

TAC NEWS Online

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A Message from Ken L. Bishop, President of NASBA

The U.S. CPA Examination is an examination developed by the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and implemented by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA). It is open to Japanese candidates since August 2011. As the number of U.S. CPA Exam takers is expected to increase amid accelerating globalization, we spoke to Ken Bishop, President of NASBA, regarding the value of acquiring the qualification, its international value and future plans for the Examination.

Regarding the Value of the U.S. CPA License in Asia

TAC: What benefits do U.S. CPA candidates gain from the qualification, especially in Asia?

Ken: The world will continue to become a more global economy and the U.S. will continue to have significant investments and business partnerships with governments and businesses in every country (including Japan). The need for U.S. CPAs across the globe is more than likely to continue to increase. Japan, China and Korea (and continual growth in smaller countries like Vietnam) have a significant financial nexus (research, development and production) to the U.S. that will require U.S. CPAs to manage, oversee and execute the substantial financial business transactions and operations.

TAC: Does the U.S. CPA qualification improve your chances of immigrating to the United States?

Ken: A significant number of international candidates take and pass the U.S. CPA Examination, but a very small percentage become a licensed U.S. CPA. In the U.S., there is a shortage of CPAs which is amplified by the large numbers of “baby boomers” who are retiring from the work force. There is also a great need for U.S. CPAs with foreign language skills (particularly Asian dialects). NASBA has launched a work experience verification service to help international candidates who have passed the CPA Examination obtain a U.S. State Board license. Lastly, licensed CPAs will have greater opportunities to immigrate to the U.S. and establish careers in the accounting and business professions, as well as enhance their careers in their home countries.

How is the U.S. CPA qualification recognized in other countries? (For instance, is there mutual recognition for the U.S. CPA qualification with other countries?)

TAC: What countries do NASBA and the various U.S. State Boards of Accountancy have reciprocity with?

Ken: A majority of U.S. States and Territories currently have reciprocity with Canada, Mexico, Ireland, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia. The Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA)s are continuously reviewed for validity. NASBA and AICPA (through the joint International Qualification Appraisal Board (IQAB)) determine the eligible countries/credentials.

TAC: Are there plans to expand this? Japan? Value of it?

Ken: IQAB is currently studying the possibility of adding additional MRAs and is also considering new methodologies and pathways to U.S. State Board licensure. Japan is not currently being considered.

Regarding the future of the U.S. CPA Exam

TAC: What are the intentions of NASBA and AICPA with regards to the future of the U.S. CPA Exam?

Ken: The Uniform CPA Examination is continually reviewed and refreshed to make sure it is a valid measurement Examination to ascertain the level of knowledge of candidates to meet the vigorous requirements of being a U.S. CPA as determined by practice analysis. The Examination will have significant changes in the next few years.

TAC: Will there be further changes to the Exam. What about international expansion?

Ken: NASBA and AICPA continue to consider expansion of the availability of the U.S. CPA outside of the U.S. It is likely that a few new countries will be added once those reviews are complete.

In Japan, candidates feel the Exam is a bit too expensive.

TAC: In Japan, many candidates think taking the U.S. CPA Exam is too expensive. Is there a possibility that the price might be reduced?

Ken: Both NASBA and the AICPA are sensitive to the price of the Examination. The current value of the U.S. dollar has made the Exam more expensive in Japan. There are additional costs associated with international delivery of the Examination that also impact the price. However, if you compare the price of the CPA Examination in the U.S. with additional travel costs from Japan, sitting for the Examination in Japan is a far better value monetarily. It is not likely that we will see any price decreases in the near future, but we believe that those who pass the Examination and achieve a U.S. State Board license will be rewarded financially, making the investment in the Examination a great value.

Do you have a final message for U.S. CPA candidates?

Ken: We are very pleased to see such interest in the US CPA license among Japanese candidates. The demand for people who are able to analyze and communicate complex financial information in high-level business English will only

increase, and we look forward to further supporting the ambitions of Japanese candidates in any way we can.