Accountancy, Professional

e-mail: accountingdepartment@mail.wvu.edu

Degrees Offered

• Master of Professional Accountancy (M.P.A.)
• Graduate Certificate in Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examination

Given the changing environment in both the public and private sectors of the economy, many accountants will need an educational background that goes beyond that obtained in an undergraduate degree program. Accountants must be proficient in applying professional concepts and principles to a wide variety of existing and emerging situations as an effective member of a team and also have the ability to adapt to new standards and methods of doing business. Competing in such an environment requires a solid technical foundation, adeptness in analyzing complex business situations, and the ability to effectively communicate recommended solutions and conclusions. Thus, the objectives of the M.P.A. program include the integration of financial and nonfinancial data in problem-solving and decision-making, the application of relevant research techniques and information technologies, the integration of varying viewpoints and techniques of conflict resolution, and the importance of adhering to a strong ethical code.

The accounting programs at WVU, both undergraduate and graduate, have separate accounting accreditation by the AASCB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. At the date of this printing, there are relatively few colleges and universities in the nation that have achieved this status at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Program

The M.P.A. program is a thirty credit-hour program, which can be completed in approximately ten months of full-time study or twenty-two months half-time. The program requires that the student have the equivalent of an undergraduate degree in accounting and meet very specific accounting and business course prerequisites. Work experience is not a requirement for admission. Students may enter the program on either a full-time or half-time basis. Fall is the preferred starting date, but students may start in May or January. Careful selection of degree candidates limits the size of classes, leads to high-quality efforts in the program, and permits frequent and direct contact between students and faculty. The full-time program consists of two twelve-hour semesters and one four-week summer session. Half of the courses each term are taught in the early evening and the other half in the late afternoon to provide the opportunity for part-time employment for full-time students and part-time study for full-time employees.

No thesis is required in the program, but communication skills are emphasized in all courses. Extensive use is made of information technology in accounting applications.

Academic Standards

The M.P.A. program requires that the student maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 on all work taken as a graduate student while enrolled in the College of Business and Economics, including prescribed work taken to remove undergraduate deficiencies. A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 2.75 will be placed on probation. If the average is not brought up to 2.75 by the end of the following semester, the student will be suspended from the program. A grade below C in more than one course taken while enrolled as a graduate student will result in suspension from the graduate program. A course with a grade below C will not count for the thirty semester-hour requirement for graduation unless repeated with a grade of C or above. A student must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 or above on the thirty semester hours required for the degree. Complete information about the M.P.A. program may be obtained from http://www.be.wvu.edu/mpa/index.htm.

Requirements to Sit for C.P.A. Examination

The specific requirements to sit for the Uniform C.P.A. Examination vary with each state board of accountancy. Some states (or other jurisdictions such as the District of Columbia or Guam) require candidates to have a bachelor’s degree with a specified distribution of accounting and business courses as the minimum educational requirement to take the examination, whereas others require a bachelor’s degree and the completion of 150 semester hours of academic credit (including a specified distribution of courses) as the minimum. These standards are subject to change; thus, students should occasionally review the requirements (including the distribution of courses) of the board in the jurisdiction in which they plan to sit for the examination. Incidentally, these are the requirements to sit for the examination, not to be certified. Most boards of accountancy require 150 semester hours of academic credit for certification.

The West Virginia Board of Accountancy requires a bachelor’s degree with a specified distribution of coursework as the minimum qualification to sit for the C.P.A. examination. This includes twenty-seven semester hours of accounting (excluding principles), six hours of business law, and twenty-seven hours of related business courses. West Virginia also requires a three semester credit-hour ethics course for all individuals applying to sit for the exam. This course may be counted as either an accounting or a business elective. West Virginia requires 150 semester hours of academic credit to be completed prior to certification.

For the specific requirements to sit for the C.P.A. examination in West Virginia, go to the Board’s website at http://www.boa.wv.gov or call (304) 558-3557. For requirements in other jurisdictions, go to the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy’s website at http://www.nasba.org and use the links to the web pages for all boards of accountancy under the “Members” section.
Content specification of the C.P.A. examination and related information may be found at http://www.cpa-exam.org using the “Prepare for the Exam” and then “How to Prepare” links.

Financial Assistance

WVU has a strong comprehensive financial aid program to help you finance your education. Although the cost to attend WVU is relatively low, more than half of our students qualify for financial aid awarded on the basis of need, merit, or a combination of the two. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed before March 1. Contact the Student Financial Aid Office at (304) 293-5242 or at finaid@mail.wvu.edu for more information or go to the website at http://adm.wvu.edu.

The Accounting Department in the College of Business and Economics has a very limited number of graduate assistantships and tuition waivers for M.P.A. students. This is common among many master’s degree programs in accounting and business at public universities. Applicants are encouraged to note that the WVU M.P.A. program is a quality but relatively short (thirty credits over ten and one-half months) master’s program of only two semesters and one summer session.

Faculty

Chair

- Arron Scott Fleming - Ph.D. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
  C.P.A., C.M.A., Managerial and Financial Accounting, Fraud and Forensic Accounting, Behavioral Research

Professors

- Barbara Apostolou - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
  C.P.A., Auditing, Assurance Services, Fraud and Forensic Accounting
- Richard C. Brooks - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
  C.G.F.M., Governmental Accounting, Public Sector Accounting
- Robert S. Maust - A.B.D. (University of Michigan)
  Emeritus, C.P.A., Financial Accounting, Accounting Theory
- Adolph A. Neidermeyer - Ph.D. (University of Iowa)
- Presha Neidermeyer - Ph.D. (Virginia Commonwealth University)
- David B. Pariser - Ph.D. (Southern Illinois University)
  C.P.A., C.M.A., C.C.A., C.G.F.M., Financial Accounting, Governmental Accounting and Auditing, Public Sector Accounting, International Accounting
- Richard Riley - Ph.D. (University of Tennessee)

Associate Professor

- Richard Dull - Ph.D. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
  C.P.A./C.F.F., C.F.E., C.I.S.A., Accounting Information Systems, Forensic Accounting, IT Auditing
- Arron Scott Fleming - Ph.D. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
  C.P.A., C.M.A., Managerial and Financial Accounting, Fraud and Forensic Accounting, Behavioral Research
- Christian Schaupp - Ph.D. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
  C.F.E., Accounting Information Systems, IT Auditing

Assistant Professor

- Noel Brock - M.P.A. (West Virginia University), J.D. (West Virginia University), L.L.M (Georgetown University)
  C.P.A., Federal Taxation, Pass-through Entity and Owner Taxation
- Jack W. Dorminey - Ph.D. (Virginia Commonwealth University)
  Intermediate Financial Accounting, Regulatory Accounting

Visiting Professor

- Nicholas Apostolou - D.B.A. (University of Tennessee)
  C.P.A., C.F.A., Financial Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Fraud and Forensic Accounting
Admission to Program

Admission to the M.P.A. program is determined by a committee of accounting faculty members. The committee acts upon individual applications within a short period of time after receipt of the completed application.

The Admission Committee prefers applicants who possess a 3.0 cumulative grade point average or higher (calculated on all college courses completed or the last sixty hours), an accounting grade point average of 3.0 or higher (calculated exclusive of principles, proctoring, internship, and independent study courses), and GMAT scores at the fiftieth percentile or higher.

Applicants who have passed the Certified Public Accountant examination are exempt from the GMAT requirement. Candidates who meet most of the above requirements will still be considered. Other factors such as work experience and other graduate degree work may also be a part of the committee’s decision-making.

The above requirements apply to both full and part-time student applicants. As an AACSB-accredited program in accounting, these requirements must also be met by non-degree students who desire to take any of the graduate courses required by the M.P.A. Program.

Students who possess appropriate GMAT scores and grade point averages but do not possess a bachelor’s degree with a major in accounting (or equivalent) may apply for non-degree or provisional status while they are taking undergraduate prerequisite courses in accounting and business. Provisional students must complete the prerequisite courses before enrolling in M.P.A. courses. Applicants with accounting undergraduate degrees must also satisfy all the prerequisite courses for the M.P.A. Program.

Students receiving provisional admission to the M.P.A. degree will meet with the M.P.A. Coordinator to develop a written plan for the completion of the prerequisite courses. Failure to satisfactorily complete the plan will result in the cancellation of the applicant’s provisional M.P.A. graduate student status.

Provisional students may not enroll in any graduate accounting courses until prerequisite courses have been successfully completed. After completing prerequisite coursework the student must request a change from provisional to regular M.P.A. status which is subject to approval by the M.P.A. Admission Committee. The M.P.A. degree is designed to follow an undergraduate degree in business. Students without a bachelor’s degree with a major in accounting (or equivalent) will be required to take additional business and accounting courses.

International students should note that the College of Business and Economics TOEFL requirement is higher than the university’s. Applicants must have a TOEFL score of 580 (paper), 237 (computer), or 92 (internet-based). If applicants have taken the IELTS instead of the TOEFL, the minimum score must be 7.0. International students who do not meet the College of Business and Economics TOEFL or IELTS requirement may be admitted "conditionally" provided that they enroll in the University’s Intensive English Program.

Prerequisites

To assure that all students in the program have the same foundation in business, the following prerequisite courses (or their equivalent) must be completed before enrolling in M.P.A. graduate courses: principles of accounting (six hours); intermediate accounting (six hours); cost accounting, income tax accounting, auditing, principles of microeconomics, principles of marketing, principles of management, principles of finance, statistics, business law (six hours, three of which may be taken concurrently with graduate courses); and computer science. A student without the necessary prerequisite courses may be approved to enter the M.P.A. Program as a provisional graduate student.

Master of Professional Accountancy

Courses will be offered in Morgantown.

M.P.A. Course Offerings

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required in all courses
A grade of C or higher must be earned in all required courses

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACCT 511</td>
<td>Fin Accounting Theory/Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCT 512</td>
<td>Mergers and Acquisitions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCT 521</td>
<td>Information Technology Auditing</td>
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<td>ACCT 522</td>
<td>E-Commerce/Internet Security</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCT 541</td>
<td>Federal Tax Research/Writing</td>
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<td>ACCT 551</td>
<td>Assurance Svcs/Professl Stnds</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCT 556</td>
<td>Fraud Detection and Deterrence</td>
<td>3</td>
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Select one of the following: 3

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<tr>
<td>ACCT 561</td>
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<td>ACCT 473</td>
<td>Personal Financial Advising</td>
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<td>ACCT 571</td>
<td>Accounting/Business Consulting</td>
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Select the topic that was not studied at the Undergraduate level.

Note: Students who have not completed Accounting Systems (ACCT 322, three hours) and Law for the CPA (BLAW 420, three hours) as part of their undergraduate program must also take these two courses in addition to the above thirty hours. These courses may be taken concurrently with the graduate courses.

Graduate Certificate in Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examination (FAFE)

Forensic Accountants in Demand

The widespread growth in white-collar crime and the increased need for homeland security have greatly raised the demand for forensic accountants and fraud examiners. Federal, state, and local governmental agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Offices of Inspector General all need accountants with forensic investigation skills. In the private sector, recent legislation (Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002) and auditing standards (Statement on Auditing Standard No. 99) require companies and their auditors to be more aggressive in detecting and preventing fraud.

The Accounting Department has responded to this demand by developing a unique academic program designed to prepare entry-level accountants and others for forensic accounting and fraud examination careers. Although many schools have added a single graduate or undergraduate course to their curricula, very few offer a multi-course graduate certificate program. WVU offers a twelve-credit graduate Certificate in Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examination during the summer on campus and throughout the year online. Students may take three paths to earn this certificate:

• Option 1: Complete a four-course-stand-alone, non-degree certificate program curriculum on campus
• Option 2: Complete a master of professional accountancy (M.P.A.) degree plus two additional certificate courses either on campus or online
• Option 3: Complete the certificate program courses online with cohorts starting in both fall and spring

WVU Set the National Standards

The forensic accounting faculty has solidified WVU's reputation as a leader in forensic curricula. Two professors led the effort to develop national curriculum guidelines for fraud and forensic accounting programs for the National Institute of Justice, and one of them, Dr. Richard A. Riley Jr., has been recognized by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners as Professor of the Year and by the American Accounting Association as Innovative Professor of the Year.

For admittance to the graduate certificate program, you may qualify under one of the following criteria:

1. Have a bachelor's degree with an overall GPA of 2.9 or above and a score of 500 or above on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). In some instances a score of 1,000 or above on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) may be accepted in lieu of a GMAT score. Entrance criteria provide some flexibility so that a higher GPA may offset a lower GMAT score and vice versa
2. Hold a certified public accountant certificate, law degree, or be admitted to an accredited law school

If appropriate, an applicant should have the GMAT score sent to the Accounting Department, 300 Business and Economics Bldg., West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506-6025.

FAFE Program Details

Course Requirements

Students complete four courses for the certificate. All four courses are taught using actual and simulated case materials. Students are required to perform actual examination tasks and report their findings.

The four courses are as follows:

• ACCT 581 - Types of fraud, documents, sources of evidence, and analysis of internal and external fraud schemes with an emphasis on the skills needed to identify and investigate fraud (Note: M.P.A. students seeking the certificate will complete ACCT 556 instead of ACCT 581.)
• ACCT 582 - Computer-aided data analysis techniques for detecting and investigating fraud cases, issues related to the collection and use of digital evidence, and collection of data from electronic devices (Note: M.P.A. students seeking the certificate will complete ACCT 521 instead of ACCT 582.)
• ACCT 583 - Sociological and psychological theories of criminal behavior, laws, rules of evidence, the rights of persons under investigation, interrogation and interviewing, report writing, and ethics, as these topics relate to forensic accounting
• ACCT 584 - Major fraud case investigation with an emphasis on forensic and litigation support aspects, including presentation of cases in a moot court setting (This course also contains the capstone experience as explained below.)
Note: ACCT 581 (or 556) and ACCT 582 (or ACCT 521) must be completed before taking ACCT 584.

**Capstone Experience**

Advanced fraud examination includes an integrative capstone experience using three case presentations/projects over the course of the session or term. In order to complete the assignments in this course, students must integrate and draw upon their knowledge and skills developed in the other courses in the forensic accounting and fraud examination curriculum.

The purpose is to provide students with experience in performing complex investigative tasks and analyses. These projects will involve analyzing real-world “case” information as well as corporate and business records to determine if fraud has occurred. Students mimic investigative processes found in practice by conducting analytical reviews, soliciting information from clients, and reporting suspicious activity for a fictitious client company. Finally, the capstone experience culminates when students testify to their findings in a moot court scenario.

Forensic accounting and fraud examination professionals such as certified public accountants and FBI personnel mentor students in their preparation for the moot court presentations. Legal professionals such as trial judges, prosecuting attorneys, and defense attorneys serve as moot court judges.

The moot court experience provides an excellent evaluation mechanism of the knowledge and skills developed by students. Based on their mentoring of students in preparing for the moot court and their observation of the presentations before the court, the professionals are asked to assess the overall effectiveness of the program and to provide recommendations for strengthening the curriculum.