

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Newsletters

American Institute of Certified Public
Accountants (AICPA) Historical Collection

2-1998

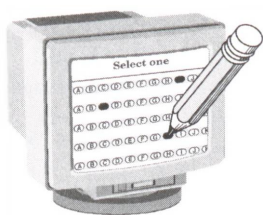
CIC Alert, Volume 1, Number 1, February 1998

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Computerization Implementation Committee

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aicpa_news



Part of the [Accounting Commons](#)



CIC Alert

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY 1998

From the Desk of Kevin P. Sweeney, Computerization Project Director

And now, Introducing...

I am pleased to have the opportunity to make several introductions to you. First, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Kevin Sweeney and I have been appointed by the AICPA as the project director for computerization of the Uniform CPA Examination. This exciting project promises to be challenging and rewarding as we transform the current paper-and-pencil Examination into an examination in which new and more relevant assessments of candidates' knowledge and skills are possible through the application of technology.

Because of the complexity and importance of this project, many highly skilled and thoughtful individuals will be contributing to its planning and success. A critical component to ensuring successful computerization is open and frequent communication between the decision makers and those who hold a stake in the endeavor. As project director, I intend to establish regular and frequent communications with Boards of Accountancy (BOAs) and other parties interested in computerization of the Examination. This leads me to my second introduction.

As part of the effort to establish solid communications, I am pleased to introduce the *CIC Alert*. This one-page update will provide information concerning the latest developments on the computerization front to BOAs and other interested parties. I look forward to, and encourage, your feedback and comments on the issues raised here.

Finally, I am pleased to introduce the Joint AICPA/NASBA Computerization Implementation Committee (CIC). This committee is the primary vehicle through which computerization of the Uniform CPA Examination will be accomplished. The CIC was established in the fall of 1997 as a successor to the AICPA Board of Examiners' Computerization Task Force. The CIC comprises six members:

Bill Holder, Chair Dr. Holder is the Ernst & Young professor of accounting at the University of Southern California. He is currently a member of AICPA Council and a member of the AICPA Education Executive Committee. He has previously served on several AICPA committees, including the Special Committee on Financial Reporting, Accounting Standards Executive Committee, Board of Examiners, Government Accounting and Auditing Committee, and the Compliance Auditing Task Force. Dr. Holder has also chaired several American Accounting Association committees, including the Outstanding Educator Award Committee, Financial Reporting Issues Committee, and the Public Sector Section.

Asa Hord Mr. Hord is Chairman of NASBA's Examinations Committee and a NASBA Director-at-Large. He is a member of the Kentucky State Board of Accountancy. A retired partner with Deloitte & Touche, LLP, Mr. Hord is currently a consultant with the firm.

David Landsittel Mr. Landsittel, a retired audit partner with Arthur Anderson, LLP, has served as Chair of the AICPA's Auditing Standards Board and has recently chaired the AICPA task force charged with addressing the auditor's responsibility for fraud detection. He has also served on the AICPA Board of Directors and is a Past President of the Illinois CPA Society. Mr. Landsittel recently received the John J. McCloy award for outstanding contributions to auditing in the United States from the AICPA's SEC Practice Section Public Oversight Board and was also recently selected by the American Accounting Association to receive its Distinguished Service in Auditing Award. Mr. Landsittel is currently serving as a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors Best Practices Council. He has served as a member of the Accounting Education Change Commission and the Advisory Council for the Committee on Sponsoring Organizations, and as a subcommittee member on the AICPA Special Committee on Assurance Services.

Eric Schindler Mr. Schindler is Vice President—Finance for American Chemet Corporation. He has served on the AICPA Board of Directors, President Search Committee, and the Special Committee on Accreditation of Specializations. Mr. Schindler has also served as Chair of the AICPA Members in Industry Executive Committee, Chair of the AICPA Finance Committee, Chair of the AICPA Strategic Planning Committee, and Chair of the AICPA External Advisory Council for the CPA Vision Project.

Carol Sigmann Ms. Sigmann is the Executive Officer of the California State Board of Accountancy. Ms. Sigmann brings nearly 25 years of experience in consumer protection activities and 13 years of experience as Executive Officer for California regulatory boards to the CIC. She has also served in a leadership capacity for three national associations. This background provides her with extensive experience with the state legislative process, state board operations, and program development and implementation.

Dennis Spackman Mr. Spackman is the Chief Accountant for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Mr. Spackman is currently serving as a member of the NASBA Board of Directors, Chair of the NASBA Ethics Committee, and a member of the AICPA/NASBA International Qualifications Appraisal Board. He has previously served on several NASBA committees, including International Reciprocity, Acceleration of Changes in the CPA Examination, Legal Liability Task Force, and Ownership of Public Accounting Firms by Non-Licensees. Mr. Spackman has also served as member of AICPA Council and the AICPA State Legislation and Region Legislation Planning Committees. In addition, Mr. Spackman has served as President of the Utah Association of CPAs.

OCT-1998

Key staff members are Ahava Goldman, AICPA Senior Technical Manager; Jim Blum, Director of the AICPA Examinations Team; Arleen Thomas, Vice President of Professional Standards and Services of the AICPA; Lorraine Sachs, Executive Vice President of NASBA; and myself. We'll tell you a little about the staff members in the next issue of the *CIC Alert*.

Recent Meetings

Since its formation, the CIC has been busy. We have met three times over the last five months to generate a plan to develop and implement a computerized Uniform CPA Examination. At our most recent meeting in January 1998, we began working with an outside facilitator, who we will also tell you about in the next issue of the *CIC Alert*. We expect to continue working with the facilitator over the next few months until an implementation plan is complete.

At its meetings, the CIC has drafted project mission and project vision statements. The committee is also forming a communications task force to coordinate dissemination of information.

In addition, the CIC has made some tentative decisions about the nature of the computerized CPA Examination, based both on responses by BOAs and others to *Invitation to Comment—Conversion of the Uniform CPA Examination to a Computer Based Examination* issued by the Computerization Task Force and input from the CIC's members. With a clear understanding of the need to further validate its decisions on the exam, the CIC has tentatively determined that the examination structure will include two independent, one-day sections that will be offered on demand, with the following criteria:

- Each section will be graded pass/fail.
- One section will focus on assessing the fundamental knowledge required for newly licensed CPAs to practice competently. This section will comprise all-objective, four-option multiple-choice questions and will cover the entire content domain of fundamental knowledge (e.g., accounting, auditing, general business, and information technology).
- The second section will focus on assessing the fundamental skills that newly licensed CPAs must demonstrate to be able to practice at entry-level competency. This section will comprise approximately four simulations designed to emulate tasks that newly licensed CPAs perform in practice. Because of the complexity involved in developing these simulations, the CIC has undertaken a study of the feasibility of administering and grading simulations by

computer, either on-demand or at regular intervals throughout the year.

Future Directions

Although development of the implementation plan is still in progress, the CIC has identified many of the important issues that need to be addressed before a computerized examination can be implemented. They include, but are not limited to:

- Legislative issues
- Psychometric issues
- Communication issues (with BOAs, candidates, and the profession)
- Item development issues
- Cost and facility issues

As the CIC moves forward with computerization, we will address any other issues that have not yet been identified.

Offering the Examination on computer provides the opportunity to bring the resources of the computer to bear on designing, administering, and scoring examination questions. This technology holds great promise for enhancing the validity/relevance of the Uniform CPA Examination. New item types that assess candidates' knowledge and skills in a manner more closely resembling the ways in which they are used in practice can be developed. Such item types might include open-ended questions allowing free responses by candidates and/or requiring candidates to produce documents or products they would be required to produce in practice. Such complex questions, because of the variety of knowledge and skills they could address, will likely better assure protection of the public than the assurance that can be obtained through the use of standard multiple-choice questions.

It is the CIC's intent to assure BOAs and other interested parties that comprehensive planning is done, that we routinely communicate important information, and that we allow reasonable time for BOAs to make any necessary changes. In other words, one of the CIC's primary objectives is to ensure that there are no surprises.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding computerization, contact Kevin P. Sweeney, Ph.D., by writing to American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Harborside Financial Center, 201 Plaza Three, Jersey City, NJ 07311-3881; by calling 201-938-3431; or by sending e-mail to ksweeney@aicpa.org. I look forward to your comments.

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Harborside Financial Center
201 Plaza Three
Jersey City, NJ 07311-3881

Examinations Team

