

Redesigned CPA Preparatory Courses – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why are the core preparatory courses being redesigned?

The redesigned core preparatory courses reflect a shift away from a one-size-fits-all learning experience towards increased learner flexibility. Incorporating technology and increased learner flexibility, each redesigned course will adapt content to meet unique learner needs through customized experiences that integrate interactivity, real-time feedback, and multimedia resources.

The redesigned courses will also achieve better alignment with the CPA Canada Professional Education Program (PEP). Students will be immersed in the CPA PEP learning structure and will be given the opportunity to study using similar resources. This will ease and enhance students' transition into the CPA PEP upon completion of preparatory courses.

2. When will the redesigned core courses be offered?

2021 Semester 2 (beginning February 2021):

- Intermediate Financial Reporting 1 (IF1)
- Intermediate Financial Reporting 2 (IF2)
- Taxation (TAX)

2021 Semester 3 (beginning May 2021):

- Audit and Assurance (AUA)

2022 Semester 2 (beginning February 2022):

- Advanced Financial Reporting (AFR)
- Intermediate Management Accounting (MAA)

2022 Semester 3 (beginning May 2022):

- Corporate Finance (COF)
- Performance Management (PMA)
- Information Technology (ITE) (will become a core course at this time)

The following non-core preparatory courses are not being redesigned at this time: Introductory Financial Accounting, Introductory Management Accounting, Economics, Statistics, and Business Law.

3. What do the redesigned core courses look like?

The redesigned CPA preparatory courses are designed to allow students to work through course concepts in an effective and efficient manner. The courses will incorporate technology solutions that will adapt course content to meet unique learner needs.

Each redesigned course contains six units. For each unit, students will complete the following learning activities in this order:

a) Interact with the CPA Canada Learning Library Smartbooks:

Students will be assigned specific chapters to read in the Smartbooks. Each Smartbook chapter has been carefully designed to include detailed explanations and examples of technical material.

Throughout the chapter, students will complete a set of diagnostic questions. Based on the student's performance on the diagnostic questions and their self-declared level of confidence, the Smartbook will adapt and highlight the areas that the student needs to continue to work on. Students will remediate their knowledge gaps through further studying in the Smartbook.

In addition, as students are working through the Smartbook chapters, they will have the opportunity to complete e-lessons on key topics. These e-lessons are interactive, short lectures with example walk-throughs.

b) Complete assigned practice problems:

Students will be assigned a series of short practice problems that are linked to technical material from the unit's Smartbook readings and are meant to resemble exam constructive response questions. The practice problems also provide good preparation for the multiple-choice unit quiz and course exam questions.

c) Complete assigned task-based simulations:

Students will be assigned a set of task-based simulations (TBSs). The TBSs are a set of objective-style questions that provide further practice on the technical concepts covered in the Smartbook readings and practice problems.

d) Complete the unit quiz:

At the end of each unit, students will complete a quiz. The quizzes include 25 multiple-choice questions.

4. How are the redesigned core courses evaluated?

- Consistent with PEP, to be eligible to write the course exam, students must achieve a minimum grade of 75% on course activities. The grade will be comprised of a combination of reasonable attempt and performance on activities.
- A student who does not meet this requirement may not be eligible to write the course exam.
- Once a student is eligible to write the course exam, the exam grade becomes the student's grade for the course. In other words, the exam grade is weighted 100% towards the course grade (and the other activities completed in the course do not count towards the course grade).
- Students must achieve a minimum grade on the exam of 60% to pass the exam. If a student achieves 50-59% on the exam, the student may rewrite the exam without retaking the course. If a student achieves below 50% on the exam, the course must be retaken (and eligibility towards the exam must be attained again).

5. Will there be any changes to the evaluation of core courses that are not redesigned?

The evaluation of core courses that are not yet redesigned will not change. The grade in these courses will continue to be based on:

- 70% - final examination
- 18% - project
- 12% - quizzes

6. What are the course activities that count towards exam eligibility in the redesigned core courses?

Each course will consist of six units and each unit will include a standard set of learning activities. When determining the grade on the course activities to be eligible to write the exam, the following activities may count towards eligibility (the weight of each activity will be announced closer to the semester start date):

- Adaptive Smartbook activities
- Practice problems
- Task-based simulations
- Quizzes

7. What is the impact to a student that takes a core course that has not yet been redesigned but writes (or rewrites, if eligible) the exam later (after the course has been redesigned)?

A student who has completed their coursework under the previous course format (70% final examination, 18% project, and 12% quizzes) and will be writing the exam **after the course has been redesigned** will:

- Have access to the Smartbook and redesigned course for study purposes but will not be required to complete the course learning activities
- Be considered eligible to write the exam
- Be subject to the new grading structure, where the final exam is worth 100% of the grade

8. What is the impact to a student that took a core course that had not yet been redesigned but is required to retake the course and the course is now redesigned?

A student who originally completed their coursework under the previous course format (70% final examination, 18% project, and 12% quizzes) and is required to retake the course **after the course has been redesigned** will:

- Have access to the Smartbook and redesigned course, and will be required to complete the course learning activities
- Be required to achieve 75% on the course learning activities (as described above) to be eligible to write the exam
- Be subject to the new grading structure, where the final exam is worth 100% of the grade

9. How much study time do the redesigned core courses require each week?

The time commitment for the core courses is expected to be 15 to 20 hours per week on average. Students should expect to spend additional time if they are less familiar with accounting concepts.

A typical unit (completed each week) will consist of:

- Smartbook
 - Reading: 5-6 hours
 - Diagnostic questions: 2-3 hours
 - E-lessons: 2-3 hours
- Practice Problems (including debrief): 3-4 hours
- Task-Based Simulations (including debrief): 1-2 hours
- Quiz (including debrief): 2 hours

10. Do students still have to complete redesigned core course activities over six instructional weeks?

At this time, students must complete course activities within six weeks of the course start date (according to scheduled due dates). The completion of these activities will count towards the 75% eligibility requirement (as described above) to write the course exam. Upon meeting the 75% eligibility requirement, students have one year to write the exam.

11. What happens if a student takes longer than six weeks to complete a redesigned core course?

Students who do not achieve a grade of at least 75% on course learning activities within the six instructional weeks will not be eligible to write the course exam and will be withdrawn from the course. Students will be required to retake the course in order to qualify for the exam.

12. Will an instructor be available for the redesigned courses to answer student questions?

In order to facilitate self-study, the redesigned courses will rely on adaptive technology that will enable students to study materials relevant to their knowledge base and gaps. Students will have access to lead facilitators on the course discussion board and will have access to a hotline to ask personal questions.

13. Will there be any classroom or synchronous lectures offered in the redesigned core courses?

To facilitate student's ability to work flexibly through materials, synchronous sessions will not be offered; however, redesigned courses will include several instructional opportunities such as e-lessons and learning activity debrief materials including videos.

14. Are there new computer requirements for the redesigned core courses?

The computer requirements remain the same for the redesigned courses.

15. Will there be any changes to the exam format for the redesigned core courses?

The exam format remains the same for the redesigned courses.

16. Will there be sample exams available in the redesigned core courses?

Sample exam questions and accompanying solutions will be available in the redesigned courses.

17. How long will students have access to the redesigned core course materials after completion of a course?

Students will have access to redesigned course materials for a period of 10 months upon writing the course exam. Students will continue to have access to the Smartbook as long as they are registered as a student in the preparatory courses or CPA PEP.

Non-core CPA preparatory course FAQs

1. Are the non-core preparatory courses being redesigned?

At this time, the non-core courses are not scheduled for redesign. However, Information Technology (ITE) will become a core course (and will be redesigned) in May 2022.

2. Will there be any changes to the evaluation of non-core courses?

Effective for the April 2021 exams, the evaluation of non-core courses will be changing to be based 100% on the final exam. Students will need to achieve 50% to pass the exam (and thus the course).

3. Will there be any changes to the exam format for the non-core courses?

The exam format remains the same for the non-core courses.