



CPA Exam study group guide:

Make learning a team sport.



Congratulations! You're ready to start preparing for the Uniform CPA Examination.

How will you tackle the material and make sure you're prepared to pass the exam?

The answer is different for everyone, but many people find value in group study.

Here are a few reasons why you should consider joining or creating a study group:

- Greater motivation to stick with your study schedule
- Peers to hold you accountable for achieving your study goals
- Help to tackle complicated topics
- A support system when you need it

The following steps can help you get the most out of a study group.

"I doubt I would have passed the first time without having been in the study group. It helped me focus on studying and provided me with a group of people I could ask questions of when I didn't understand something."

Debra Mason, CPA

Find study group participants:

- Within your firm
- From your graduating class
- Among friends studying for the exam
- Through a young member group at your state CPA society
- Among other students in your review course
- In accounting-related social media groups (or use social media to find others to join a group you've started) like the American Institute of CPAs' [ThisWaytoCPA](#) and [CPA Candidate](#) groups on LinkedIn

"I 100% suggest finding a reliable study partner and going on the journey together. We held ourselves accountable and balanced our studying with our social life."

Patrick Hill, CPA, CGMA



Quick links

[Examination Blueprints](#)

[Candidate reviews of exam prep courses](#)

[CPA Exam resources](#)

Establish study group guidelines.

These can be informal, but setting down some basic ground rules will enhance the group's effectiveness — and your future exam success! Here are some example guidelines you may want to consider:

- **How much time is each person willing to commit?** Will you meet at a set time or will you decide meeting times as you go?
- **What will be the format of the study group?** Will it be in-person or virtual? If in person, where will you meet? You'll need somewhere with plenty of space and no distractions.
- **What content will you use for your review?** For example, the AICPA's Examination [Blueprints](#) offer a comprehensive review of the content and skill levels tested in all four sections of the exam, along with providing representative task statements.
- **How will content be covered?** Will the group answer study questions, have an open discussion of study group members' concerns or some of both?
- **Will you limit the number of members?**
- **What will be expected of each study group member in between each session?** Establish goals that ensure group members are moving forward at the same rate but ones that are realistic given other time commitments.
- **Should you "set it in stone?"** Some groups work together to develop covenants. These guidelines help establish 5–7 "rules" of the group and can help members resolve potential conflicts.

"When my study partner and I committed to a schedule and were in it together, it came easier and quicker, and we motivated each other no matter what. A lifelong bond was made, and I'll never forget her help. I encourage anyone to be part of any formal or informal support group during this challenging time!"

Marika E. Ponton, CPA

"I would recommend having a study group or at least one partner to make flash cards or test each other on flash cards, which were one of the most beneficial tools I used to pass the exam."

Jackson Johnson, CPA

Be a good study buddy.

- Come prepared and ready to get to work.
- Commit to helping others succeed as they help you.
- Show up and be present.
- It can be tempting to get distracted by personal conversations during study time. Set aside a specific, short timeframe for socializing or make plans to socialize outside the group.

“My study partner and I had taken slightly different courses in our master’s program, so it was helpful to have an extra knowledge source when you hit a topic with which you had less familiarity. We also helped keep each other accountable along the way. We passed all four parts together on the first try within six months and did exceptionally well. Would highly recommend!”

Courtney Folgeman, CPA and 2015 Elijah Watt Sells

Joining an existing study group?

Things to keep in mind:

- Is the expected time commitment realistic for you?
- Will the group’s study and learning style meet your study needs and expectations?
- Are you happy with the group’s size?
- Is the group’s typical workload right for you?
- What study material are they using?
- Will you get along with the personalities in the group?
- Does the group match your level of commitment and dedication to study goals?

Happy studying, and good luck on the CPA Exam!



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