

THE FIELD

Accounting is often referred to as the language of business. Today's accountants are highly skilled professionals who identify, measure, communicate, and interpret economic information. Whether in a large accounting firm or the smallest not-for-profit organization, accountants use their knowledge and skills to provide information and advice on many different issues. As members of CPA firms, accountants may work on the financial statements of Fortune 500 companies, provide recommendations to improve operating or control procedures, help small businesses raise capital, help to develop and install computer systems, and give advice on a range of financial and tax matters. In industry, accountants use their knowledge to develop and manage accounting control systems, manage capital, provide cost-and-profit analyses of products and services, or provide tax and financial services.

There is no minor available in accounting.

THE MAJOR

While the department does not offer formal concentrations, students may effectively achieve curriculum concentrations in the areas of public accounting, management, government accounting, internal audit, or taxation. Students planning to satisfy certification requirements as a CPA (certified public accountant), CMA (certified in management accounting), or as an educator, should consult with a faculty advisor for specific requirements.

As with other Isenberg majors, the first two years of study emphasize general education by providing fundamental courses in the humanities, mathematics, and social sciences. In addition, basic courses in accounting, economics, management information systems, and the legal and social environment of business prepare the student for further study. During the final two years, all students enroll in core introductory courses in finance, marketing, management, and business communication, including major requirements and electives. The required courses for the accounting major include courses in financial reporting, auditing, business information technology, law, and accounting, as well as electives. Majors must also complete 21 elective credits that must be taken outside of Isenberg and the economics department.

HONORS

Accounting majors may pursue multidisciplinary honors within Commonwealth Honors College (413-545-2483, info@honors.umass.edu). Contact the accounting honors director Professor Pamela Trafford (413-545-5633, ptrafford@isenberg.umass.edu) for information about accounting honors courses.

STUDY ABROAD

Students are encouraged to study abroad if it supports their academic and career goals. Students should contact the International Programs Office (413-545-5247, umass.edu/ipo) and work closely with their academic advisor to choose the appropriate courses in preparation.

The Isenberg School offers several unique, short-term study abroad options that combine class time at UMass with a study abroad experience led by Isenberg faculty. Recent trip destinations have been to Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, South Africa, Ireland, India, the United Kingdom, and France.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Career Success is dedicated to helping students explore career paths and find opportunities that allow them to grow and succeed as young professionals. We encourage students to pursue internships and other field-based experiences as part of the learning process. Our career coaches and faculty work with students 1:1 and in classes to help them navigate this important time in life and make career decisions that yield a future of meaning and satisfaction. Market demand for accounting majors is very strong. The need for financial information by businesses, government agencies, and investors ensures the value of accounting education. Accounting graduates follow diverse career paths, working for large and small firms, national and international firms, and a variety of businesses. Our students develop successful careers in public accounting and private industry, holding positions such as independent or internal auditor, tax specialist, bank examiner, treasurer, controller, and financial executive. A number of professional certifications are available in accounting, including the certified public accountant (CPA), certified management accountant (CMA), and certified internal auditor (CIA).

BECOMING A CPA

A CPA is a certified public accountant who is licensed by a state board of accountancy. To earn the prestige associated with the CPA license, you are required to demonstrate knowledge and competence by meeting high educational standards, passing the CPA exam, and completing a specific amount of general accounting experience. The two most important aspects of becoming a CPA are passing the Uniform CPA Exam and meeting licensing requirements in the state where you want to practice. In most states, you will need 150 hours of college-level education to get licensed.

A CPA license is the accounting profession's highest standard of competence, a symbol of achievement, and assurance of quality. Whether you are licensed or soon-to-be licensed, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) provides information and resources you need to earn and maintain the respected CPA credential.

HOW TO MEET THE 150-HOUR REQUIREMENT AND PASS THE CPA EXAM

Isenberg's master of science in accounting (MSA) program will prepare you to take the CPA exam and meets all Massachusetts educational requirements for licensure. Since our program has the distinction of having earned separate AACSB accreditation for our accounting department and programs, you will satisfy most states' requirements. In fact, there are only 180 institutions in the world that hold AACSB accreditation in accounting.

THE ISENBERG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Isenberg is committed to introducing its students to the education, experiences, and executives that will make them effective leaders, dynamic team players, and change agents in the diverse world of business. Isenberg's unique culture sparks community and collaboration, and its entrepreneurial spirit encourages creativity in tackling today's biggest challenges to prepare its students for future positions of responsibility. Students may pursue an education in a variety of business disciplines represented by majors in seven departments and two degree programs. The program is directed toward the broad aspects of business, encouraging high standards of ethical conduct, social responsibilities, and the development of competence in particular courses of the student's own interests, aptitude, and choice.

Office: 232 Isenberg School of Management Building
Phone: 413-545-5657
Website: isenberg.umass.edu/accounting