



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

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# CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANT

FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE



## WELCOME

Founded in 1908, the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada (CGA-Canada) is a self-regulating, professional association of 75,000 students and certified general accountants (CGAs). CGAs work throughout the world in industry, commerce, finance, government, public practice and other areas where accounting and financial management are required. CGA clients range from major corporations and industries to entrepreneurs. Their expertise is valued in the public sector, government and the corporate world.

For more information on the national association and your future as a CGA, please visit [www.cga.org/canada](http://www.cga.org/canada).



### Accounting in Canada

In Canada, accountants can be found in many businesses, organizations and levels of government where they perform a wide range of financial, accounting and management functions. They also work in the regulated field of public practice, providing accounting, assurance, tax and business advisory services for a diverse range of clients.

Accountants in Canada may do work similar to that of accountants in your home country, but there are important distinctions. Canada has three accounting bodies, each with its own education, examination and experience requirements.

### CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANTS

A certified general accountant is an accounting professional with expertise in finance, taxation, business strategy, auditing, management and business leadership. CGAs must meet the educational, experience and examination requirements established and regularly updated by CGA-Canada. They work in industry, commerce, finance, government, public practice and the not-for-profit sector.

### CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

A chartered accountant (CA) must be a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants and is required to have practical training with a public accounting firm.

### CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS

A certified management accountant (CMA) is usually involved in cost or management accounting, but can also work in strategic planning, sales and marketing, information technology, human resources, finance and operations. The Society of Management Accountants awards this designation in Canada.

This fact sheet will introduce you to the basic pathway to qualify as a certified general accountant, one of many professions in Canada's financial sector.

### Before You Come to Canada

While you are waiting to go to Canada, there are many important things you can do to improve your chances of success.

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office ([www.credentials.gc.ca](http://www.credentials.gc.ca)) is an organization of the Government of Canada that provides you with helpful resources, such as the *Planning to Work in Canada?* workbook and the Working in Canada Tool. Use these resources to collect important information and to develop your job-search plan.

Canada

You will need to prove your language skills in English or French or be tested. You can find information at [www.language.ca](http://www.language.ca). If you need to improve your language skills, start before you come to Canada.

To learn how your international credentials may be recognized by CGA-Canada, visit the Accountants Coming to Canada ([www.AccountantsToCanada.org](http://www.AccountantsToCanada.org)) self-assessment tool.

Your official education, work and identity documents are important. It is much easier for you to gather your documents while still in your home country. Be sure to bring work references, employment records and a letter of good standing from your home professional accounting body.

If your documents are neither in French nor in English, they may require translation. You may have to use a professional translation service in Canada.

After you arrive in Canada, find immigrant services in your area, including language training, job-search help and, in some cases, job placements at [www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/services.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/services.asp).

[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

It is important for you to learn about the steps you need to take to get your credentials and qualifications recognized in Canada. Citizenship and Immigration Canada also recommends that you review the resources on our website for helpful information about the immigration process and living in Canada.

## Becoming a Certified General Accountant in Canada

If you are currently certified as a professional accountant, check to see if your accounting organization has a mutual recognition agreement with CGA-Canada ([www.cga-canada.org/en-ca/International/StrategicAlliances/Pages/StrategicAlliances.aspx](http://www.cga-canada.org/en-ca/International/StrategicAlliances/Pages/StrategicAlliances.aspx)).

If your accounting organization does not have a mutual recognition program with CGA-Canada, you can still become a CGA. There are three requirements to meet before the CGA designation is granted. Each province may have its own additional requirements.

### Candidates must:

- Complete the CGA Program. Courses deemed equivalent may enable advanced standing in the program.
- Earn a bachelor's degree. Any discipline is acceptable. International degrees must be deemed equivalent to a Canadian bachelor-level university degree by the credential assessment agency recommended by the provincial CGA association.
- Gain approved professional work experience. International experience may be recognized with appropriate third-party confirmation. At least one year of Canadian experience is required.

### CGA Program

The CGA Program has many entry points to reflect the skills and educational background of candidates.

If you possess a bachelor's degree, you may be awarded credit up to the first four levels of the CGA Program depending on your major and the courses taken. If you have a diploma, you may receive credit for some CGA Program levels. You will still need to complete a bachelor's degree.

One of the benefits of the CGA Program of Professional Studies is that it enables candidates to work full time while they complete their CGA studies and meet their certification requirements.

## Finding a Job in Canada

There is a strong need for professional accountants in Canada. However, the qualification requirements for the CGA designation—and for other Canadian accounting designations—are demanding. As well, in order to succeed in the workplace, strong communication skills in English or French are critical.

Bridging programs are becoming more common in the accounting profession. Bridging programs ease the transition from your international training and experience to the Canadian workplace.

Do some research to see which accounting firms or immigrant-serving organizations have bridging programs.

It is important to be in contact with the provincial CGA association for the province where you plan to live and work. This will allow you to see the work study options available in that province.

The Government of Canada posts jobs for employers at [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca).

## Provincial and Territorial CGA Associations

Alberta [www.cga-alberta.org](http://www.cga-alberta.org)

British Columbia [www.cga-bc.org](http://www.cga-bc.org)

Manitoba [www.cga-manitoba.org](http://www.cga-manitoba.org)

New Brunswick [www.cga-nb.org](http://www.cga-nb.org)

Newfoundland and Labrador [www.cganl.org](http://www.cganl.org)

Nova Scotia [www.cga-nb.org](http://www.cga-nb.org)

Ontario [www.cga-ontario.org](http://www.cga-ontario.org)

Prince Edward Island [www.cga-pe.org](http://www.cga-pe.org)

Saskatchewan [www.cga-saskatchewan.org](http://www.cga-saskatchewan.org)

Northwest Territories and Nunavut [www.cga-nwt-nu.org](http://www.cga-nwt-nu.org)

Yukon [www.cga.org/canada/yukon](http://www.cga.org/canada/yukon)

## Additional Resources

Accountants Coming to Canada:

[www.AccountantsToCanada.org](http://www.AccountantsToCanada.org)

Information on becoming a CGA and the CGA Program of Professional Studies: [www.cga-canada.org/en-ca/Programs/Pages/ca\\_become\\_CGA.aspx](http://www.cga-canada.org/en-ca/Programs/Pages/ca_become_CGA.aspx)

Certified Management Accountants [www.cma-canada.org](http://www.cma-canada.org)

Chartered Accountants of Canada [www.cica.ca](http://www.cica.ca)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

Service Canada [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca)

Foreign Credentials Referral Office [www.credentials.gc.ca](http://www.credentials.gc.ca)

Quebec [www.cga-quebec.org](http://www.cga-quebec.org)

