

# GUIDE TO ACCOUNTING RECRUITING

| Queen's Accounting Association







FIRSTLY

# WELCOME

TO OUR GUIDE FOR SUCCESS

For anyone interested in pursuing a career in the Accounting field, this guide is for you. This guide is intended to provide information and support to Queen's students. No matter your academic year, we are here to help should you require further assistance or simply wish to chat about the contents of this guide.

Our goal is to smooth the recruiting process for fellow students and to provide facts, ideas, and advice on how to succeed. QAA's mission is to strive to inform, connect, and above all else, to help students land their dream jobs as they begin their long, rewarding careers.

As a short disclaimer, the authors of this guide take no responsibility for any future successes or failures. We cannot guarantee that you will be hired, or be granted an interview, and therefore, we encourage you to use it at your own discretion.

QAA EXECUTIVE  
2017-2018

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

.....

## ACCOUNTING AND THE CPA

2

THE BASICS OF ACCOUNTING

THE CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT DESIGNATION

THE HISTORY OF THE CPA

WHY BECOME A CPA?

CPA OPPORTUNITIES

INDUSTRY PATHWAYS

THE BIG 4

SME'S

.....

## GETTING MY CPA

12

COURSE ROADMAP

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTING

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

PRE-APPROVED PROGRAM ROUTE (PPR)

BIG 4 SUMMER CONFERENCES

INTERNSHIPS

FULL TIME CAREER

5 STEPS TO ENTER THE CPA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

PREPARING TO WRITE THE CFE & GETTING DESIGNATED

.....

## RECRUITING

21

RECRUITING CYCLE TIMES

ACING THE INTERVIEW

INTERNSHIPS AND FULL TIME

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

BUSINESS COMPETENCIES

SUMMER CONFERENCES

TIPS & TRICKS

KEY CONTACTS

.....



---

# ACCOUNTING & THE CPA

You may be asking yourself right now, what exactly is accounting? In simplest terms, it is the systematic recording of financial transactions pertaining to a business. It also involves the process of summarizing, analyzing and reporting of these transactions for external stakeholders and tax collection agencies.



# BASICS OF ACCOUNTING

Accounting is one of the key responsibilities for almost every business no matter the size. At smaller firms, it may be handled by just a bookkeeper and an accountant, while larger businesses may have a separate finance department with dozens of accountants employed.

There are many different service lines that accountants can specialize in. Some of the areas include:



## AUDIT & ASSURANCE

The role as an auditor is to inspect and examine the financial reports of an organization to ensure accuracy and compliance with national standards.



## RISK ASSURANCE

The task for the risk assurance team is to manage and mitigate potential risk within a business's processes, policies, systems, and controls to ensure strategic objectives are met.



## ADVISORY

The purpose of the advisory group is to offer financial and technical advice by developing strategies to help enhance the organization's financial performance and success.



## TAX

The tax practice helps companies understand and meet their tax obligations, while identifying and reducing risks involved with tax and creating tax strategies that complement their business and operational objectives.

# | THE CPA DESIGNATION

## WHY BECOME A CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT?

If you're looking to enter the world of business or finance, having a professional accounting credential will open many doors for you and enhance your prospects of future job opportunities. CPAs are highly valued for their financial expertise, strategic thinking, business insight, management and leadership skills. They are trusted leaders who can navigate through complexity to drive success.

## HERE ARE THE FACTS

- Highly qualified professionals in the accounting, business and finance field will always be in high demand, as CPA professionals are trained to meet Canadian and international market needs.
- The CPA designation can take you to the top position in any type of organization, in any sector of the economy, anywhere around the world. According to the ROB 1000, 75% of CFOs in Canada are CPAs. Along with comprehensive financial management skills, you are provided with the soft skills that can make you an effective senior executive.
- The designation can help ensure a high starting salary and opportunities for advancement over time. The CPA designation provides financial security as it is a credential that is in demand even in tough economic times, but gives you the opportunity to pursue the income that you aspire to reach.

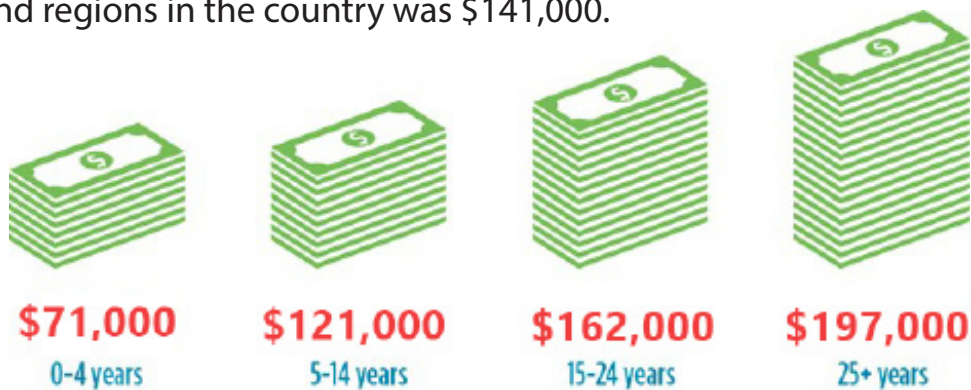
# CPA OVERVIEW

The CPA designation boasts over 200,000 members in Canada with over 87,000 in Ontario alone.



## CPA SALARY

According to the CPA Profession Compensation Survey, the mean average compensation of Canada's professional accountants in all working sectors, age ranges and regions in the country was \$141,000.



## WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES THE CPA CREATE?

A CPA designation does not only open doors to many accounting related jobs in Canada, but it is a gateway to a world of many exciting opportunities for your career. The skills obtained from earning the CPA designation are transferable to many other professions such as consulting and finance. The value of the CPA designation is recognized by organizations worldwide and offers you countless career choices — multiple opportunities in many different roles and in all sectors of the economy, domestically and abroad. It offers the widest range of possibilities so you can choose the environment and area of business that interests you the most.

# INDUSTRY PATHWAYS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE

**BIG 4**

The Big 4 used to be known as the Big 8, until several mergers and dissolutions in the late 1980s.





## THE BEGINNING

The Big 8 included Coopers & Lybrand, Ernst & Whinney, Deloitte Haskins & Sells, Arthur Andersen, Price Waterhouse, Peat Marwick Mitchell, Arthur Young, and Touche Ross.



## THE TRANSITION

In 1989 the Big 6 emerged through the merger of Ernst & Whinney with Arthur Young to form Ernst & Young, as well as Deloitte, Haskins & Sells with Touche Ross. Then in 1998, Price Waterhouse merged with Coopers & Lybrand to form PricewaterhouseCoopers.



## THE BIG 4 EMERGENCE

The last event to reduce the number of firms to 4 was the fall of Arthur Andersen. This firm was involved in the collapse of Enron Corp. and suffered such a loss of reputation that it could no longer continue to operate; thus leaving Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG.

Criteria	Deloitte	PwC	EY	KPMG
Origins	Founded by William Deloitte in 1845 and became Deloitte after the partners of Deloitte & Touche merged in 1995	Formed in 1998 through merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand	Ernst & Whinney merged with Arthur Young to create Ernst & Young in 1989	Formed in 1987 through merger of Peat Marwick International and Klynveld Main Goerdeler (KMG)
Lines of Service	Audit & assurance, consulting, risk advisory, financial advisory, tax, legal	Audit & assurance, accounting advisory services, consulting, tax, risk advisory, deals	Assurance, tax, advisory services, transactions	Audit, advisory services, tax
Size	Employees: 244,400 2016 Revenue: \$36.8 Billion Countries: 150	Employees: 223,500 2016 Revenue: \$35.9 Billion Countries: 157	Employees: 230,800 2016 Revenue: \$29.6 Billion Countries: 150+	Employees: 189,000 2016 Revenue: \$25.4 Billion Countries: 152
Headquarters	New York City, United States	London, United Kingdom	London, United Kingdom	Amsterdam, Netherlands
International Opportunities	Deloitte's people gain international experience by moving to and working in other geographies, short- and long-term international business travel, and working on international teams or projects	Secondments ranging from 3 months to 2 years at another PwC office elsewhere in the world allowing you to travel and learn about different lines of service and cultures	The Global Exchange Program allows high-performing seniors or managers at EY in any service line to participate in overseas assignments lasting 18 to 24 months	KPMG's Global Opportunities (GO) program helps people broaden their horizons and develop new capabilities by applying their skills in different business and cultural environments

Criteria	Deloitte	PwC	EY	KPMG
Training Opportunities	Offers a Personal Learning Portal that allows you to build a tailored learning program to shape your own career path	Offers courses, workshops, assigned a coach on day one, and PwC's DRIVE initiative allows for short-term, local and virtual work assignments	Offers on-the-job coaching, counselling for performance review and career development, and personal mentoring	Offers free webcasts, self-education, and other resources for those who wish to learn online, in addition to in-person classes, seminars, and symposiums
Highlights	Recognized for their technological advancements	Recognized for personal growth opportunities	Recognized for diversity within the workplace	Recognized for workplace environment and inclusive culture
Common Cultures	Innovative, customer oriented, teamwork, trust, communication, excellence			

## SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED

# ENTERPRISES (SME'S)

SME's differ from the Big 4 accounting firms with regards to the opportunities they present and the types of experiences they offer to their employees. Some examples of differences are as follows:

### JOB COMPETITION



In the workplace, there are fewer accountants, which leads to less internal competition among co-workers resulting in fewer overtime hours being worked.

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Typically fewer classroom and online learning options are available at smaller accounting firms. Having a mentor at the Big 4 is very common, while there are fewer opportunities for an assigned mentor at medium sized firms. There is usually more on-the-job and individual learning at SME's. Learning opportunities also happen earlier at SME's because you are a large part of the team right from the moment you start.

TRAINING

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

FUTURE CAREER GOALS

At SME's, you generally have to depend on your supervisor to train you rather than a specific teacher or assistant that is offered at the Big 4. Having a supervisor with their own responsibilities can pose a challenge to your training but some see the hands-on training approach to be very beneficially for their personal growth.

If you're working at the Big 4, you're often given one specific area to work on, such as tax or auditing. But in a smaller firm, you are more likely to be involved with many more aspects of the business. This will ultimately lead you to become a more complete and well-rounded employee.

Working with one of the Big 4 accounting firms opens up a bigger network as you work on bigger clients, but at SME's you work very closely with a handful of smaller clients. Although the reputation of working with the Big 4 may impress future employers, ultimately your success at your job will impress them more than the company you are employed by.

Criteria	BDO	Grant Thornton	MNP	Crowe Soberman
Origins	Founded as Siedman and Sidman in New York City in 1910, and became BDO International in 1973	Founded by 26 year-old Alexander Richardson Grant in 1924, and became Grant Thornton International in 1980	Founded in Winnipeg in 1945, renamed to Meyers Norris Penny in 1997, and became MNP LLP in 2011	Founded in 1958 by Max Soberman and Hy Isenbaum, rebranded to Soberman LLP in 2003, and became Crowe Soberman LLP in 2012
Lines of Business	Assurance & accounting, tax, advisory, outsourcing services	Audit, business risk services, forensic accounting, tax services, transactions	Assurance & accounting, consulting, enterprise risk, tax	Audit, tax, advisory, international transactions, consulting, risk,
Size	Employees: 67,700 2016 Revenue: \$7.6 Billion Countries: 158	Employees: 42,000 2016 Revenue: \$4.8 Billion Countries: 130	Employees: 4,100 2016 Revenue: \$4.4 Billion Countries: 103	Employees: 33,200 2016 Revenue: \$3.7 Billion Countries: 130
Headquarters	Brussels, Belgium	Toronto, Ontario	Calgary, Alberta	Toronto, Ontario
Highlights	Recognized for building strong client relationships	Recognized for superior service and exceptional colleagues	Recognized for maintaining excellent employee work/ life balance	Recognized for having passionate people and innovative solutions
Common Cultures	Client focused, change oriented, accountability, responsibility, integrity			

---

# WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY



“

Accounting the base to all things business. Getting your CPA could be one of the best business decision you will ever make

”

Accountants are not limited to working at one of the Big 4 firms like Deloitte or PwC, or a small and medium-sized enterprise firm like BDO or Grant Thornton, but accountants work inside the industry as well. In fact, within the professional service sector it is very common for young associates to leave the accounting firm they started at once they have earned their CPA credentials, to take an executive position at a different company.

Working as a corporate accountant enables professionals to hone their craft in an area of business they enjoy and possibly enjoy a greater work/life balance. Being employed by a company such as Canadian Tire or Ford Canada is commonly known as working within the private sector as opposed to the public sector. Some of the main responsibilities of these accountants are performing internal audit reviews, and verifying their companies' financial and information systems, management procedures, and internal controls.



---

# EXIT OPPORTUNITIES

By having your CPA, you will be in constant demand from other employers as you are seen as a qualified individual with a immense skillset, thus making your career opportunities endless. Some benefits of transitioning to working in the industry are:

## BEYOND SALARY INCENTIVES

In order to attract top performers, companies in the private sector are taking steps to enhance their overall compensation packages to rival those at public accounting firms. When benefits beyond salary and sign-on bonuses are considered, additional corporate compensation offerings often include stock options, annual and discretionary bonuses, and pensions.

## CONSISTENCY

Knowing that you have a specific job to do (and place to do it) day after day, for many people is comforting. Consistency and routine are important stress reducers for some professionals, which makes corporate accounting an attractive choice. Security and routines are also important when you're making decisions about your future.

## BOTTOM LINE CONTRIBUTION

Accounting roles that support business growth in corporations, such as financial analysts and business system analysts - provide accountants with a unique opportunity to directly contribute to the company's bottom line.

## SPECIALIZATION

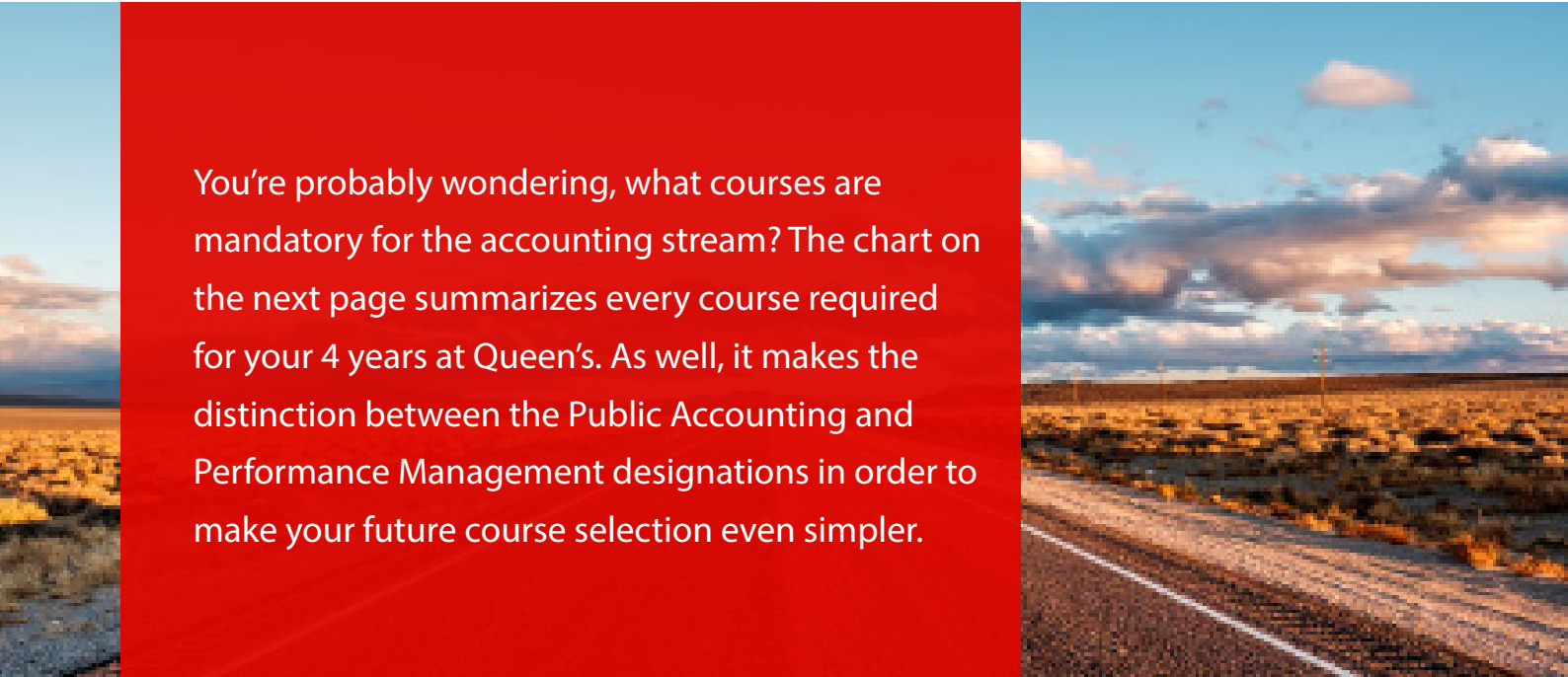
Manufacturers, major retailers, biotechnology companies, technology firms, governmental agencies, and environmental organizations are often looking for new accountant specialists for their teams.



---

# GETTING MY CPA

## Course Roadmap



You're probably wondering, what courses are mandatory for the accounting stream? The chart on the next page summarizes every course required for your 4 years at Queen's. As well, it makes the distinction between the Public Accounting and Performance Management designations in order to make your future course selection even simpler.

# COURSE ROADMAP

Public Accounting			Performance Management		
Year	Course	Course Code	Course	Course Code	
1	Financial Accounting Management Accounting	COMM 111* COMM 112*	Financial Accounting Management Accounting	COMM 111* COMM 112*	
2	--	--	--	--	
3	Financial Accounting Practices, Principles and Concepts Intermediate Management Accounting Financial Accounting II Management Control	COMM 311 COMM 312 COMM 313 COMM 414	Financial Accounting Practices, Principles and Concepts Intermediate Management Accounting Financial Accounting II Management Control	COMM 311 COMM 312 COMM 313 COMM 414	
4	Auditing Income Taxation Business Law Business Combinations Accounting -- --	COMM 317 COMM 319 COMM 381 COMM 417 -- --	Auditing Income Taxation Business Law Financial Statement Analysis and Accounting Based Valuation Corporate Governance and Control Business Combinations Accounting	COMM 317 COMM 319 COMM 381 COMM 411 COMM 415 COMM 417	
*Denotes required course for Commerce Program			*Denotes required course for Commerce Program		

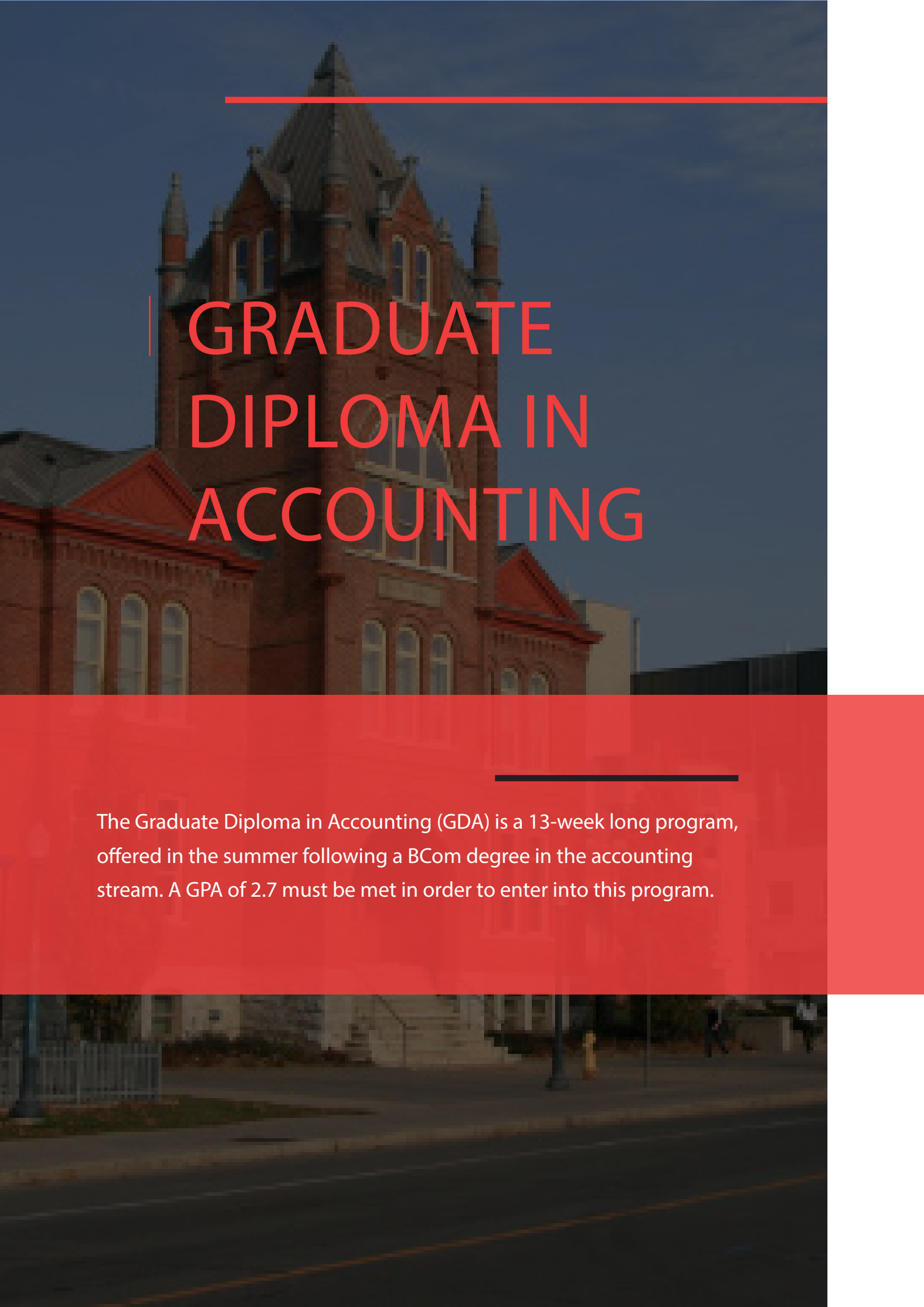
In addition to the requirements listed above, Queen's offers the following supplemental accounting courses that might catch your eye:

## Environmental Accounting – COMM 310

Examines financial issues related to the environment in the context of natural capitalism and corporate social responsibility. The course provides an overview of concepts and tools related to 1) financial reporting, 2) assessing and managing environmental costs and benefits, 3) environmental entrepreneurship.

## Organizational Fraud – COMM 416

Examines the types of fraud as well as how to identify conditions within an organizational setting that likely increases the chances of fraud. Significant time is spent discussing ways in which to prevent and detect fraud. Finally, this course includes ethical decision making within the accounting and financial reporting function. The course will be taught using an interactive, case-based methodology. Current events may play an important role in this course. A prerequisite is COMM 111.



---

# GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTING

---

The Graduate Diploma in Accounting (GDA) is a 13-week long program, offered in the summer following a BCom degree in the accounting stream. A GPA of 2.7 must be met in order to enter into this program.



## GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTING

The GDA begins in May following your final year in the Queen's Commerce program and includes these 5 mandatory courses:



ACCOUNTING  
THEORY  
(MACC 811)



INCOME TAX  
PRACTICE  
(MACC 812)



INFORMATION  
SYSTEMS CONTROL,  
MANAGEMENT &  
AUDIT  
(MACC 814)



AUDIT  
EFFECTIVENESS  
(MACC 816)



INTEGRATION &  
ANALYSIS  
(MACC 818)

There are many benefits of the GDA. First, you can qualify to write the Common Final Evaluation (CFE) in only 15 months, where the CPA Professional Education Program takes a total of 27 months. Second, you will have a nationally accredited degree under your belt! You can then begin the further stages of the CPA certification by entering the Capstone Modules 1 and 2 anywhere in Canada.

Further, being able to concentrate on work experience during your first 8 months field will not only increase your own learning, but make you more valuable to your firm.

The cases written during the GDA are also very similar to the cases you will work on during the CPA designation. This gives you a leg up and a head start in comparison to students who chose not to take the GDA.

As an Adjunct Assistant Professor and the Director of the Graduate Diploma in Accounting Program, Professor McConomy can offer students the opportunity to grow their skill sets and increase their tool kit while meeting the requirements to enter into the CPA certification process.

# PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

## How to gain practical experience and kick start your accounting career

Now, you have started taking accounting courses and have learned how to debit and credit. However, you must elevate your in class knowledge to an applicable hands-on, ready to apply skill set for a full time accounting career beyond school. If your goal is to become a CPA, you must first have 30 months of paid qualifying practical work experience.

## 2 TYPES OF PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE

### PRE APPROVED PROGRAM ROUTE (PPR)

- Specific training roles in an organization approved by CPA Ontario
- CPA Ontario and your employer work together to create roles that fulfill the qualifying work experience
- These roles are filled through on campus recruitment (example: Queen's OCR in September for third and fourth year students in the Commerce program)
- The Big 4 Firms are PPR approved



### EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION ROUTE (EVR)

- As long as the experience is relevant, the candidate can choose to work anywhere
- Candidates must submit their detailed experience reports which are reviewed by their supervisor for approval by CPA Ontario
- Candidates work directly with CPA Ontario to assess experience
- This includes SME firms

# Pre Approved Program Route

## Pros of the Big 4 Accounting Firms

Internship	Full Time Career
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· More opportunities to work with a variety of clients in different industries</li> <li>· Assignments, projects and teams are pre-assigned, resulting in regularity and a balance of capacity</li> <li>· Additional training for interns are offered: workshops and career events</li> <li>· HR events to connect you with other interns and accounting professionals across the GTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Big 4 is known for their flexibility and support when employees are completing their CPA training and writing the CPA exam</li> <li>· Additional support is offered through mentorship; opportunities such as pairing CPA candidates with a CPA Professional</li> <li>· Opportunity to travel and work abroad</li> <li>· Opportunities to work on bigger and more recognizable projects with well-known clients</li> <li>· Access to network through high client exposure, Big 4 employees have opportunities to elevate their career by moving into leadership positions in their client's companies</li> </ul>

# Experience Verification Route: SME Firms

Some students may choose to complete their internship or work experience at medium or small sized firms, such as BDO, Grant Thornton, MNP, and Crowe Soberman.

Internship	Full Time Career
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Will have greater experiences with adaptability and flexibility: for example being assigned to a new project and team last minute</li> <li>· More opportunities to work with leadership employees in the company; you may be seated closer to your manager for example</li> <li>· Have an ability to develop skills and experiences outside those required in your role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Big 4 is known for their flexibility and support when employees are completing their CPA training and writing the CPA exam</li> <li>· Additional support is offered through mentorship; opportunities such as pairing CPA candidates with a CPA Professional</li> <li>· Opportunity to travel and work abroad</li> <li>· Opportunities to work on bigger and more recognizable projects with well-known clients</li> <li>· Access to network through high client exposure, Big 4 employees have opportunities to elevate their career by moving into leadership positions in their client's companies</li> </ul>

# STEPS TO ENTER THE CPA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



## STEP 1: FIND YOUR PROGRAM ENTRY

Conduct a self assessment for outstanding prerequisites which can then be completed through CPA Preparatory courses or Queen's.

## STEP 2: SUBMIT YOUR TRANSCRIPT ASSESSMENT REQUEST

### WHAT YOU NEED:

- ✓ A post-secondary institution degree
- ✓ Completed transcript assessment form
- ✓ Official transcript
- ✓ The required fees (\$150 + HST)



Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario  
69 Bloor Street East, Toronto, ON M4W 1A2  
T: 416 962-1841 Toll free 1 800 387-0735  
cpaontario.ca

### Transcript Assessment Form

CPA Ontario ID:            
(for office use only)

The Transcript Assessment Form is to be used by individuals who have an interest in enrolling in the [CPA Certification Program](#) with the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario (CPA Ontario). If submitting your transcript assessment package via email, this form and all documentation must be submitted to CPA Ontario as one package in PDF format. If submitting official transcript(s), have your post-secondary institution's Registrar's Office send the official transcript(s) directly, in a sealed envelope to CPA Ontario at the address on the top right of this form (see Step 2 on page 2 for more information).

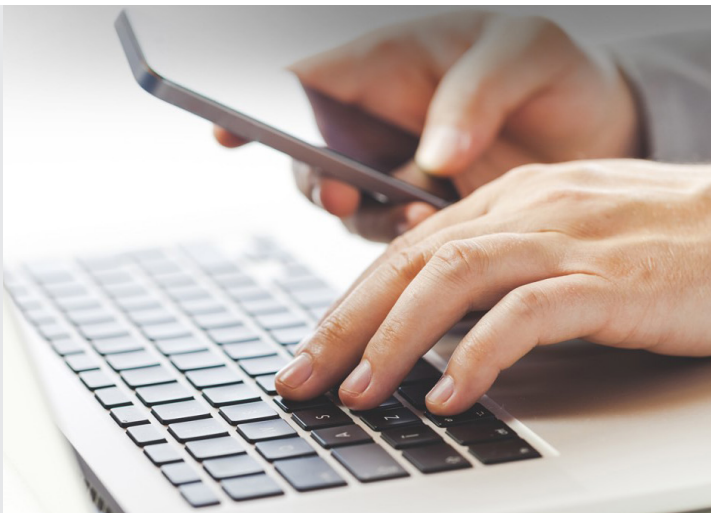
Incomplete submissions may result in delays and additional fees. **Effective August 1, 2016**, documents submitted after transcript assessment results are provided will necessitate a reassessment fee of \$150 (plus HST). Please see [Get Started Today](#).

#### Fee Requirement:

There is a \$150 (plus HST) fee for transcript assessments. Please see [Get Started Today](#) for more information.

#### Privacy Statement:

CPA Ontario is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal information. The collection, use and disclosure of your personal information that may be made by CPA Ontario is described in the CPA Ontario [Privacy Policy](#). The information collected in this Transcript Assessment is used primarily for the purposes of an individual's assessment.



## STEP 3: REGISTER AS A STUDENT

After the transcript assessment is complete, you must select the appropriate student registration category and pay the applicable fees. You must register and be approved as a student prior to enrolling in any course, module or exam.



# STEPS TO ENTER THE CPA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



## STEP 4: ENROLLING IN A COURSE, MODULE, OR EXAM

### MEET THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ Enrol in the required courses:
  - Core 1 & 2 (Included in the GDA)
  - Elective 1 & 2 (Included in the GDA)
  - Capstone 1 & 2
- ✓ Enrol in the Common Final Exam

## STEP 5: BEGIN REPORTING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Your practical experience must be captured in the profession's online Practical Experience Reporting Tool (PERT). This can be accessed on CPA Ontario's online learning platform, Brightspace. A minimum of 30 months of experience is required to receive the CPA designation.



## PREPARING TO WRITE THE COMMON FINAL EXAMINATION (CFE)

Before you are eligible to write the CFE you must complete the CPA PEP prerequisites, the degree requirements, and be well on your way to completing your 30 months of paid qualifying practical work experience.

The CFE tests candidates in 3 categories:

### 01 BREADTH

- Financial Reporting
- Management Accounting
- Strategy and Governance
- Taxation
- Finance
- Audit and Assurance

### 02 DEPTH #1

- Financial Reporting
- Management Accounting

### 03 DEPTH #2

- Financial Reporting
- Management Accounting
- Strategy and Governance
- Taxation
- Finance
- Audit and Assurance

## THE GOAL OF THE CFE IS TO TEST CANDIDATES IN 5 ENABLING COMPETENCIES:



PROFESSIONAL AND  
ETHICAL BEHAVIOR



PROBLEM-SOLVING AND  
DECISION MAKING



COMMUNICATION



SELF-MANAGEMENT



TEAMWORK AND  
LEADERSHIP

---

# RECRUITING

## RECRUITING CYCLE TIMES

At Queen's University, the core accounting recruiting period for Summer employment ranges from late August to late September. During the end of August, many accounting firms will post employment opportunities on Quest, accessible through the Commerce Portal. It is extremely important to scope these opportunities early, as you can book coffee chats with recruiters once they are on campus to answer any questions you may have. The first couple of weeks in the school year are the most busy for recruiting in the Accounting stream.



### TIME PERIOD:

First week of school

.....

September 19 – 25

.....

Late February – Late March

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT:

- > Each of the Big 4 Accounting firms and some smaller firms will have an information session, after which their employment opportunity on Quest will close. It is extremely important to network during these sessions and ask any questions you may have – make sure you stand out.
- > Accounting interviews will take place and firms will make their decisions. September recruiting goes by quick, so make sure you take advantage of it. The summer is the best time to prepare for your interviews and get tips from peers.
- > Another 'mini' recruiting opportunity arises through the Big 4 Summer Conferences. If you are looking to work for one of the Big 4, these summer conferences are the best way to do so.



RECRUITING TIP

# ACING THE INTERVIEW

HIGH LEVEL DESCRIPTION FOR INTERNSHIP AND FULL TIME

## INTRODUCTION

---

Whether you are trying to land an internship after 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year, or aiming for a full time position out of 4th year, interviews take preparation and practice. We are here to provide you with some inside knowledge and past experiences to make this preparation easier for your accounting journey.

At the internship level, interviews are more conversational than technical. Therefore, we recommend placing greater emphasis on preparation for the behavioural types of questions rather than industry based or situational. In the interviews, it is best to show up prepared and ready to talk to all aspects of your life, as they are really just trying to get to know you and the type of employee you would be.

We suggest focusing on integrating stories into your answers that tell of leadership, initiative, teamwork, problem solving, persuasion, and communication. The actual style of each interview differs between every firm, but for the most part, the general process is the same. For full time positions, the interviews become more technical, but are still grounded in a solid behavioural foundation.



## QUOTES FROM ALUMNI

Once you've landed that internship or full time position, it is helpful to know what to expect during your work term. Therefore, we've provided several quotes from alumni who have completed an internship or are currently working at one of the Big 4.

DIYANG  
LU



COMMERCE '18  
DELOITTE INTERN

“As a student entering the business field, working at Deloitte has been an incredible learning experience. Throughout my term, I got exposure to a variety of different industries and worked on projects in distinct capabilities. Deloitte does a very good job at rewarding people who take initiative. From the get-go, I was surrounded by my coach, my buddy, and my peers with whom I could share ideas and learn more about the business. While there's a jump from a student schedule to working full-time, the supportive environment was what made the transition seamless. Being around these new friends and the reacquainted ones made this past summer one of the best yet.”

MEERA  
JAGOTA



COMMERCE '20  
PWC INTERN

“Recruiting is unlike any other experience that you'll have in University. You're not only meeting people who work at the Big 4 firms, including everyone from the intern level to the partner level, but you're also meeting other students from Universities across the country. My biggest advice is to be confident in networking with different people, be genuine, and always have a smile on your face!”

TIM  
RIFFAULT



COMMERCE '18  
KPMG INTERN

“Your summer internship is an opportunity to immerse yourself in the firm culture and build the foundation for your career. During your internship, you will have the opportunity to meet so many people who all want to help and watch you succeed. Because of this, ask as many questions as possible; about the work, the people and the programs that KPMG has to offer. I was told that there was never a stupid question and I can honestly say that that was true. And most importantly- have fun. It's an amazing experience meeting all the interns who I can now say are friends!”

## QUOTES FROM ALUMNI

MATTHEW  
TATOFF



COMMERCE '18  
KPMG INTERN

“ Your summer internship experience is how you shape it out to be. Connect with as many people as you can not only those in your service line. Step out of your comfort zone at work and push yourself to try new experiences. Grasp hold of every opportunity that is thrown at you. Everyone at KPMG is friendly, approachable and supportive - so ask lots of questions and learn as much as possible. Always attend every social and remember, you're in a unique environment as your team is not only experienced but young - so take the time and make great friends. In the end, you'll grow as a person and professionally as well as feel rewarded by one of the most unique experiences in your life.”

JESSICA  
ZHU



COMMERCE '18  
PWC INTERN

“ One of the best aspects of an internship is the people you meet. Having worked at PwC in both Toronto and Vancouver, I can honestly say that I have met people in both cities, through the internship, that have become some of my closest friends. Together, we have done pot-lucks, gone camping, hiking, etc. - all outside of work. On a career side, these are also the people that will start with you in full-time and become your network - no matter where you all end up. Beyond the intern class, you are also exposed to a completely new network of people within the firm, who are extremely willing to guide you and help you find your path.”

ROBIN  
CREIGHTON



COMMERCE '18  
EY INTERN

“ An accounting summer internship at EY is an incredible experience. There are a plethora of events to attend and enjoy, but you get out what you put into your internship. Attend anything and everything; connect with the other interns and seek out the unique opportunities within your firm. You will meet a ton of interesting people, and learn a lot about yourself in a personal and professional setting. It is a wonderful opportunity to try something new and I encourage you to meet people from all areas of the company, not just the intern bubble. You never know who you'll meet.”

# FIRM COMPETENCIES

## WHAT THE BIG 4 LOOKS FOR IN A CANDIDATE



### 01 DELOITTE

---

**Communication:** ability to work in teams and communicate clearly, expressively, and concisely in a variety of situations.

**Achievement of Goals:** commitment and motivation to succeed and meet objectives, both personal and business related. Displays drive and determination through a persistence and desire to push past pressure.

**Commercial Awareness:** ability to demonstrate an interest in business and knowledge of any current issues that may be impacting your chosen field.

**Career Motivation:** demonstrate knowledge of what a career in a professional services firm involves, particularly in your chosen field. We also look for individuals who are able to explain why they have an interest in these areas.

**Planning and Organizational Skills:** taking responsibility for the completion of tasks and ensuring that detail is not overlooked when involved in a project. Having good time management skills and being able to prioritize tasks effectively.

**Problem Solving:** analyzing, distilling, and solving practical problems, generating new ideas, and making sound judgments in complex situations. Ability to motivate others towards a particular course of action.



## 02 PWC

---

**Whole Leadership:** ability to lead, make a difference, and deliver results.

**Business Acumen:** ability to bring business knowledge and awareness.

**Relationships:** ability to build genuine, trust-based relationships.

**Technical Capabilities:** creating value for PwC.

**Global Acumen:** transcending boundaries of geography, politics, race, and culture.



## 03 EY

---

**Integrity:** clear sense of personal and professional accountability; people who exercise sound judgment and common sense and build relationships based on doing the right thing.

**Respect:** recognizing the value of different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. People who excel: ability to perform highly and consistently deliver quality work while continually looking for ways to improve.

**Teamwork:** ability to listen, learn, share, develop, and work with other people.

**Energy, enthusiasm, and courage to lead:** demonstrating drive, vision, and determination; people who are passionate and excited about the opportunities at EY, their futures, and achieving their potential.

**People who thrive on challenges:** flexible, adaptable to new situations, and able to prioritize effectively.



## 04 KPMG

---

**Delivers Quality:** be able to plan, prioritize, and prepare in advance. Be able to manage multiple tasks and keep track of progress towards a goal.

**Drives Collaboration and Inclusion:** ability to share and discuss ideas to make lasting connections. Be able to adapt communication styles and methods according to each audience, getting everyone involved in the process.

**Strives for Continual Improvement:** actively seeks feedback on performance and learns from experiences. Listens to advice provided by fellow teammates.

**Seizes Business Opportunities:** being passionate about the business world and identifying areas where the business could be improved or further developed.

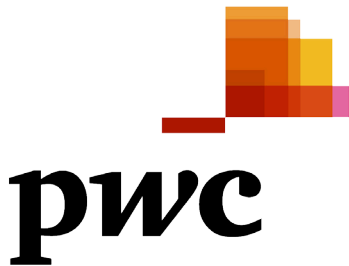
**Demonstrates Innovation and Curiosity:** ability to go beyond the obvious solution and think laterally about a problem.

**Resilience:** remaining motivated in difficult situations and overcoming challenges.

# SUMMER CONFERENCES

To attract top accounting students, each of the Big 4 firms hosts an accounting conference in the summer (May-August) to give candidates a preview of the firm's culture and atmosphere, while giving students an opportunity to build their connections through networking with fellow peers and staff accountants.

Each of the Big 4 accounting firms have a different summer conference: Talent Academy (PwC), Executive Look (KPMG), National Leadership Conference (Deloitte), and the Emerging Leaders Program (EY).



## TALENT ACADEMY

The program is designed to help you experience PwC's purpose, culture and values through a variety of team-building and networking activities. Be prepared to stretch your imagination and challenge yourself during this exciting summer conference.



## EXECUTIVE LOOK

By participating in Executive Look you can cultivate relationships with top students from across Canada and with KPMG professionals. By immersing yourself in the event you will get an inside look at what a career with KPMG may hold, and find that it's a great place for you to discover your potential.



## NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Deloitte's National Leadership Conference gives students the opportunity to expand their horizons and elevate their potential. This conference gives you the opportunity to find your future, learn to lead and conquer the commonplace.



## EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

During the Emerging Leaders Program, you will be introduced to the EY culture, people and practices that drive their success. And by participating in group activities, discussions and training, students are able to build their leadership, teamwork and communication skills.



# RECRUITING TIPS & TRICKS

Here are a few tips to ace your coffee chats and interviews:

## UPPER YEAR GUIDANCE

Before arranging coffee chats with recruiters, it may be useful to set up a coffee chat with an upper-year student to understand the format of a coffee chat. You can also get a lot of advice from regarding the recruiting process – especially if they have successfully gone through the recruiting process for the company you are applying to.

## PREPARING QUESTIONS

Prepare questions to ask during the networking session or at the end of an interview. This shows that you have done your research on the company already, but are motivated to learn more. Make sure your questions are tailored to each company you apply to.

## BUSINESS CARDS

Ask for business cards at the end of an interview or networking session. Ensure you follow up with the interviewer/recruiter no more than 48 hours after meeting the them. Don't forgot to add a personal touch to your follow-up email.



## PROPER ATTIRE

Always dress in Business Formal during recruiting events; it is always better to be the best dressed in the room than the worst dressed.

## RESEARCHING

Invest time in researching the company before you network with them. It can also be helpful to do some research on the head recruiters at Queen's University.

## HAVE FUN!

At the end of the day, recruiters really want to get to know who you are as a person and see if you are a good fit for their company.



# KEY CONTACTS FOR EACH OF THE FIRMS

If you have any questions about any of the Big 4 firms, these are the key contacts you should reach out to first:

## Deloitte.

Dominique Gonsalves – Campus Recruitment Specialist

Sarah Vachon – Recruitment Advisor

Erica Newman – Recruitment Specialist (Ottawa)



Natalie LaManna – CPA Campus Talent Acquisition Specialist

Kate Vandevenne – CPA Campus Talent Acquisition Specialist

Ryan Taylor – GTA CPA Campus Talent Acquisition Manager

Daniel Leone – GTA CPA Talent Acquisition Coordinator



Jordan Barrat – National Campus Recruiting Leader

Katie Wilson – Assurance Campus Recruiting Leader

Krystle Kong – Campus Recruiter

Quynh Dinh – Campus Recruiter



Christine Lee – Talent Attraction Manager

Gillian Lee – Talent Attraction Specialist

Stephie Fung - Audit Manager





THANK YOU  
FOR READING

Authors: Kobi Lawson and Meera Jagota  
Editors: Matthew Tatoff, Sean Fraser, and Brandon Lin  
Illustrators: Stanley Tao and Shane Katz