

ACCOUNTING CONCENTRATION GUIDE

Accounting is the science of business information.

The amount and variety of business information has grown dramatically in recent years. Historically, the information domain of accounting focused on financial data, including financial statements and cost information. Now, this data is growing to include a wide variety of business data critical to organizations and their stakeholders, including so-called ESG (environmental, social, and governance) data. The accounting concentration focuses on providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to derive and interpret this business information for sound decision-making in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, and do so in ways that are informed, ethical, and dynamic.

A concentration in accounting offers a variety of employment opportunities. Accountants' responsibilities range from being a strategic member of a new business development team to analyzing financial statements at client sites. Common areas include (i) public accounting, which offers a variety of functions (tax, audit, advisory); (ii) corporate accounting, which includes pathways towards controllership and CFO positions; (iii) financial analysis, which includes positions in equity and portfolio analysis; and (iv) tax and tax consulting. Competition is high for the most prestigious jobs in major accounting or business firms. As such, firms routinely seek students with skills and experience in analysis, data analytics, teamwork, communication, and customer/client service. Firms also often look for strong academic performance.

The primary certification in accounting is the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) designation. One of the key requirements is completing 150 credit hours of education. Boston University's Questrom School of Business is one of the few universities in which students can typically complete the necessary 150 credit hours in the context of a four-year undergraduate program.

Some students elect dual concentrations, with the more popular choices including Finance, Information Systems, and Business Analytics. Some students also elect minors outside of Questrom, such as Economics and Math. For all available minors, please visit the Boston University programs website found [here](#).

For more information about required courses and to contact the Concentration Faculty Advisor, please visit [here](#).

AUDITOR

Students who select the Auditor pathway are interested in a position as auditors or tax accountants in public accounting firms, or as internal auditors in a corporation. Auditing requires a deep understanding of the construction of financial statements and related disclosures, as well as knowledge of audit practices. Students who chose this career pathway plan to take the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) exam, which is a key step towards becoming a licensed CPA. The CPA license is a highly-respected professional credential, which can enhance career progress and options, both within and outside of public accounting. The recommended courses help you to pass the CPA exam; note that each state determines its own CPA licensure requirements, which you can refer to [here](#). The Auditing pathway is sometimes combined with additional concentrations, such as Finance or Information Systems.

Careers Include: Internal Auditor, Financial Auditor, Cost Accountant, Accounting Officer and Audit Partner

CORPORATE ACCOUNTANT

Students selecting the Corporate Accountant pathway are interested in preparing financial statements for internal decision-making: that is, to help management understand its operations and make sound business decisions. The Corporate Accountant career pathway provides students with a deep understanding of financial reporting principles as well as skills (like budgeting, cost management, planning) that are critical for informed corporate decisions. Corporate accountants typically work for corporations either as Financial or Managerial Accountants; it is a pathway that can lead to becoming a Chief Financial Officer of a firm. Students can pursue a Corporate Accountant career path either directly out of college, or after attaining some experience in public accounting. Students choosing this pathway can take the CMA (Certified Management Accountant) exam, which is a key step towards CMA certification. The CMA certification is a respected credential for accounting and finance professionals, which can enhance career progress and options. The Corporate Accountant pathway is sometimes combined with an additional accounting pathway, or with either a Finance or Information Systems concentration.

Careers Include: Public Accountant, Audit and Assurance Analyst and Internal Auditor

CORPORATE FINANCE/FINANCIAL ANALYST

Students selecting the Financial Analyst pathway are interested in the rigorous and sophisticated application of financial statements to decision-making. This includes applications in investor settings (such as portfolio allocation and analysis), consulting (such as using financial statements to assess strategic alternatives), and in corporate settings (such as financial managers to determine resource allocations). The Financial Analysis track is sometimes combined with additional functional accounting pathways, or with a Finance concentration.

Careers Include: Corporate Financial Accounting, Corporate Managerial Accountant and Financial Analyst

FINANCIAL CONSULTANT

Students selecting the Financial Consultant pathway are interested in advising corporations on their strategy and operations, in providing financial advisory services (such as for equity offerings), and in advising on mergers & acquisitions. The Financial Consultant pathway is sometimes combined with additional functional accounting pathways, or with a Finance concentration.

Careers Include: Consultant, Financial Data Analyst, Investment Analyst and Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A), Mergers & Acquisitions Advisor, Strategy and Operations Associate/ Consultant and Financial Advisor

TAX ACCOUNTANT

Students selecting the Tax Accountant pathway are interested in corporate tax strategy (for corporations), tax consulting (for consulting/advisory firms), tax preparation for either corporations or individuals, or tax compliance (for government agencies). Corporate tax strategy is a major component of business operations, and includes structuring business units and products/services to both comply with tax laws while achieving tax strategies (including minimizing taxes).

Careers Include: Public Tax Accountant or Consultant, Corporate Tax Accountant and Enrolled Agent or IRS Auditor

FORENSIC ACCOUNTING

Students who select the Forensic pathway are interested in the measurement and management of risks to organizations that arise from global corruption, fraud, and other threats. Forensic accountants become risk intelligence experts, who help companies manage these risks, or work as litigation and disputes consultants. The Forensic pathway is often combined with additional functional accounting pathways or with concentrations such as Law or Information Systems.

Careers Include: Risk Intelligence Consultant, Litigations and Disputes Consultant and Forensic Accountant/Specialist

CLASSES TO CAREER GRID

Interested in seeing how different career paths connect back to the classes you take? Take a look at the grid below to help you strategize which classes will help you build the skills and knowledge you need to meet your career goals.

CLASS	AUDITOR	CORPORATE ACCOUNTANT	CORPORATE FINANCE/ FINANCIAL ANALYST	FINANCIAL CONSULTANT	TAX ACCOUNTANT	FORENSIC ACCOUNTING
AC347 Intermediate Accounting I	×	×	×	×	×	×
AC348 Intermediate Accounting II	×	×	×	×		×
AC414 Financial Statement Analysis	×	×	×	×	×	×
AC420 Introduction to Financial Analytics	×	×	×	×	×	×
AC430 Accounting Research	×				×	×
AC445 Advanced Managerial Accounting		×	×	×		
AC469 Principles of Income Taxation I	×	×			×	
AC541 Advanced Accounting	×	×	×	×	×	
AC565 Auditing	×	×				×
AC579 Principles of Income Taxation II	×				×	
FE449 Corporate Financial Management*		×	×	×		
IS465 Managing Data Resources*	×	×	×			×
LA450 Law and Risk Management*	×	×	×			×
BA476 Machine Learning*		×	×			×

COURSES NOT IN CONCENTRATIONS THAT CAN AUGMENT THE CONCENTRATIONS

AC410 Corporate Financial Reporting and Analysis			×	×		
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*The course does not fulfill the CPA's education requirements in accounting

INTERNSHIP AND JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

- [Vault](#)
- [Pardee Library](#)
- [Accounting](#)
- [BLS/O*Net](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [Simply Hired](#)
- [Internships](#)
- [Glassdoor](#)

POPULAR EMPLOYERS

- Anderson Tax
- Bank of America
- Bloomberg
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- CBIZ/Mahoney Cohen
- Deloitte
- Duff & Phelps
- Ernst & Young
- Feeley & Driscoll
- Fidelity Investments
- Rothstein & Koss
- Santander
- State Street Corporation
- TD Ameritrade
- Grant Thornton
- HSBC
- IRS
- John Hancock Financial
- KPMG
- Morgan Stanley
- PricewaterhouseCoopers

NEXT STEPS

QUESTROM/BU CLUBS

Joining clubs is a great way to gain experience and build your professional network. Below are specific clubs within Questrom for those interested in Accounting.

For a complete list of business specific Questrom Clubs, please visit [here](#) and for a list of BU wide clubs that offer organizations across larger interest areas ranging from health to nonprofits, please visit [here](#).

- [Accounting Association](#)
Email their contact or visit their Facebook page for more information.
- [BU Entrepreneurship Club](#)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Professional Associations exist on the regional and national level. They host national conferences discussing relevant topics, networking events and training and professional development opportunities.

If you are interested in careers in accounting here are some professional associations, you may want to consider joining:

- [Association of Accountants and Professionals in Business](#)
- [American Institute of CPAs](#)
- [American Accounting Association](#)
- [Massachusetts Society of CPAs](#)
- [Institute of Internal Auditors](#)
- [Institute of Management Accountants](#)
- [National Association of Black Accountants \(NABA\)](#)

LINKEDIN GROUPS

LinkedIn is a crucial part of anyone's job search and networking strategy, and one of the most underutilized pieces are groups. On LinkedIn groups you can develop more targeted networks on various criteria including location, industry, function and more!

Below is a list of sample LinkedIn groups accounting concentrators may want to consider, for more assistance on using this feature please make an appointment with a UDC Career Advisor at bu.joinhandshake.com.

- Accounting and Finance Professionals (AaFP)
- Big Four Accounting Consulting
- Jobs for Accountants
- Business Control