



FORENSIC
CPA SOCIETY

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

About this Handbook

This handbook provides essential guidance for candidates preparing for the Forensic Certified Public Accountant (Forensic CPA) examination. It covers eligibility requirements, application procedures, program policies, and exam structure. Use this handbook as your comprehensive reference to successfully earn and retain the Forensic CPA credential.

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Forensic CPA Society	1
Vision & Mission.....	2
Our History	3
What is Forensic Accounting?	4
The Forensic CPA Program.....	5
Certification Process	6
Course Outline.....	7
Program Study Options.....	8
Program Fees.....	10
Membership Levels	11
Member Benefits	11
Maintaining the Credential.....	12
Career Opportunities	12
Code of Ethics	15



Welcome to the Forensic CPA Society

Welcome to the Forensic CPA Society, where your journey towards becoming a Forensic CPA begins. We are thrilled to have you join our community of dedicated professionals committed to uncovering the truth, safeguarding financial integrity, and making a significant impact in the world of finance.

Throughout your time with us, you will be guided by an experienced faculty, supported by a network of peers, and immersed in a curriculum designed to prepare you for the rigorous demands of forensic accounting. Whether you aim to prevent fraud, assist in legal proceedings, or contribute to corporate governance, the education and training you receive here will enhance your career.

This handbook is your essential guide to navigating the program. Inside, you will find important information about our academic policies, program requirements, support services, and much more. We encourage you to read through it carefully and keep it handy as you progress through your studies.

Welcome to the Forensic CPA Society. We look forward to supporting you on this journey and celebrating your successes along the way.

Forensic accounting is more than just a career, it's a calling that demands sharp analytical skills, unwavering ethical standards, and a deep understanding of the complexities of financial systems.

At the Forensic CPA Society, we equip you with the knowledge, tools, and practical experience needed to excel in this challenging and rewarding profession.

Vision & Mission

Our Vision

To create a worldwide network of forensic accounting professionals, driven by our accounting expertise and investigative skills to uncover fraud, corruption, waste and abuse by providing transparent and reliable financial insights within legal frameworks.

Our Mission

We aim to shape forensic accountants and our members so that they can uncover the truth, safeguard financial systems, and make significant contributions to the pursuit of justice. We strive to be leaders in advancing the field, contributing to research and upholding the highest ethical standards in forensic accounting.



Our History

In July 2005, Larry Larsen, CPA, recognizing the need for a specialized forensic accounting certification, founded the Forensic CPA Society with his wife, Donna Larsen. The Forensic CPA Society was founded with the purpose of promoting excellence in the forensic accounting profession, bringing together CPAs with a focus on forensic accounting practices.

At that time, there were no forensic accounting certifications for CPAs globally. Additionally, with all the financial scandals that were occurring at that time, for example, WorldCom, Enron and Arthur Andersen, it was the perfect time to develop a forensic accounting certification. This area of accounting was getting more popular, and the term “forensic accounting” became more mainstream.

The rise in financial crimes, such as fraud, embezzlement, and money laundering, created a growing demand for professionals who could analyze financial data and provide expertise in legal matters. This shift led to the formation of specialized organizations to support these forensic accounting professionals.

As the need for forensic accounting expertise expanded, professional organizations were established to serve as platforms for education, networking, and advocacy. To this end, our Society has developed a comprehensive “Forensic CPA” certification study program. Upon certification, the Forensic Certified Public Accountant (Forensic CPA) credential is conferred after your name. This instantly informs the public and the business community that the holder is not only a CPA, but also a forensic certified public accountant who has met the certification criteria.

The Forensic Certified Public Accountant (Forensic CPA) designation is an international credential and has members in over 60 countries.

What is Forensic Accounting?

Forensic accounting is a specialized area of accounting that involves investigating financial records to uncover fraud, embezzlement, and financial misconduct. It plays a crucial role in legal and regulatory matters, providing critical financial evidence for dispute resolution and criminal investigations.

Key Characteristics of Forensic Accounting

- Analyzes financial records to detect fraudulent or illegal activities.
- Provides financial evidence for court cases, financial disputes, and regulatory investigations.
- Combines accounting, auditing, and investigative techniques to identify financial irregularities.
- Examines financial statements, transactions, and records for inconsistencies or suspicious activity.
- Uncovers financial crimes such as money laundering, tax evasion, and asset misappropriation.

“Forensic” means suitable for use in Court, and it is to that standard and potential outcome that forensic accountants generally have to work. Forensic accountants work with law enforcement, lawyers, and organizations to provide expert financial analysis and potentially serve as expert witnesses in legal proceedings.

Additionally, Forensic Accountants often assist in professional negligence claims where they are assessing and commenting on the work of other professionals. Engagements relating to criminal matters typically arise in the aftermath of fraud, as such, Forensic Accountants frequently are involved in the assessment of accounting systems and accounts presentation—in essence assessing if the numbers reflect reality.

In recent times, Forensic Accountants have been involved in recovering proceeds of crime in relation to confiscation proceedings concerning actual or assumed proceeds of crime or money laundering.

The Forensic CPA Program

The Forensic CPA certification program delves into the intricacies of fraud detection, financial investigation, and litigation support, providing professionals with the tools to analyze complex financial data, uncover discrepancies, and provide expert testimony in legal proceedings.

The program's content covers topics such as forensic accounting analysis techniques, data analytics, legal frameworks, and the ethical considerations of forensic accounting. By integrating theoretical knowledge with practical applications, the Forensic CPA program aims to prepare CPAs to effectively identify and resolve financial discrepancies, support legal teams, and contribute to the integrity of financial reporting and compliance.

Program Objectives

The Forensic CPA program is designed to equip candidates with the knowledge, skills, and ethical foundation necessary to excel in forensic accounting. This program prepares participants to investigate financial fraud, analyze financial data, and present findings in legal and regulatory contexts. By completing this certification, candidates will develop a strong understanding of forensic accounting principles, investigative methodologies, and industry best practices.

The program objectives include:

- Understanding Forensic Accounting
- Enhancing Analytical Abilities
- Mastering Investigation Techniques
- Understanding Legal and Regulatory Frameworks
- Improving Communication Skills
- Preparing for Certification and Professional Development
- Applying Best Practices and Ethical Standards
- Navigating Challenges and Emerging Trends
- Contributing to the Field of Forensic Accounting

This certification program is designed to ensure that candidates not only acquire technical expertise but also develop the analytical, legal, and ethical skills required to become competent forensic accountants.



Certification Process

To earn the Forensic Certified Public Accountant credential, candidates must meet specific eligibility criteria and successfully complete the certification process outlined below.

Eligibility Requirements

Forensic CPA Credential for Accountants & Professionals

To qualify for the Forensic CPA credential, candidates must:

- Meet one of the following professional qualifications:
 - Be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Chartered Accountant (CA), or hold an equivalent professional accountancy designation.
 - Professionals holding a degree or recognized designation in a related anti-fraud field may also be considered. Eligibility will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Hold an Associate-level membership with the Forensic CPA Society.
- Successfully complete the two-part exam.
- Upon successfully passing the two-part exam, candidates must submit an application for Forensic CPA Credential Membership with the Forensic CPA Society. Once approved, they will receive their official Forensic Certified Public Accountant (Forensic CPA) credential and certificate.

The Forensic CPA Exam

The two-part exam covers the following areas:

- Forensic Accounting
- Asset Misappropriation
- Application of Financial Accounting
- Conducting Investigations
- Forensic Analysis
- Computer Forensics

Exam Details

- The exam consists of two parts, each with 120 multiple-choice questions and a time limit of three and a half hours.
- An overall minimum passing score of 70% is required.
- Candidates must complete both parts of the exam within one year of taking the first part.
- Candidates who fail the exam may retake it for a US\$300 fee.

Course Outline

The course syllabus will include the following topics:

- Forensic accounting
- Corruption
- Billing schemes
- Understanding the basics of financial accounting
- Accounting principles and fraud
- Financial statement schemes
- The investigative process
- Interviewing witnesses
- Proving cases through documentary evidence
- Analysis tools for investigators
- Inferential analysis
- Documenting and presenting the case
- Trial and reports phase
- Using Microsoft Excel for forensic analytics
- Detecting financial statement fraud
- Using Microsoft access for analytics
- Suiting up for a lawsuit or criminal investigation
- Getting authorized to search and seize
- Acquiring and authenticating e-evidence
- Examining e-evidence
- Extracting hidden data



Program Study Options

The Forensic CPA Society offers two study options for candidates; an instructor-led program and a self-study program.

Instructor-Led Program – Real-Time Forensic Accounting Training

The instructor-led program offers real-time engagement with expert instructors, ideal for preparing for the Forensic CPA exam.

What to Expect:

- **Live, Scheduled Sessions:** Expert-led classes covering core forensic accounting topics in a consistent, structured format.
- **Interactive Learning:** Live question and answer sessions, discussions with instructors and peers.
- **Hands-on Practice:** Real-world assignments and case studies that apply key concepts.
- **Proctored Final Exam:** Secure online exam to validate your knowledge and meet certification standards.

Key Benefits:

- **Expert Access:** Learn directly from experienced forensic accounting professionals.
- **Immediate Feedback:** Clarify complex topics in real time.
- **Professional Networking:** Connect with peers in the field.
- **Current Resources:** Study with current, industry-aligned materials.
- **Flexible Review:** Access recorded sessions anytime for reinforcement.

Enrolling in the instructor-led program means more than just preparing for the Forensic CPA exam—it's a pathway to long-term success in forensic accounting, fraud detection, and financial investigation.

Self-Study Program – Flexible Forensic Accounting Training

The self-study program is tailored for professionals who need maximum flexibility. Designed with busy individuals in mind, this self-paced track provides comprehensive preparation for the Forensic CPA exam.

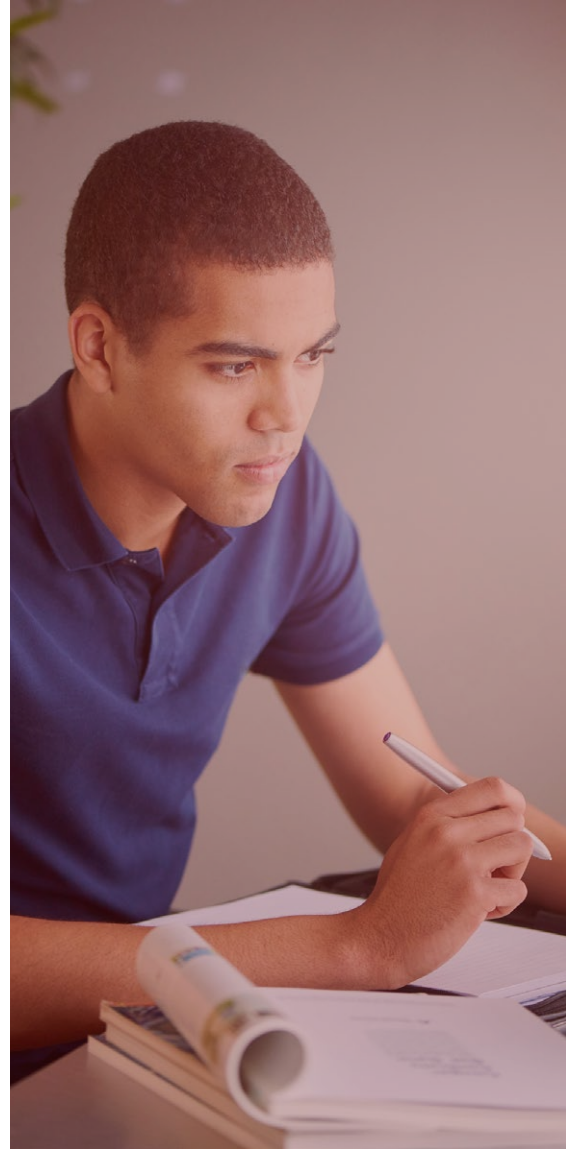
What to Expect:

- **24/7 Course Access:** Learn anytime with on-demand modules, video lectures, and downloadable materials.
- **Structured Curriculum:** Follow a guided path.
- **Proctored Final Exam:** Take the certification exam in a secure online setting to meet industry standards.
- **Self-Paced Learning:** Move at your own speed, revisiting topics as needed.
- **Built-In Assessments:** Test your knowledge with practice questions and case-based exercises.

Key Benefits:

- **Maximum Flexibility:** Study when it works for you—perfect for professionals with a busy schedule.
- **Comprehensive Materials:** Access expert-created content aligned with the Forensic CPA exam and industry practice.
- **Affordable Option:** A cost-effective path to certification.
- **Targeted Exam Prep:** Focused tools and content to help you pass the Forensic CPA exam with confidence.
- **Member Support:** Get help when needed from the Forensic CPA Society team, even while studying independently.

Choosing the self-study program means investing in a flexible, thorough path to becoming a certified forensic accountant, ready to lead in fraud detection, litigation consulting, and financial investigation.



Program Fees

The Forensic CPA Society offers two study options, each with its associated fees and benefits:

Instructor-Led Program – USD \$4,000 per participant

Participants will receive:

- Live instructor-led virtual classes – six-month duration, twice a week
- Access to library of recorded virtual classes
- E-book - Forensic Accounting: Principles, Techniques, and Professional Standards for Forensic CPA Certification
- PowerPoint presentations
- Reading Material
- Study Guide
- Two proctored exams (Part 1 and Part 2)
- Internship opportunities

Self-Study Program – USD \$3,000 per participant

Participants will receive:

- Access to library of recorded virtual classes
- E-book - Forensic Accounting: Principles, Techniques, and Professional Standards for Forensic CPA Certification
- PowerPoint presentations
- Reading Material
- Study Guide
- Two proctored exams (Part 1 and Part 2)

Examination Retake Fee

Candidates who fail the exam may retake it for a US\$300 fee.

Payment

All fees are in US dollars and payments can be made via the www.fcpas.org website.

Membership Levels

The Forensic CPA Society offers two levels of membership:

Associate Membership

- US\$125 per year

Ideal for professionals exploring forensic accounting or working in related fields, the Associate Membership provides access to essential resources, networking opportunities, and professional development programs.

Associate Members are currently preparing for the Forensic CPA exams and are not yet certified. This membership is your first step toward earning the Forensic CPA credential.

Forensic CPA Credential Membership

- US\$150 per year

Designed for professionals who have successfully completed the FCPA exam, the Credential Membership grants the right to use the FCPA designation and provides exclusive access to advanced resources, ongoing certifications, and global networking opportunities.

This membership enhances your professional credibility while keeping you informed on the latest standards, methodologies, and best practices in forensic accounting.

Member Benefits

Becoming a member of the Forensic CPA Society offers numerous benefits that can significantly enhance your professional journey in forensic accounting. Members gain access to exclusive resources, including forensic accounting toolkits and research materials, which are invaluable for staying current in the field.

The society provides opportunities to connect with other members and professionals through networking events and online forums, fostering a collaborative environment for knowledge sharing and career advancement. Additionally, members are included in the “Find a Forensic CPA” directory, enhancing professional visibility and credibility.

These benefits position the Forensic CPA Society as a vital partner in your ongoing professional growth and success in forensic accounting.



Maintaining the Credential

To maintain the Forensic CPA credential, holders must fulfill annual membership and continuing professional education (CPE) requirements to remain in good standing.

Credential holders must:

- Remain an active Forensic CPA Credential Member by paying the annual membership fee.
- Complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPE each year in anti-fraud, legal, forensic accounting, or other approved related fields. At least 10 of these hours must relate directly to the Forensic CPA body of knowledge.
- Maintain accurate CPE records and provide documentation upon request.
- Be responsive to audit notifications. Credential holders may be selected for audit and will be required to report their CPE activities as instructed.

Career Opportunities

The Forensic accounting field offers a diverse range of career opportunities that combine financial expertise with investigative skills. Professionals in this field play a critical role in detecting fraud, supporting legal cases, and ensuring financial transparency. Here are some career options in forensic accounting:

Forensic Accountant

Role: Analyze financial records to detect irregularities, provide litigation support, and prepare detailed reports for legal proceedings. Forensic accountants may also testify as expert witnesses in court cases.

Employment Sectors: Law firms, accounting firms, government agencies, financial institutions.

Fraud Examiner

Role: Investigate allegations of fraud, conduct interviews, analyze financial data, and report findings. Fraud examiners work to uncover fraudulent activities within organizations or individuals and may be involved in both civil and criminal cases.

Employment Sectors: Corporations, government agencies, non-profits, consulting firms.

Litigation Support Specialist

Role: Assist attorneys in preparing financial evidence for legal cases, including quantifying damages, reconstructing financial transactions, and providing expert testimony. Specialists in this area often work closely with legal teams to ensure that financial data is accurately represented in court.

Employment Sectors: Law firms, forensic accounting firms, government agencies.

Internal Auditor

Role: Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes within an organization. Internal auditors help detect and prevent fraud by reviewing financial operations and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Employment Sectors: Corporations, government agencies, non-profits, healthcare organizations.

Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Specialist

Role: Develop and implement strategies to detect and prevent money laundering activities. AML specialists work to ensure compliance with regulations and help organizations mitigate the risks associated with financial crimes.

Employment Sectors: Banks, financial institutions, government agencies, law enforcement.

Insurance Fraud Investigator

Role: Investigate suspected insurance fraud cases, analyze claims, and determine the validity of insurance pay-outs. This role involves working with both private insurers and public agencies to combat fraudulent activities.

Employment Sectors: Insurance companies, law enforcement agencies, private investigation firms.

Digital Forensics Specialist

Role: Focus on recovering, analyzing, and preserving digital evidence related to financial crimes. Digital forensics specialists play a critical role in tracing electronic transactions, securing evidence, and preventing cyber fraud.

Employment Sectors: Cybersecurity firms, law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, consulting firms.

Forensic Data Analyst

Role: Use data analytics to detect anomalies and patterns that indicate fraudulent activity. Forensic data analysts design algorithms, interpret data trends, and create models to identify and prevent financial irregularities.

Employment Sectors: Financial institutions, consulting firms, regulatory bodies, technology companies.



Fraud Risk Manager

Role: Develop and implement risk management strategies to identify, assess, and mitigate fraud risks. Fraud risk managers work closely with internal teams to create a fraud-resistant culture and ensure compliance with anti-fraud policies.

Employment Sectors: Corporations, non-profits, government agencies, healthcare organizations.

Financial Crimes Investigator

Role: Investigate complex financial crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, and identity theft. Financial crimes investigators analyze financial records, identify patterns of illegal activity, and work closely with law enforcement to prosecute offenders.

Employment Sectors: Law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, government agencies, private investigation firms.

Bankruptcy and Insolvency Specialist

Role: Assist in analyzing financial records during bankruptcy proceedings to identify fraudulent activities, assess claims, and recover assets for creditors. Specialists often work in restructuring or liquidation scenarios.

Employment Sectors: Law firms, accounting firms, government agencies, corporate restructuring firms.

Expert Witness

Role: Provide specialized knowledge and testimony in legal proceedings involving financial disputes or fraud. Expert witnesses review evidence, prepare detailed analyses, and deliver testimony that helps courts understand complex financial issues.

Employment Sectors: Law firms, courts, regulatory agencies, consulting firms.

Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics establishes the principles and standards of conduct for Forensic CPA credential members. It is designed to promote the highest ethical standards and accountability in forensic accounting practices, ensuring adherence to both the letter and spirit of the profession. All credentialed members must commit to uphold these principles, thereby preserving the integrity of their professional conduct and reinforcing public confidence in the forensic accounting discipline.

Integrity

Forensic CPA credential members shall act with integrity in all professional and business relationships. They must be honest, straightforward, and forthright in all professional and business dealings, avoiding any conduct that would discredit the profession.

Objectivity

Forensic CPA credential members shall maintain objectivity and exercise sound judgment in the performance of professional services. They must not allow bias, personal interests, or undue influence from others to compromise their professional or business decisions.

Professional Competence and Due Care

Forensic CPA credential members shall maintain the knowledge and expertise necessary to ensure that clients or employers receive competent and reliable service. They must perform their duties with diligence and in accordance with relevant technical and ethical standards.

Confidentiality

Forensic CPA credential members shall respect the confidentiality of information acquired during the course of professional and business relationships. They must not disclose such information to third parties without proper and specific authority, unless there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose.

Professional Behavior

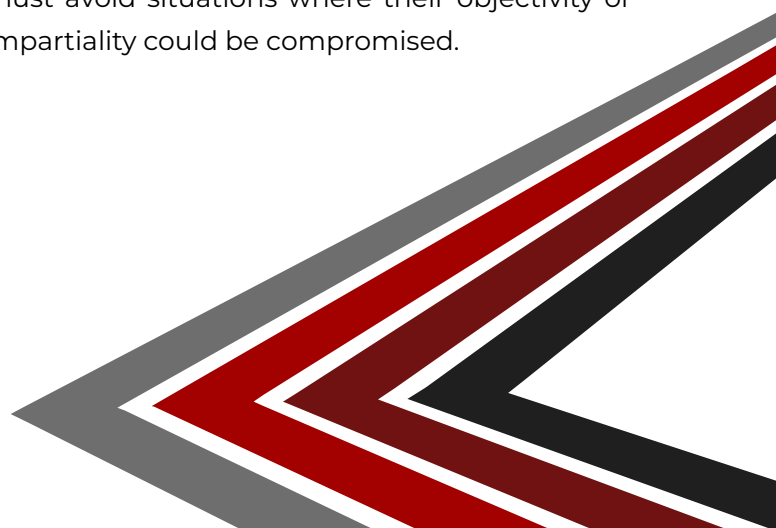
Forensic CPA credential members shall comply with relevant laws and regulations and avoid any conduct that discredits the profession. They must refrain from any conduct that would discredit the profession.

Professional Judgment

Forensic CPA credential members shall exercise professional judgment in all professional activities. They must make informed decisions based on relevant facts and circumstances, and in the context of applicable professional standards.

Independence

Forensic CPA credential members shall maintain independence in both appearance and fact when providing forensic accounting services. They must avoid situations where their objectivity or impartiality could be compromised.



Compliance with Standards

Forensic CPA credential members shall adhere to all applicable professional standards, including that of their respective accountancy body. They must stay informed about changes in standards and regulations affecting their professional conduct.

Continuous Professional Education

Forensic CPA credential members shall engage in continuous professional education to enhance their skills and knowledge. They must participate in relevant training and education to maintain and improve their professional competence.

This Code is not merely a set of guidelines, but a formal commitment to uphold the core values of the Forensic CPA Society: integrity, objectivity, professional competence, confidentiality, and professional behavior.



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