

Winter 2023

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**CPA: EXPLORE  
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**34**

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*Capitalize* is a semi-annual magazine that introduces students and others to the accounting profession in Alberta. Published by CPA Alberta, the magazine is distributed to more than 4,500 readers, including university, college, and high school students, as well as career counsellors and other student-oriented service providers.

Visit [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](http://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca) for even more *Capitalize*!

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## Message from Rachel Miller, CEO, CPA Alberta



Dear Alberta students:

Welcome back from the holidays for the winter 2023 term! I hope you had a restful break, and I wish you all the best for a successful 2023.

The CPA designation opens up endless possibilities, and you don't always know where they are going to take you. It is the beginning of a career full of twists, turns, surprises, and challenges. With the skills and knowledge they obtain with their designation, every CPA has what they need to drive their own career and explore the possibilities.

So far, my own CPA journey has led me from working for and with firms across the country to sitting on various boards related to the profession to currently leading CPA Alberta. It has certainly been exciting, and achieving my designation gave me the tools to confidently explore the possibilities. And I still have so much to look forward to! My story is still ongoing, and I know the expertise I've gained through my designation will help me navigate those future choices and twists still yet to come.

The feature story in this issue of *Capitalize* illustrates five other Alberta CPAs and the possibilities they have uncovered (so far). They show you what is possible when you pursue a CPA designation. Will you also uncover mysteries through forensic accounting? Or maybe become an entrepreneur with a knack for data? Maybe you'll go beyond spreadsheets in the tax realm or lead innovation for a booming metropolis? What about guiding clients through tough business decisions? The adventure is yours to begin!

What possibilities will you explore with your designation?

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Capitalize* and the rest of the 2022/23 school year is a great one. CPA Alberta looks forward to supporting your student experience and your adventure for many years to come.

Rachel Miller FCPA, FCA  
CEO, CPA Alberta



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

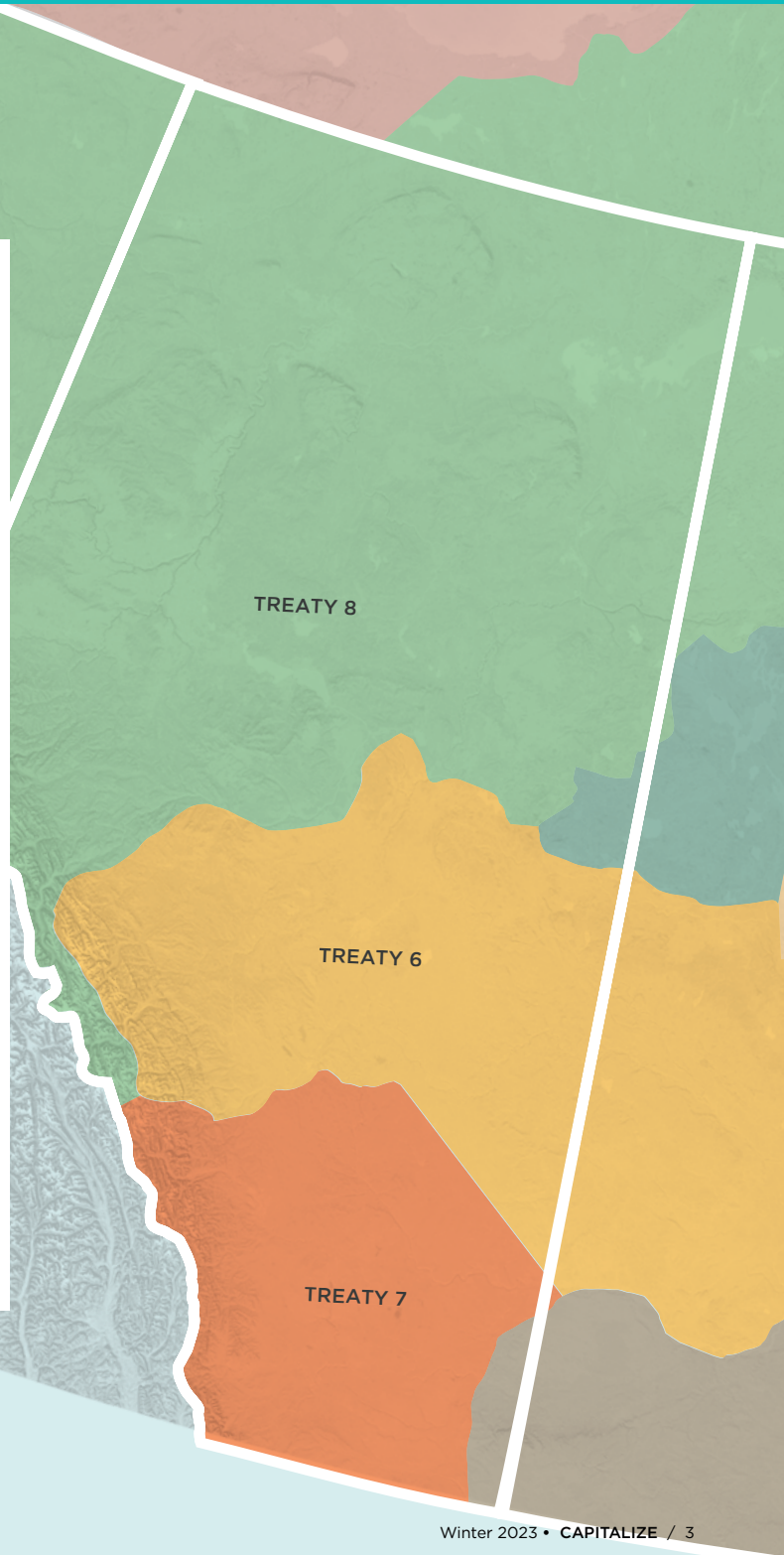
CPA Alberta and *Capitalize* acknowledge the land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land, and their histories and culture influence our community to this day.

Spanning generations, acknowledgment of the land is a traditional custom of Indigenous peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation and building respectful relationships, we recognize our offices are situated on the following traditional territories:

Amiskwaciwâskahikan, or Edmonton, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux people.

Moh'kins'tis, or Calgary, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 7 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Stoney Nakoda First Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), Tsuut'ina, Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation Region 3.

We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. CPA Alberta is committed to building a profession where Indigenous peoples and their voices and experiences are heard, valued, respected, and celebrated.



# CPA EVENTS

## events **CALENDAR**

### CPA Alberta Events

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#### CPA Alberta Virtual Information Session

January 25, 2023, 12-1:00pm

CPA Alberta's information sessions are a great opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a CPA to learn more. We'll share details on the CPA program requirements and the enrolment process—and, of course, provide time for your questions!

Register at  
<https://bit.ly/3Noyc5A>

#### CPA Education Foundation Business Challenge Case Competition

March 1-3, 2023

The CPA Education Foundation Business Challenge is an intense case competition between students from post-secondary institutions across Alberta. It provides an opportunity for students to experience what it's like to be a professional solving real-world business problems.





# CAREER FAIRS AND OPEN HOUSES

From career fairs to sponsorships to information and networking sessions, below is a list of some upcoming events you should know about!

# CPA SPONSORSHIPS

## CPA Alberta Sponsored Events

CPA Alberta partners with student clubs at post-secondary institutions across Alberta to sponsor events throughout the year.

Some of the events you can look forward to in 2022/23 include Meet the Firm at MacEwan University, Industry Night at the University of Calgary, and Intro to Accounting Club at the University of Lethbridge. Learn more about these events and many, many more at [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](https://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca).

These are just a few of the events coming up, so be sure to check [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](https://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca) regularly for more!



# HONOURING THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA

## HOW DO WE HONOUR THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA IN OUR WORKPLACES?

BY LORELEI HIGGINS



The land we interact with every single moment carries the footprints of all those who came before us. The Original Peoples of this land left stories in these footprints.

So, how do we honour the footprints of the Original Peoples of Canada (Indigenous Peoples) in our everyday lives, and specifically, in our workplaces?

### BE CURIOUS

Be curious about where you live! Here are some explorations to get you started:

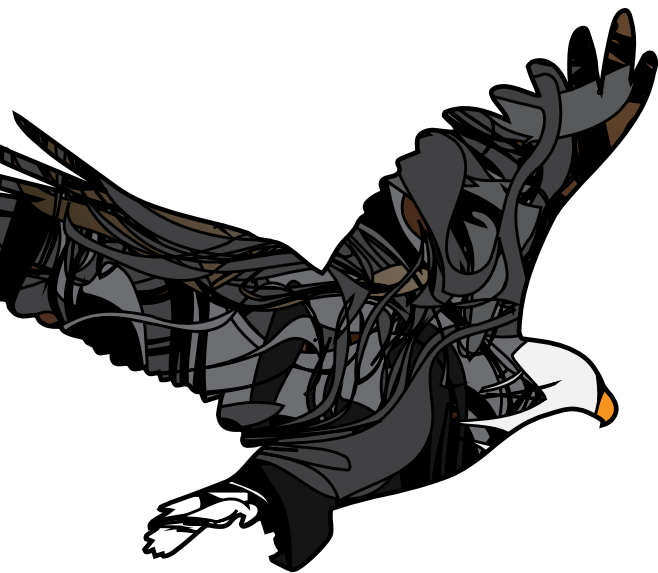
- What do you know about where you live and its Indigenous histories? Whose footprints live on these lands? What stories are waiting to be told and shared?
- Who lives on these lands today?
- What are the Indigenous languages that were and are spoken where you live? Can you learn the basic greetings in each of the languages? How can you incorporate these languages into your workplace?
- Consider incorporating ancestral acknowledgements in your workplace. At what moments can you offer recognition of the ancestral lands and its people in meaningful ways?

### LEARN AND SHARE ABOUT TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Learn as much as you can about Canada's complex histories and the truths of the impacts of colonization. As you sit in the truths, share what you learn. A good place to start is *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* by Bob Joseph and *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*.

Make personal connections to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. What can you do individually and within the workplace collectively? Call to Action #92 calls on the corporate sector in Canada to take action. How is your workplace implementing this Call to Action and what can you do to contribute?





## BE WILDLY INCLUSIVE AND CRITICAL ABOUT HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

Take a critical look at who comprises your workplace. Are Indigenous Peoples part of the workplace in meaningful ways? Who makes the decisions, especially when it comes to Indigenous matters? One of the most significant things that can happen in a workplace is to put decision-making abilities in the hands of leaders who represent the who/what the decisions are being made about.

## CREATE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Everything happens on the land! It is part of us. We are part of an interconnected whole. As we connect to the land, we connect to the Original Peoples and to the history we are part of. Get to know Indigenous Peoples where you live, get involved with community events, and volunteer! This is how we create meaningful and lasting connections. It is also reconciliation in action. At its heart, reconciliation is about establishing and creating meaningful relationships.

We have the opportunity to be curious about the footprints we walk in and the stories they contain. We also get to carry these stories forward, weaving them into the paths we create with our footprints. This is how we are part of creating a shared path forward that is inclusive of all of us and grounded in the rich history and diversity of the Original Peoples of these lands. 📍

From the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action report (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>):

### Business and Reconciliation

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.



Lorelei Higgins is a Métis Canadian Cultural Mediator who has spent the majority of her life exploring the importance of culture and

the impacts of connecting and re-connecting to one's cultural roots. Her Indigenous roots stem from the Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She has a background in political science and an MBA, with a specialization in leadership. She currently lives in Calgary with her family.



# ***FROM PLAYING WITH HOT WHEELS TO DRIVING HOT WHEELS***

## **ROY TWINN SHARES HIS CPA JOURNEY AND PASSION FOR FAST CARS**

BY SHERYAR QAISER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY

**Roy Twinn CPA** was fueled by a different kind of drive to achieve his CPA designation. Since he can remember, he has been passionate about and fascinated by fast cars. In school, he longed to own a Subaru WRX STi. “It’s what drove me. I have a vision and knew the only way to get there was to work on myself—and that’s what a CPA [designation] has helped me do,” says Roy.

Today, Roy owns that WRX STi—more specifically, a 400-wheel horsepower 2016 WRX STi. Just a few of the long list of modifications Roy’s made include adding a large twin-scroll turbo, a twin-plate clutch that will put any leg day to shame, titanium exhaust, and TE37 wheels. “I’m not playing Hot Wheels now,” says Roy. “I’m driving the hot wheels.”





In addition to his love for fast cars, Roy is a proud member of the Sawridge First Nation and is currently a Corporate Controller at the Sawridge Group of Companies, a company founded by the Sawridge Cree First Nation of Slave Lake, Alberta.

Roy is driven to give back to the youth of Sawridge First Nation. “If I can change their path for the better, that’s all I need,” he says. “When I’m gone, it’s going to be them.”

He shares his knowledge, expertise, and experience with his First Nation and gives back without limitation—values that are deeply rooted in his culture and upbringing. “It’s my culture. It’s embedded in my values and teachings from the First Nation,” says Roy. “You take from the land, [and] you give back; you take the knowledge you gained, and you give it back to your community. When they have a question, you can have the answer.”

However, it hasn’t always been smooth sailing for Roy to get to a place where he felt he had something to offer to his community. In school, Roy wasn’t a straight-A student. “I felt bad for not getting high marks, but they got me to where I am today,” says Roy. “Even during the CPA [Professional Education] Program, there were failures, but I had to pick myself up and learn from them and see what I needed to do next time.”




**YOU TAKE FROM THE LAND, [AND] YOU GIVE BACK; YOU TAKE THE KNOWLEDGE YOU GAINED, AND YOU GIVE IT BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY. WHEN THEY HAVE A QUESTION, YOU CAN HAVE THE ANSWER.**

Roy Twinn CPA



Without a doubt, Roy picked himself up. Earlier this year, he was a CPA Alberta Early Achievement Award recipient, and although the award took him by surprise, he’s humble about his achievement. “I don’t praise myself,” he says. “The acknowledgement within the profession is encouraging, and it’s just the beginning.”

Roy tells students and aspiring CPAs: “If I can do it, you can do it too. Just apply. Put in the effort, fill out the forms, and be there. It’s going to be worth it in the end. It may seem gloomy, and it may seem like you are putting in too much, but you have it. It’ll be worth it.” 





# CPA: EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

## WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR CPA DESIGNATION, THE CAREER POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

BY SARAH MALUDZINSKI | ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL TWA

The CPA designation opens up opportunities that many couldn't have even imagined when they were first considering following this path. The CPA career can be full of challenges, surprises, new beginnings, and exciting opportunities.

The possibilities are endless, and many CPAs have already proven this!

### Flip through these pages to read about:

- A CPA who is uncovering a clear story with forensic accounting;
- A CPA who is filling a data niche as an entrepreneur;
- A CPA who is connecting through tax as a trusted advisor;
- A CPA who is fostering innovation by supporting companies and entrepreneurs; and
- A CPA who is consulting clients who find themselves at a crossroads.







# A CPA UNCOVERING A CLEAR STORY

**Bailey Rivard CPA, CA-IFA, CBV, CFE, CFF** decided early on she wanted to become a lawyer.

But first, she wanted the financial background to run a practice. “In about my third year, I heard about forensic accounting,” says Bailey. “I thought, ‘This might be a shortcut where I can get the benefit of both worlds, where I can really use my accounting knowledge in a more detailed, applicable way but still work within the legal side.”

“So I didn’t end up writing the LSAT.”

Fast forward a few years, and Bailey has made that dream come true as a partner in the Valuations, Forensics, and Litigation Support Services group at MNP LLP. Her job is to bring the independent, objective financial story to a case.

“The CPA training on the accounting/tax side of things is extremely important, but I also have additional training on the investigative side as well as understanding Canadian law,” says Bailey. “Really, my job day-to-day is helping take complex information—accounting information, results of interviews, digital evidence—and bringing it together...so that somebody who needs to make a decision has a clear story.”

But it’s not just the “juicy scandals” you might see in the media, she says. It’s a lot more than that. Forensic accounting can include family law, estate disputes, employee misconduct allegations, bullying and harassment claims, partnership and shareholder disputes, investor fraud—and, yes, can even include the high-profile investigations that require a forensic accountant to testify in court.

Because of this, Bailey recommends any new or prospective CPA exploring the possibilities with the designation reach out to someone already doing what they might want to do.

“Reading articles about the scandals and high-profile stuff—that’s not necessarily what you’re going to get,” she says. “If you can talk to someone living the job day-to-day, that would be very valuable.”

Forensic accounting can be very rewarding, but also very tough. “You have to have a very thick skin and be really comfortable in conflict,” says Bailey. “I don’t have to love every day, but it doesn’t take long before I realize how lucky I am to have this as a career.”





# A CPA FILLING A DATA NICHE

**Jessa Aco-Kuchmak CPA** has always had the “entrepreneurship bug,” as she puts it.

“I think I was in third grade, and I was already selling little accessories and bracelets to everyone I knew in the class,” she says.

After spending some time in public practice at PwC, Jessa moved to an HVAC and construction company. While there, she had the opportunity to help the company establish some data analytics best practices and realized it was not the only company that needed this.

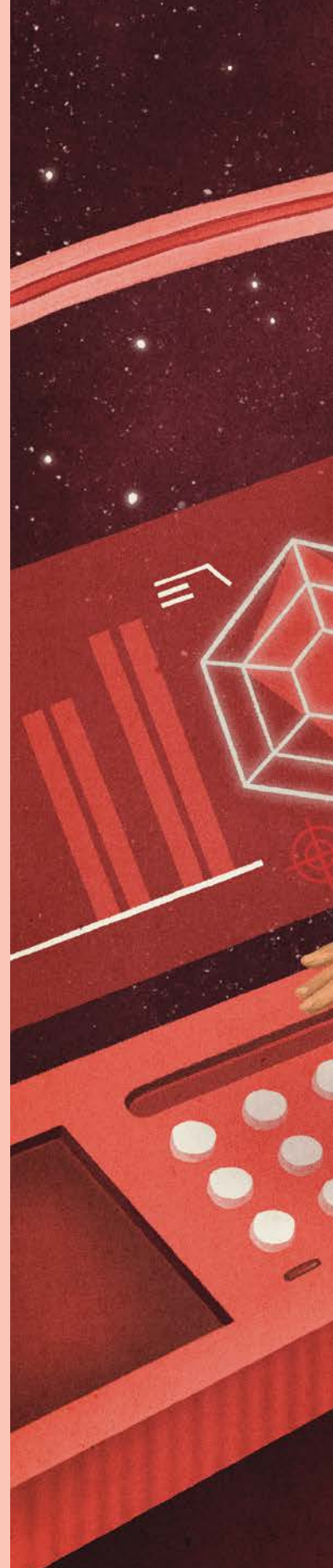
Thus began Pontem Innovations, the data innovation company Jessa co-founded and now serves as the Vice-President of. She jumped at the opportunity to combine her entrepreneurial spirit and her accounting and strategy skills to fill a gap she noticed in the data world.

“It was clear around 2018 that technology was a growing and fast-evolving space,” she says. “Large companies are going to have the luxury of hiring developers to help them in the [data] journey, but small- and medium-sized businesses will not.”

Jessa and her business partner are committed to helping these businesses use data to implement simple and sustainable solutions to organizational challenges. “It’s really interesting in the sense that I technically don’t do accounting day-to-day, but really employ that strategic lens and that lens toward technology and data analytics,” says Jessa.

“But I think above and beyond that, the combination of accounting and technology has really proven to be effective because when I go into a room and speak about data analytics, the CFOs and controllers immediately understand what I’m talking about,” she says. “I can speak about technology in their language.... How is technology helping to save time, save money, and build capacity on their teams?”

When it comes to exploring the possibilities as a CPA, Jessa reminds new and prospective CPAs that the designation is not just one path—and it’s not even one path for an entire career. The designation is a great foundation, and it can provide a safety net for CPAs to “venture out and do interesting things,” says Jessa. “A lot of people change careers all the time. There’s a long ramp to life.”













# A CPA CONNECTING THROUGH TAX

**Navin Jagasia CPA, CA** was drawn to the designation because it sounded exactly like what he wanted out of life—stability, job security, chances to move up, a large market of jobs, and a lot of variety.

In his very first co-op term, Navin knew he'd made the right decision. "I loved it," he says. "It was what I like: interacting with people, different industries, getting to know all parts of a business. You become a well-rounded business professional, which is something I wanted."

Now a Senior Tax Manager at FYidoctors, Navin has enjoyed exploring the possibilities with his designation. Realizing tax was his preferred area of interest was only the beginning. "Tax decisions affect business decisions," he says.

Navin has embraced the opportunities to go beyond the spreadsheets and become a trusted advisor within the tax realm. "People really rely on you for advice, and it kind of catches you off guard because it sort of happens overnight," he says with a laugh.

Tax may be one of those few certainties in life, but the way it's done is constantly evolving. "Tax is very technologically forward in many ways, and I find that to be very interesting," says Navin. "In contrast to 10 or 15 years ago when everything was on paper, there is no paper left in tax at all.... Tax technology is a huge field and super interesting, and one of the things I'm looking at for the future. Where does that go? What does that look like?"

At the end of the day, a career in tax—or generally a career as a CPA—is really what you make of it. "You really can choose your own [journey], so it's important to think about what it is you like most about yourself and what you're good at," says Navin. "You must make the choice, and you must act on the choice."





# A CPA FOSTERING INNOVATION

**Kris Cotter CPA, CMA** knew she wanted to be in the room where it happens. She wanted to be a leader, be strategic, and be part of the decision-making process. She knew an accounting designation could help her get there—once she gave it a shot.

Kris started her university journey in science, took some time off after her first year, and then went back to school for accounting. “Before the end of my first term, I had decided I was going to pursue a professional designation,” Kris says. “It really just resonated with me.”

And her CPA journey ever since has been “dynamic,” as Kris puts it.

Over the years, she’s moved around quite a bit, building the breadth of her experience to get to where she is now—in a leadership role she essentially created. “The role I’m in has been one of the most exciting and challenging and productive,” Kris says. “I joined [Edmonton Unlimited] initially as a consultant to build the organization...from the accounting, the processing and procedure, the legal requirements to even negotiating the funding requirement with the city. That’s evolved into a permanent position.”

Edmonton Unlimited promotes and supports Edmonton as a global innovation capital. “The opportunity to make an impact on Edmonton’s economic future is super exciting,” Kris says. “But we also provide programming and support to entrepreneurs and their journey. Part of driving that economic change is providing companies and entrepreneurs with the support they need to start their ideas and then grow their companies.

“Being a part of that is super interesting, challenging, and exciting.”

Kris fell into accounting completely by chance but is proud of the career she’s built within it, and she encourages students to be open to opportunities. “Where you decide to start might not be where you end up,” she says. “I think keeping yourself open to that really keeps you open to opportunities you might not ever have seen for yourself. It might take you places and let you do things you’ve never done before.”













# A CPA CONSULTING ON A CROSSROADS

**Christine Leung CPA** was very certain she wanted to work in healthcare. So certain, in fact, that she got all of her pre-requisites for medicine before deciding to finish her undergrad in business. A doctor she had been shadowing told her it would be an asset in the medical field to understand how a business is run.


“At the time, I had to choose a specialization, and I ended up choosing accounting because it kept a lot of doors open,” says Christine.

And the door Christine is currently exploring is not her first love, medicine, but a whole different specialty: management consulting as a Manager at KPMG. “I describe it as being a doctor for businesses and corporations,” Christine says, revealing the similarities between the vocations. “A lot of the time, these companies have probably tried to consult all the resources that they could within the company, and by the time they’re seeking advice with external consultants, they’re often at a point where they’re at a crossroads....”

“Consulting is really working with your clients to find solutions.”

Consulting can apply to almost every field, but you need the skills and knowledge to back up your recommendations. Christine’s designation helps with that part, but she did at one time consider exploring other CPA options.

“Before I was exposed to management consulting...I was exploring more traditional finance accounting-related roles,” Christine says. “When I first started at the firm, I was really open-minded and wanted to build up my skillset and allow things to progress. I think it’s interesting that certain doors opened and closed at the right times. I owe a lot to the people in my life too—like mentors and friends and family—who really helped shape my decisions.”

As Christine demonstrates through her career, becoming and being a CPA is not a one-size-fits-all experience. “I would [tell students] definitely don’t be afraid to try something new and reach out to people who have journeys you’re curious about,” she says. “Everyone is going to relate to a different part of everyone’s adventure.” 



# The CPA Certification Program: what students need to know

The CPA Certification Program—which consists of education, practical experience, and a final examination—is designed to provide future Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) with the knowledge and skills to succeed in business.

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## Degree and prerequisites

An undergraduate degree (in any discipline) from a recognized post-secondary institution is required for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP). In addition to an undergraduate degree, prerequisite courses must be successfully completed.

A transfer credit guide for Alberta post-secondary institutions is available online at [www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide](http://www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide).

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## CPA Professional Education Program

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a graduate-level program delivered part-time over two years. The program includes six modules designed to develop six technical competencies and five enabling competencies. In Alberta, the national CPA PEP is delivered by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB delivers CPA PEP to all candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut who are pursuing their CPA.

Candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant position. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

CPA PEP uses a variety of learning methods to help students develop their skills. The program combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning, and teamwork to help CPA candidates develop the competencies expected of Canada's pre-eminent professional accountants.



Vivien Chu CPA, CA

## CPA Alberta's new video series

The CPA profession has been around for a very long time. With that kind of longevity, there's bound to be change and progress. CPA Alberta's new video series looks at some of the CPAs driving the profession forward in dynamic, innovative, and impactful ways. Check it out at [cpaalberta.ca/changingfaces](http://cpaalberta.ca/changingfaces)

## Modules

Six modules comprise CPA PEP. The program begins with two core modules that are common to all CPA candidates, followed by two elective modules (of which there are four options). Upon completion of these four modules, all candidates are required to complete the two "capstone" modules.

The modules are:

- Two common core modules, which all CPA candidates must take, focusing on the development of competencies in management and financial accounting, and the integration of the six core technical competency areas.
- Two elective modules, which allow CPA candidates to develop deeper skills in their areas of career interest. Four electives are offered: assurance, performance management, tax, and finance. All candidates must choose two of the electives; candidates pursuing careers in public accounting must choose assurance and tax.
- A capstone integrative module that focuses on the development of the enabling competencies, such as leadership and professional skills, and the integration of core competencies.
- A capstone examination preparation module, which prepares CPA candidates for the Common Final Examination (CFE).



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## Registration into the CPA Professional Education Program

Students are encouraged to apply for conditional acceptance into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) prior to the completion of their required courses and degree. Registration as a CPA candidate is required prior to registering for specific modules; however, candidates are encouraged to register for modules once they've submitted their application.

Once a student has applied for CPA PEP, there is a registration validation period in which transcript assessment, verification of degree, and verification of prerequisites will occur. After verification, the student may then participate in Core One.

Module registration deadlines are typically six to eight weeks in advance of the module start date. Please refer to the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) website for key module registration deadlines: [www.cpaweb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules](http://www.cpaweb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules).

For more information about becoming a CPA, please visit [www.cpaalberta.ca](http://www.cpaalberta.ca); call CPA Alberta at 1-844-454-1245 (toll-free); or email [recruitment@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:recruitment@cpaalberta.ca).

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP and admission support, please visit [www.cpaweb.ca](http://www.cpaweb.ca); call CPAWSB at 1-855-306-9390 (toll-free); or email [cpaapplication@cpaweb.ca](mailto:cpaapplication@cpaweb.ca).

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## Entrance requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program

### Bridging into the CPA Professional Education Program

For students who have completed their degrees but have not obtained the necessary prerequisite courses for the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), or for students who do not have a degree,\* there are two options:

#### 1. CPA preparatory courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. These courses are available in an accelerated format and are delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require.

Students are eligible for enrolment if they have successfully completed one year (30 credit hours) of post-secondary studies or three years of relevant work experience.

*\*Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to CPA PEP.*

Please contact CPA Alberta at 1.844.454.1245 or email [recruitment@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:recruitment@cpaalberta.ca) to learn more about preparatory courses.

#### 2. Prerequisites through a post-secondary institution

Students can register for the business and accounting courses they are missing through a post-secondary institution approved by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). A transfer credit guide is available online at [www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide](http://www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide). Students will only take the courses they need for entrance into CPA PEP.

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## Practical experience

In addition to formal education, candidates are required to complete a term of relevant practical experience. The knowledge and competencies gained through practical experience complement those developed through CPA PEP. To develop as a professional accountant, CPA candidates must gain relevant, paid employment that is progressively challenging. For the period of practical experience to begin, individuals need to be registered with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) as a CPA candidate, be employed in a qualifying position, and have a mentor.

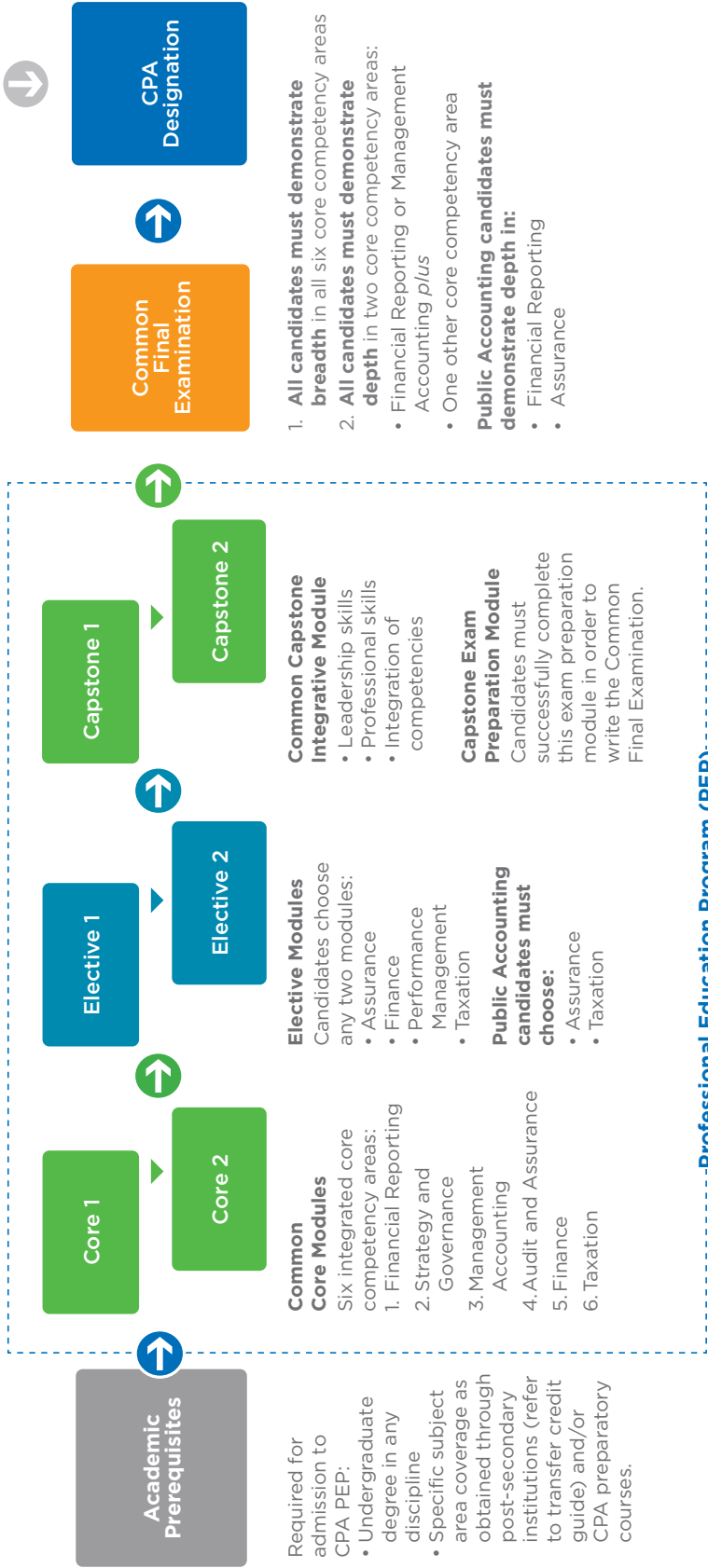
There are two routes to obtain practical experience requirements:

- **The Pre-approved Program Route (PPR)** in which future CPAs gain relevant experience by choosing a position from a wide range of employers pre-approved by the profession.
- **The Experience Verification Route (EVR)** in which future CPAs demonstrate competence and gain relevant experience at a chosen employer.

Future CPAs can gain experience through either route or a combination of both. The profession may accept up to one year of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. The minimum practical experience requirement for both routes is 30 months; this includes an allowance of up to 20 weeks of time away from work (including vacation time).

# CPA Professional Education Program Overview

Practical Experience Requirements (PER) 30 Months



1. **All candidates must demonstrate breadth** in all six core competency areas
  2. **All candidates must demonstrate depth** in two core competency areas:
    - Financial Reporting or Management Accounting *plus*
    - One other core competency area
- Public Accounting candidates must demonstrate depth in:**
- Financial Reporting
  - Assurance

---Professional Education Program (PEP)---



There are five common elements that support both routes:

1. Candidates gain relevant experience and develop as a professional accountant in a minimum of 30 months.\*
2. Candidates' experience must be appropriately supervised.
3. Candidates must record detailed reports at regular intervals.
4. Candidates must meet and discuss their progress at least semi-annually with a CPA mentor.
5. Candidates' experience is assessed by the CPA profession.

*\*Practical experience requirements for public accounting practice and professional accounting practice are recognized separately from practical experience requirements for certification.*

## CPA Practical Experience Self-Assessment Tool

This tool is intended for individuals who have not yet had their experience assessed by a provincial/regional body but want to understand how their current or

prospective position might align with the CPA technical competency requirements for purposes of the experience verification route. To access this self-assessment tool, visit <https://pert.cpa-services.org/student/TrialAssessment>.

## CPA mentorship

Mentorship is a mandatory component of the CPA Practical Experience Requirements (PER). The focus of the CPA mentorship program is to help future CPAs achieve their enabling competencies. CPA candidates who work in the Pre-approved Program Route (PPR) will be matched with a CPA mentor by the organization that offers the program. CPA candidates who choose the Experience Verification Route (EVR) are required to seek out their own CPA mentor in order to find a successful fit. Recognition may be given for a total of up to 12 months of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. After that time, the qualifying period of practical experience cannot begin until CPA candidates have a CPA mentor. CPA Canada has developed a number of valuable resources to assist CPA candidates in finding a mentor.

Please visit [www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience](http://www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience) for more information.

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**(EXTRA)ORDINARY**

# CPAS

**SARAH CARVER AND VICKY CATO  
DEMONSTRATE YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A  
STRAIGHT-A STUDENT TO EXCEL AS A CPA**

BY QUINTA ITICKA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDERLEE PHOTOGRAPHY



“Taking on  
Challenges  
is how  
I got here.”  
- Sarah Carver  
CPA



Failure can seem devastating at first, but it isn't always a bad thing. It can be an opportunity to reassess where things went wrong, bounce back stronger, and become extraordinary.

At 27, **Sarah Carver CPA** is the Financial Controller at C-West Custom Fixtures, an Alberta-based manufacturing company. However, achieving success so early in her career didn't come without a few bumps on the road. "I failed the Common Final Examination (CFE) the first time.... That was easily one of the worst days of my life," says Sarah.

CPA candidates write the three-day case-based CFE at the end of the CPA Professional Education Program. Passing the exam is a critical step towards obtaining the CPA designation. Day 1 of the CFE is four hours, Day 2 is five hours, and Day 3 is four hours. Needless to say, it is tough!

Sarah finished each day with an hour to spare. In retrospect, she acknowledges this should have been a red flag because candidates usually wish they had more time for the exam.

"I realized finishing early wasn't a sign of completeness. I needed to integrate more case

facts into my responses and go deeper into my analysis," says Sarah. "The experience changed the way I approached my studies."

It also changed the way Sarah approached her career. To excel at work, she realized she had to step out of her comfort zone and take on new challenges. These have included presenting in boardrooms, managing her company's IT systems, and recently, representing the company at a conference in Arizona. "Taking on challenges is how I got here. I take every opportunity to learn and grow in my role and expand my knowledge of the company," says Sarah.

Sarah also recognizes the importance of effective communication. "This skill is not emphasized enough, I think. To shine as a CPA, you have to be able to listen, understand, and relate to people," she says.

Sarah credits the CPA designation for providing her with the skills to pursue a career she adores. "The CPA designation is the catalyst that kick-started my career," says Sarah. "At 27, my designation backs up what I am saying. It has given me the competencies to lead with confidence, regardless of my age."

Many professionals base their career choices on their favourite courses in university. Not **Vicky Cato CPA**. When accounting challenged her, she decided to pursue it as a career.


In Vicky's first year at SAIT, she had to take four electives as part of her Business Management program. "I did well in all the courses, but accounting was the hardest," says Vicky. "In my other classes, I could work moderately hard and get As. In accounting, I'd work my butt off and get a B or a C."

So what did Vicky do? She majored in accounting, of course!

Fast forward to her last year in university, and she was unsuccessful in Advanced Financial Accounting, the last course she needed to complete her degree. "Eventually, I retook the course, passed, and got my degree with honours!" she recalls proudly. "Success tastes so much sweeter when you work really hard for it.... I am motivated by challenge. I want to be in a role where I am continuously learning and growing."

Recently, Vicky was promoted to the role of CFO at PinkWood Ltd., where she started in 2020 as an Accounting Manager. Her new role caused her to look inward and ask herself how she can continue to excel professionally.

"One strategy I use is to talk to people and get feedback. I didn't realize how important it is to have a mentor outside of the CPA program.... Someone who is a few steps ahead of you, and who will challenge you and be honest with you," says Vicky, whose current mentor has been in leadership for more than 10 years.

Becoming a CPA has accelerated Vicky's career growth; yet, after university, she was on the fence about pursuing the designation. "Then an opportunity for a promotion came up at a previous company, and they wanted a CPA for the role. That's when I started seeing how the designation can make a difference," says Vicky. "Yes, it is possible to become a CFO without a designation, but it may take longer. The CPA designation proves that you have the qualifications, so you don't have to spend years in a position you don't love. It opens doors." 

"I AM  
MOTIVATED  
BY  
CHALLENGE"  
- VICKY CATO, CPA







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# CPAS ON CPAS: ALL IN THE FAMILY

**NIZAM AND SHAFIQ SHAJANI INTERVIEW  
EACH OTHER ON WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE CPAS,  
BUSINESS PARTNERS, AND BROTHERS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAMSEY KUNKEL PHOTOGRAPHY





Shafiq Shajani CPA, CGA (left) and Nizam Shajani CPA, CA

In this first-ever installment of CPAs on CPAs, two brothers—**Nizam Shajani CPA, CA** and **Shafiq Shajani CPA, CGA**—interview each other on what got them into the family business, what it takes to keep a firm going after nearly four decades, how they each maintain a work/life balance, and more!

**Nizam:** Ok, let's start this off with an easy one. Why did you choose to become a CPA?

**Shafiq:** Growing up, it was not only our father who was in the profession, but also uncles and cousins that I was close to and admired. I was surrounded by it!

As I progressed through post-secondary, there was an inherent comfort level and enjoyment

with accounting and tax courses that kept me moving forward. What about you?

**Nizam:** I don't think I really chose to become a CPA; it was more like CPA chose me. I made a spontaneous decision to interview with a firm that was recruiting on campus, and they hired me the same day and offered to put me through the program. I think I got hired because I was able to speak enthusiastically about how I could make a positive difference in the lives of others as a CPA. And I think this came about from the many conversations between you, me, and dad!

**Shafiq:** Ah, yes, the debates!



**Nizam:** You and dad would debate tax and tax policy for hours. At times, it got very passionate. I think it takes a bit more effort to be taken seriously as the youngest, so I discovered I needed to do some research and be current with the news before I could join in those family conversations. Those discussions, though, enabled me to join other conversations where people started seeking my advice on entrepreneurial things.

It all kind of goes back to that sense of belonging—with family, friends, and others—that pushed me into public accounting and following the family's footsteps.

**Shafiq:** I also felt like keeping the firm going for another generation was appealing and an opportunity to leave a meaningful legacy for our family.

What do you think it takes to keep a family-run business going for almost 40 years?

**Nizam:** I think our family has always had an informal division of responsibilities that has contributed to the firm's longevity and success. That being said, an accounting firm today is very different to one from 40 years ago. It is absolutely imperative to be on top of technological changes and updates to accounting standards, tax legislation, and administration. This can be difficult when faced with daily pressures from client requests, deadlines, and managing the business.

**Shafiq:** Absolutely! And a substantial amount of work goes into this!

I would say one of the most important elements is being on the same page as your business partner—in this case, you, my brother—on both the day-to-day operations and the big picture.

**Nizam:** Yeah, we've really learned to rely on each other and trust each other because no one person could do it all. We also learned to value our clients, trust and nurture our team, network with other service providers, and foster win-win relationships. Our family-run accounting firm is as much about relationships as it is about accounting.

Ok, let's really get into it: What's the best part of working with me?

**Shafiq:** Your vision and ability to make the big picture a reality is a huge asset. You ensure we're always working towards that.

**Nizam:** And you help balance our partnership. You allow me to pursue opportunities and work towards our vision by maintaining the day-to-day operations. I can always count on you.

**Shafiq:** You're also able to provide excellent strategies and solutions for our clients on a day-to-day basis. And not only for taxes! Your support is invaluable.

What is the worst part about working with me?



**Nizam:** You always ground my dreams with a necessary dose of reality by asking the hard questions. You are, after all, a CPA.

**Shafiq:** If the numbers don't work, we have to re-work the strategy!

**Nizam:** How do you balance work and family life with so much going on at the firm?

**Shafiq:** I'm sure my family would say I have a ways to go here!

I do appreciate the advice I've been given as to just how fast the childhood of your children passes, so I always ensure I'm there at the important events, and I really enjoy spending time with them, whether it's at formal events—like a musical (*Hamilton!*), a hockey game (Go Flames!), or a vacation—or just trips to the dog park.

**Nizam:** I think it's important to have goals outside of work. I review and update my goals

regularly and each of my goals includes a why; of course, any goal requires a series of steps for achievement, so I schedule in time for health, work, relationships, volunteering, education, and spirituality.


**Shafiq:** This feels like the right time to ask—what do you admire about me?

**Nizam:** So many things! You keep the firm going. Day in and day out, you ensure clients are taken care of, and you watch the bottom line. This steadfastness is the foundation of our firm, and the reliability is admirable.

**Shafiq:** I really admire that you've been able to harness your passion for tax into impressive credentials, technical ability, and excellent results for our clients. Your big picture thinking is invaluable and provides a crucial framework for our day-to-day firm operations and decision making.

I also really admire your willingness to provide support for your family, friends, and community.



Shafiq and Nizam are CPAs, business partners, and above all, brothers. It should be no surprise they balance each other well and have successfully carried on the family legacy when accounting is so embedded in their DNA. 



# A picture- perfect career

BY ANDREA MICHAUD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY AND CYNTHIA PRIEST CPA, CMA

**CYNTHIA PRIEST QUIT HER DAY JOB TO PURSUE  
HER PASSION BUT STILL FINDS WAYS TO USE HER  
CPA DESIGNATION**

What better way to mix things up than by quitting your job to pursue your hobby as a career? That's exactly what **Cynthia Priest CPA, CMA** did. After more than a decade taking pictures for fun while working a nine-to-five, she knew it was time to make the switch to full-time professional photographer.

Back when Cynthia was deciding on a career path, she initially wasn't sure if she even wanted to be a CPA. After graduating, she was torn between pursuing her designation or an MBA. "Ultimately, I decided it was better to be part of a designated profession rather than having an MBA," Cynthia explains. "I am not a big fan of writing papers and doing my designation turned out to be much more fun!"

The designation wasn't just more fun; it was invaluable in her previous career in banking. Cynthia worked in anti-money laundering and even uncovered a human trafficking case. While the job was interesting and rewarding, she decided she wanted to flex her creative muscles and try something totally new.

Cynthia started her professional photography business in early 2021. She had no experience being an entrepreneur, but her designation gave her many necessary skills to run her own business. "You need to learn to work outside of the business," says Cynthia.

Thinking about her business objectively and taking a step back helps Cynthia make better decisions. She is particularly excited about the big-picture thinking. She loves planning, conducting SWOT analyses, and dreaming about where her company can go next.

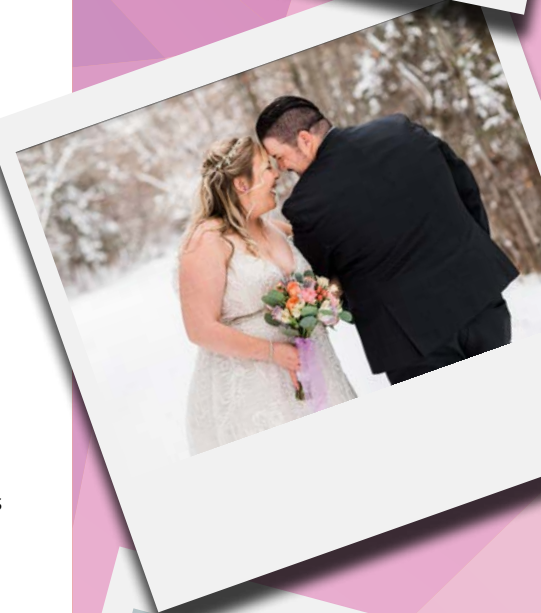
Cynthia didn't expect to use her CPA designation in daily conversations with her photography clients, but that's exactly what happened. While doing headshots for clients, she regularly discusses the big-picture strategy behind their organizations. "People find it weird that I'm a CPA and a photographer, but it piques a lot of small businesses' interest," says Cynthia.

For CPAs hoping to start their own businesses, Cynthia urges them to leverage their designation for networking. Since her business is mostly built on word of mouth, Cynthia understands the importance of maintaining relationships. She is still in touch with her cohort from her studies for her designation and keeps a network of makeup artists, hair stylists, and fashion designers who refer clients to each other.

She also recommends setting boundaries. "I joke that I didn't want to work nine to five, so now I work all the time," says Cynthia.

Making time for family and other commitments is very important. Due to the nature of photography, Cynthia often has to work evenings and weekends, but she has committed to taking Wednesdays off to take a break and recharge.

And Cynthia's biggest piece of advice? New business owners are going to make mistakes, so take time to learn and don't worry too much about perfection. "It's okay to put your ego aside when you are starting because there's a steep learning curve," she says. 📷







# ACCOUNTING'S DIGITAL FUTURE

**INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CPA? EMBRACING TECH  
AS A STUDENT IS A SMART WAY TO PREPARE FOR  
YOUR CAREER**

BY CAITLIN CRAWSHAW | PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDERLEE PHOTOGRAPHY



It's hard to imagine, but there was once a time when accountants filled paper balance sheets by hand and risked papercuts from sorting through piles of paper (and shoeboxes of receipts, if you happened to be a tax specialist).

Like so many things in our world, accounting has evolved greatly since the start of the digital revolution, but the biggest changes may be yet to come as the field embraces automation, artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, digital communication, and other innovations.

The next generation of CPAs are well-positioned to both master these technologies and leverage them in their own careers. "I think they're coming up at the right time," says **Aamar Yaseen CPA**, a partner consultant with Xero, an accounting

software company. "The more they can lean into the technology side of things, the more successful they'll be in future."

## TECHNOLOGY RACES AHEAD

Aamar has seen a ton of change in the field since he got started in 2012. "When I was doing my articling, it was about trying to get the work done as quickly as possible because there was so much to be done," he explains.

When Aamar began his accounting career working for firms like Deloitte and Grant Thornton, Microsoft Excel formulas were the name of the game. "At the time, it seemed pretty slick," he says with a laugh.

In short order, the field began adopting a variety of online platforms to automate repetitive tasks, increasing efficiency. “Something that would take an hour now takes 20 or 30 minutes,” he says.

Aamar’s employer, Xero, is one of a number of cloud-based accounting platforms to emerge in recent years (others include Intuit Quickbooks Online and Freshbooks). Today’s CPAs can also use cloud-based software to share business information with stakeholders (like Spotlight Reporting and Sage Intacct) and manage payroll systems (such as Payment Evolution and Zoho). There are also a myriad of apps that integrate with some of these big platforms, such as Hubdoc, which uses a phone camera to scan receipts and record the data.

### ACCOUNTING IN A HIGH-TECH AGE

Aamar notes cloud-based computing means accounting professionals can work anywhere, anytime. “There are firms who don’t have a physical office anymore,” he says.

Cloud-based software also makes it easier for CPAs to share data with colleagues or clients and more quickly access the information they need. “Instead of having to go through 30 pages of client documents, you can open up your phone or other device, and see your client’s information,” he says.

Technology is also changing the nature of accounting work itself. **Steve Janz CPA, CGA**, an accounting instructor at SAIT, points out that as AI takes on more of the tedious tasks, accountants can focus on more analytical work. This means advising clients on financial strategies and planning, but he anticipates CPAs will also spend more of their time analyzing the huge amount of data being collected. “Someone has to have the skills to synthesize that data and make it so we can make good decisions—and that’s not easy,” he says.



**THE MORE [STUDENTS] CAN LEAN INTO THE TECHNOLOGY SIDE OF THINGS, THE MORE SUCCESSFUL THEY’LL BE IN THE FUTURE.**

Aamar Yaseen CPA







**IT'S GREAT TO HAVE TECHNICAL SKILLS, BUT CAN YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE CLIENT? DO YOU HAVE PERSUASIVE SKILLS? DO YOU HAVE THE SKILLS TO LISTEN?**

Steve Janz CPA, CGA



## PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION


As a long-time educator, Steve has long incorporated technology in his classes. Nearly 20 years ago, he had an “aha” moment when a student asked why he was only teaching the theory behind a software. Steve agreed hands-on learning was needed and began hauling a cart of 30 laptops to and from his classes so students could practice.

Now, he teaches classes that allow students to become proficient in Xero, Spotlight Reporting, and Payment Evolution. (He’s also written manuals for all three.) Students receive official certifications after completing the online certification requirements, which is a course requirement.

On top of this, Steve uses a lot of technology in teaching his online and in-person classes. He relies on better-known platforms like YouTube (Lightboard-style videos), Power BI, Solver, Excel (pivot tables), and Prezi, as well as up-and-coming education technology such as virtual reality simulations.

Recently, Steve partnered with Mursion to create an avatar-based virtual reality communication project for accounting students, which he piloted earlier this year with funding from the CPA Education Foundation and the Canadian Academic Accounting Association. The crux of the project was a 2D virtual reality simulation in which students had to persuade a “client” to switch to Xero from their existing software. In this safe online environment, students could practice their communication skills without fear of judgment.

“It’s great to have technical skills, but can you communicate with the client? Do you have persuasive skills? Do you have the skills to listen?” he asks. Especially during a time of hybrid communication, the next generation of CPAs must be skilled at communicating both online and in real life and have the confidence to succeed in these situations.

Steve recommends prospective CPAs seek out opportunities to advance their tech skills before they’re in the job market—but it’s likely they don’t need much persuading: “This is a generation that loves technology and embraces it.” 

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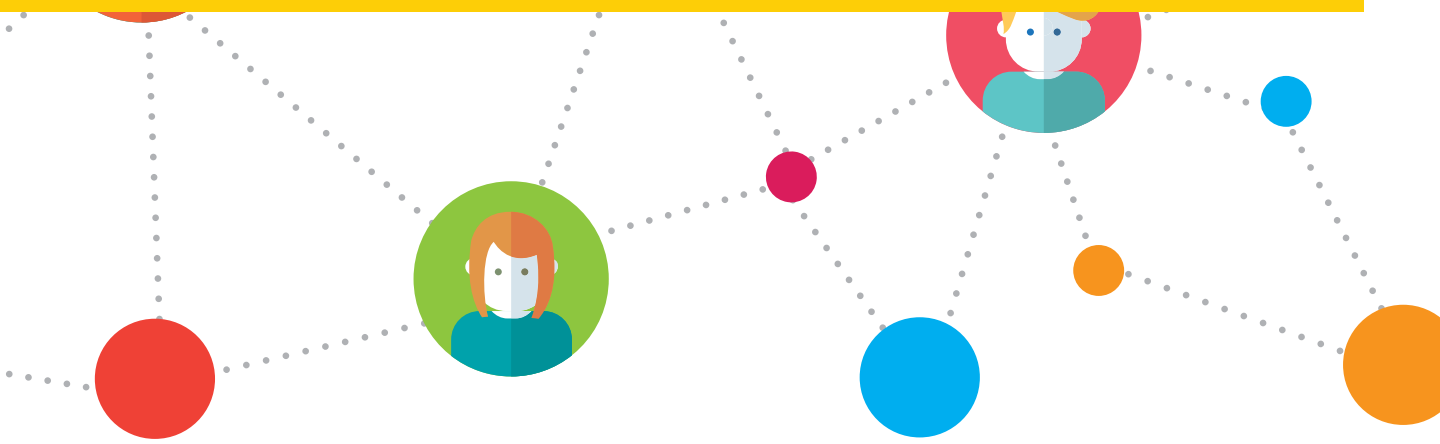





# NETWORKING IRL

AFTER BEING VIRTUAL FOR A COUPLE YEARS, HOW DO YOU NETWORK IN REAL LIFE? YOU PREPARE AND SHARE!

BY SIMONE MCLAUGHLIN





The last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the world of networking. The pandemic drastically changed how events were planned, hosted, and attended, with a shift to 100% virtual during the height of the pandemic. We are now in a pivot as the world reopens. While many of us are eager, the reopening comes with great uncertainty.

But there are benefits of attending in-person events if you can. Being out and engaging with others can increase your mood, and networking is made so much easier. It gives you the opportunity to make a good first impression to potential clients or employers. Additionally, you are able to make observations and credible judgments from those connections.

Getting back into the networking game can be challenging, and you may be wondering how to network in the new paradigm. Start with preparation. Research the event, the topics and content for discussion, and concerns or challenges in the field.

From here, the acronym SHARE can help:

**S:** Sparks. Walk around the room and make eye contact, smile, and identify sparks of energy and connections. Approach one of these sparks and start a conversation.

**H:** Highlight something positive about the event or your new acquaintance to strike up a conversation.

**A:** Ask. To keep the conversation flowing, ask your new acquaintance questions and share information. Discuss new or emerging trends or challenges in the field. Be sure to listen and ask follow-up questions.

**R:** Retain. Ask for information from your new contacts, such as their email or phone number. Take notes or request a business card.

**E:** Engage. Determine who you can introduce your new friend to and have them do the same. If you do find common interests in the people you have met, invite them to form a networking group.

And just like that, you have networked! Hopefully you've made new friends, and maybe even formed a group and established a meeting time or space. ☑



Simone McLaughlin is a trained competency-based educator in the field of hospitality and works with students to hone their skills and become employment-ready. With a passion for service, Simone has conducted research and worked with the Migrant group to highlight the needs and concerns of temporary international workers.



“As an Indigenous woman trying to navigate a world that doesn’t always recognize the accomplishments of Indigenous peoples, I really appreciate the opportunity to be recognized by the CPA Education Foundation. My goal is to help create accepting environments that allow people to be themselves in a culturally sensitive way.”

— Kiara Johnson, recipient of the Alex Tutschek FCPA, FCA Award for Indigenous Student Post-Secondary Achievement

# YOU’VE GOT GOALS. WE’VE GOT SUPPORT.

## CPA Education Foundation student awards

The CPA Education Foundation is passionate about helping students reach their CPA designation goals and recognizes that education is a significant financial investment. That’s why the Foundation offers a variety of awards to help ease the financial barriers of higher education for students at all stages of their educational careers, from high school to post-secondary and through to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

Post-secondary and CPA  
PEP awards deadline:  
**January 31**

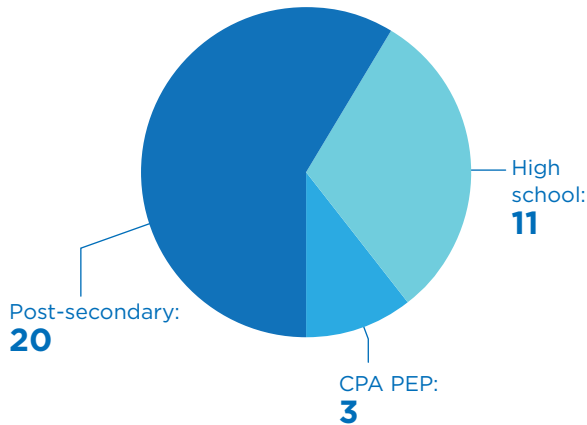
High school awards deadline:  
**May 1**

For more information on any of the CPA  
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please visit [cpaalberta.ca/scholarships](https://cpaalberta.ca/scholarships).

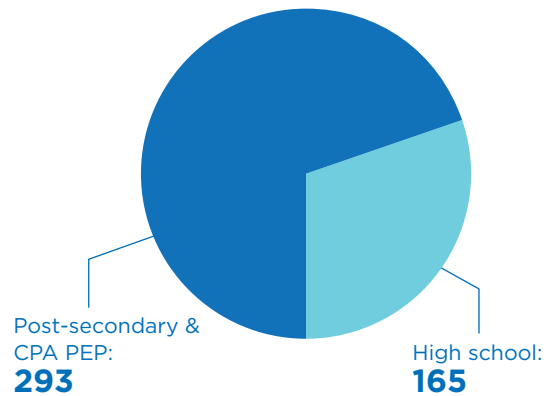


Did you know the CPA Education Foundation provided more than \$170,000 in funding for student awards, scholarships, and bursaries in the 2021/22 year?

### Number of awards available in 2023



### Applications received in 2022



Have questions? Connect with us at [cpaef@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:cpaef@cpaalberta.ca)!

The CPA Education Foundation is proud to support Alberta's future community-builders, philanthropists, academics, and entrepreneurs. Here are some of this year's award recipients.



"I believe the most valuable thing in this world is an opportunity; sometimes, all it takes for someone to be successful is a chance to do so. With support from my parents, all my hard work paid off when I was accepted into my dream business program. This scholarship will be a huge step toward graduating with as little debt as possible."

— Athena Wong, recipient of the Stepping Up Entrepreneurial Spirit Award



"I know that becoming a CPA is a challenging pathway, but receiving this award has built my confidence in [my ability] to become a successful CPA. It is affirming to know my community involvement, dedication, and commitment to being a young female entrepreneur throughout high school have been recognized."

— Maya Mezubiak, recipient of the Empowered Young Woman Award



"The opportunities available for a CPA seem to be never-ending. To me, the CPA designation is a goal I am sure will open countless doors for me to truly take control of my career. The support of the CPA Education Foundation helps students chip away at their financial burdens and allows those who are actively involved in the community to continue to focus their efforts on building stronger communities."

— Youngjae Park, recipient of the Peter Kruczko CPA, CA Award in Memory of Gordon Woodman FCA



# CPA IN THE DNA

THREE GENERATIONS OF CPAS IN THE  
FAMILY BUSINESS

BY KEVIN SPILA



“It was no surprise to my family when I said I was interested in accounting,” says **Emily Parker**.

For some, knowing what you want to be when you grow up doesn’t come easily. For others, like Emily, the signs are a little more obvious.

Growing up in rural central Alberta, Emily was exposed to the accounting profession from a very young age. Her grandfather, **Lloyd Parker CPA, CA**, and his brother-in-law started an accounting firm nearly five decades ago, and her father, aunt, and uncle are all now CPAs and partners in that family business. If that wasn’t enough, there are even more CPA family members not working at the firm.


So, while they weren’t necessarily debating and discussing the pros and cons of financial statements at family events or holiday get-togethers, it’s plain to see accounting is a big part of Emily’s family.

“It has been beneficial to have the most influential people in my life to ask questions of regarding the career path for [a CPA], and how I should build my experience in the industry,” Emily muses. “My family has aided and supported me throughout my degree, and I am very thankful I have them while I continue.”

Emily is the recipient of the CPA Education Foundation’s Vic Dzurko Generations of Excellence Award. This award is given to a business or commerce post-secondary student who is interested in pursuing a CPA designation and who has at least one family member who is (or was) a CPA in good standing.

“Receiving this award means a lot since the career of accounting has been such a big part of our family,” Emily says. “I am so thankful for opportunities like this; they make a world of difference.”

Emily’s optimistic about the future and hopes she will find a career that best fits her. Emily’s CPA grandfather, Lloyd, is equally optimistic and recognizes the CPA designation has evolved to provide a variety of career opportunities. “Her positive attitude, strong work ethic, and innovative ideas enable her to achieve the goals she sets for herself,” he says.

“It is not an expectation that Emily will join the family firm, although she would be most welcome. The family would be proud to have Emily represent them as a third-generation CPA.” 



# SUPPORTING ALBERTA COLLEGES

## THE HESJE CPA KNOWLEDGE CENTRE SUPPORTS PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS FROM SMALLER COMMUNITIES


BY KEVIN SPILA

Over the years, the CPA Education Foundation and Alberta's post-secondary institutions have worked together to ensure students have access to the highest quality accounting and business education.

Recently, the Foundation has been consulting with smaller post-secondary institutions across the province; the Foundation wants to support these colleges as they begin to offer diplomas in accounting with direct transfer pathways to degree-granting institutions or as they become degree-granting institutions themselves.

These discussions led to the establishment of the Alberta College Grants.

The Foundation provides some of these grants as financial support for accounting programs, and the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre awards a portion of these grants to support technology upgrades for schools that primarily serve students from smaller communities.

The Foundation believes supporting these schools not only greatly benefits students, but also honours the legacy of the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre's namesake, the late Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA. Brian had a passion for supporting students in small towns and farming communities who seldom have the same opportunities as students in major cities. 

**In this first year, seven institutions received funding:**

- **Bow Valley College**
- **Keyano College**
- **Lethbridge College**
- **Medicine Hat College**
- **Northwestern Polytechnic**
- **Olds College**
- **Red Deer Polytechnic**



The CPA Education Foundation's Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre was established thanks to a generous gift from Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA (1946-2021), who is remembered as an accomplished Alberta business leader and community builder. The Knowledge Centre, which was founded in March 2019, is a virtual hub of resources and materials featuring Alberta CPAs sharing their unique perspectives and vast expertise on a wide range of topics and issues.

# CAPITALIZE QUIZ

## ARE YOU READY TO START YOUR CPA PATH?

BY ANDREA MICHAUD

### 1 What do you want to be when you grow up?

- A** I want to be a CPA!      **B** I have no idea.      **C** I am leaning towards a career in business, but I haven't decided yet.

### 2 Winter break just ended. Where are you headed for the next few months?

- A** Back to high school.      **B** To a post-secondary institution or a co-op term.      **C** To the office because I've already graduated.

### 3 If you compare your transcript to the Transfer Credit Guide, how many prerequisites have you met?

- A** All the prereqs!      **B** Some, but I still have a few to go.      **C** What's the Transfer Credit Guide?

### 4 What are your job prospects looking like after you graduate?

- A** I've been looking but haven't found anything yet.      **B** I've secured a qualifying position to work towards my practical experience requirements.      **C** I have no clue, That's a long way away for me!

### 5 Have you been networking?

- A** What's networking?      **B** I've been to one or two events...      **C** Yes, and I've connected with a few employers.

**7 to 10 points**

#### You're ready

You're getting close to having everything you need to become a CPA! Your degree is in progress or complete, and you have the prerequisite courses. You've thought about your career goals and are on the path to finding a job after graduation. Great work!

**4 to 6 points**

#### You're on the right track

You're aware of the requirements to become a CPA, and you're on the path to achieving them. Keep on track, and you'll be ready to start the CPA Professional Education Program in no time!

**0 to 3 points**

#### You need more information

It sounds like you might have a lot of questions about the CPA Professional Education Program. Connect with a member of CPA Alberta's recruitment team to get more information and to start on your journey.

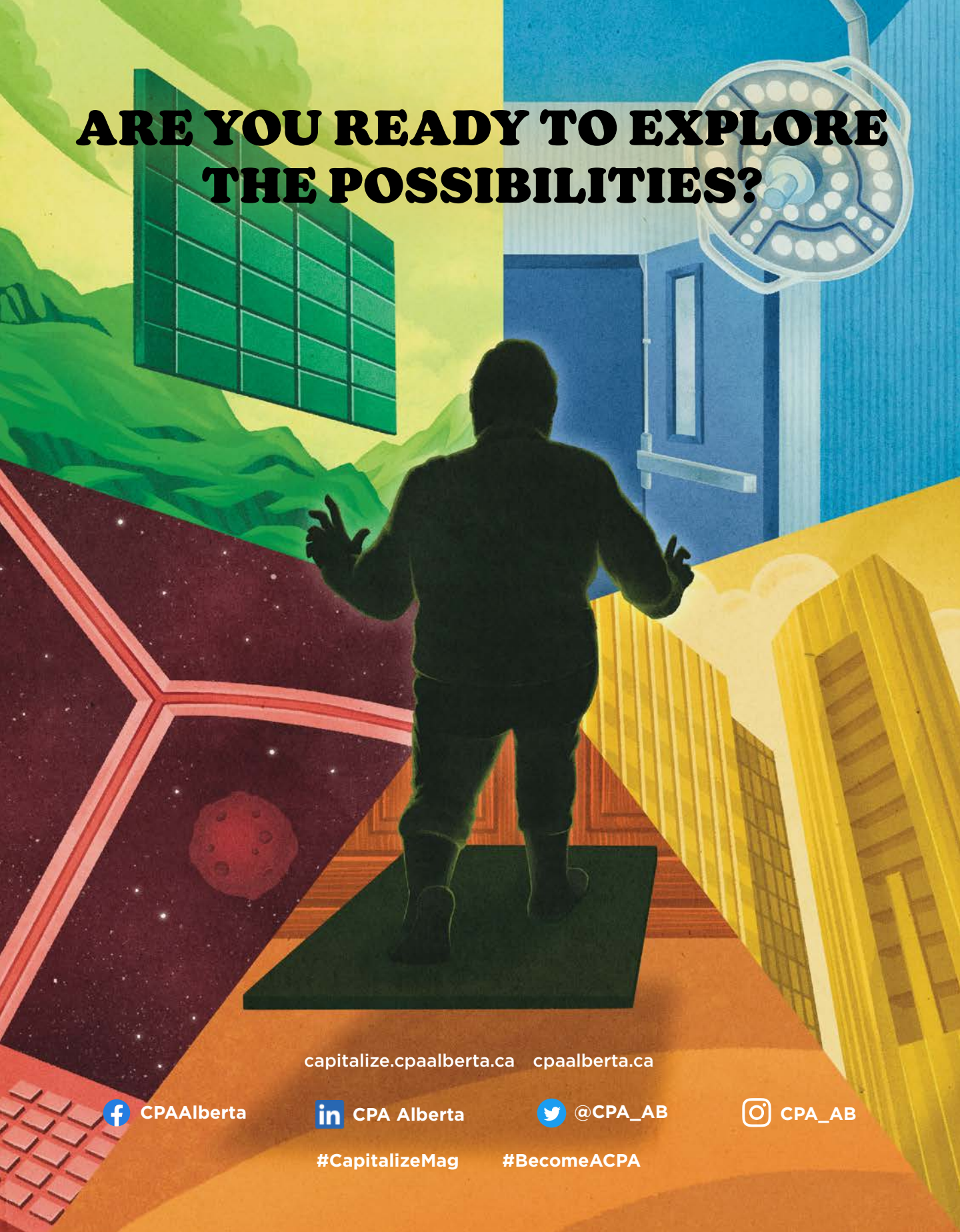
No matter where you are on your adventure, you might have questions. We can answer them! Email [recruitment@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:recruitment@cpaalberta.ca), call **1.844.454.1245**, or book a one-on-one advising session with a Recruitment Officer to have your questions answered!

**BOOK NOW**



SCORING: 1. A-2, B-0, C-1; 2. A-0, B-1, C-2; 3. A-2, B-1, C-0; 4. A-1, B-2, C-0; 5. A-0, B-1, C-2

# ARE YOU READY TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES?



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