

RCW 18.04.105 Issuance of license—Requirements—Examination—Fees—Certified public accountants' account—Valid certificates previously issued under chapter—Continuing professional education—Inactive license designation—Applications to activate. (1) A license to practice public accounting shall be granted by the board to any person:

(a) Who is of good character. Good character, for purposes of this section, means lack of a history of dishonest or felonious acts. The board may refuse to grant a license on the ground of failure to satisfy this requirement only if there is a substantial connection between the lack of good character of the applicant and the professional and ethical responsibilities of a licensee and if the finding by the board of lack of good character is supported by a preponderance of evidence. When an applicant is found to be unqualified for a license because of a lack of good character, the board shall furnish the applicant a statement containing the findings of the board and a notice of the applicant's right of appeal;

(b) Who has met the educational standards established by rule as the board determines to be appropriate;

(c) Who has passed an examination;

(d) Who has met the experience requirements established by rule by the board as it deems appropriate, which is gained:

(i) Through the use of accounting, issuing reports, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, tax advisory, or consulting skills;

(ii) While employed in government, industry, academia, or public practice; and

(iii) Meeting the competency requirements in a manner as determined by the board to be appropriate and established by board rule; and

(e) Who has paid appropriate application fees as established by rule by the board.

(2) The examination described in subsection (1)(c) of this section shall test the applicant's knowledge of the subjects of accounting and auditing, and other related fields the board may specify by rule. The time for holding the examination is fixed by the board and may be changed from time to time. The board shall prescribe by rule the methods of applying for and taking the examination, including methods for grading examinations and determining a passing grade required of an applicant for a license. The board shall to the extent possible see to it that the grading of the examination, and the passing grades, are uniform with those applicable to all other states. The board may make use of all or a part of the uniform certified public accountant examination and advisory grading service of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and may contract with third parties to perform administrative services with respect to the examination as the board deems appropriate to assist it in performing its duties under this chapter. The board shall establish by rule provisions for transitioning to a new examination structure or to a new media for administering the examination.

(3) The board shall charge each applicant an examination fee for the initial examination or for reexamination. The applicable fee shall be paid at the time an individual applies for examination, reexamination, or evaluation of educational qualifications. Fees for examination, reexamination, or evaluation of educational qualifications shall be determined by the board under this chapter. There is established in the state treasury an account to be known as

the certified public accountants' account. All fees received from candidates to take any or all sections of the certified public accountant examination shall be used only for costs related to the examination.

(4) Individuals whose certificates are current and valid on June 30, 2024, will automatically be converted to a licensee in an inactive status. To activate a license and become an active licensee, the individual must apply to the board to activate the license and:

(a) For applications to activate, the licensees must submit to the board documentation that they have gained one year of experience through the use of accounting, issuing reports, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, tax advisory, or consulting skills, without regard to the eight-year limitation set forth in (b) of this subsection, while employed in government, industry, academia, or public practice;

(b) For applications submitted to the board before January 1, 2024, the individual must provide documentation to the board that they have one year of experience acquired within eight years prior to applying for a license through the use of accounting, issuing reports, management advisory, financial advisory, tax, tax advisory, or consulting skills in government, industry, academia, or public practice;

(c) Meet competency requirements in a manner as determined by the board to be appropriate and established by board rule;

(d) Submit to the board satisfactory proof of having completed an accumulation of one hundred twenty hours of CPE during the thirty-six months preceding the date of filing the petition;

(e) Pay the appropriate fees established by rule by the board.

(5) Individuals who did not hold a valid certificate on the conversion date of June 30, 2024, and who wish to apply for a license must apply as a new licensee and meet the requirements under subsection (1) of this section for initial licensure.

(6) Licensees in good standing may request to have their license placed on inactive status. All licensees in inactive status, including those who converted from certificate to a license, are subject to the following conditions:

(a) The licensee is prohibited from practicing public accounting;

(b) The licensee must pay a renewal fee to maintain this status;

(c) The licensee must comply with the applicable CPE requirements;

(d) The licensee is subject to the requirements of this chapter and the rules adopted by the board. [2024 c 13 s 3; 2022 c 85 s 5; 2016 c 127 s 3; 2004 c 159 s 2; 2001 c 294 s 7; 2000 c 171 s 2; 1999 c 378 s 2; 1992 c 103 s 7; 1991 sp.s. c 13 s 20; 1986 c 295 s 6; 1985 c 57 s 3; 1983 c 234 s 7.]

Effective date—2001 c 294: See note following RCW 18.04.015.

Effective dates—Severability—1991 sp.s. c 13: See notes following RCW 18.08.240.

Effective date—1985 c 57: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1985." [1985 c 57 s 91.]