

When you are a student in the CGA program, you will be eligible to start submitting your work experience for assessment when you have five or fewer courses remaining. Work experience is submitted using a national, online reporting system.

10. When do I need to meet the work experience requirement?

Students who complete the CGA program's academic requirements, including course and degree requirements, but do not yet satisfy the practical work experience requirement, will be given an interim three-year period to continue building their experience to the required level.

*For further details, please visit CGA Ontario's website (cga-ontario.org). If you have any questions about the work experience requirement information, please email CGA Ontario at peaq@cga-ontario.org.