

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON IES 1, *ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING EDUCATION PROGRAMS*

1. **When did IES 1 become effective?**

The International Education Standard™ (IES™) 1 became effective on July 1, 2014.

2. **What does IES 1 require?**

The requirements for IES 1 include:

- IES 1 requires IFAC member bodies to specify educational entry requirements for professional accounting education programs that will allow entrance only to those with a reasonable chance of successfully completing the professional accounting education program, while not representing excessive barriers to entry.
- IES 1 requires IFAC member bodies to explain the rationale for the principles to be used when setting educational entry requirements to stakeholders, including relevant education providers and individuals considering a career as a professional accountant.
- IES 1 requires IFAC member bodies to make relevant information publicly available to help individuals assess their own chances of successfully completing a professional accounting education program.

3. **What are educational entry requirements?**

Educational entry requirements are those conditions that an IFAC member body would expect an individual to meet to be accepted into a professional accounting education program. These educational entry requirements ensure that individuals considering a career as a professional accountant have the requisite knowledge and skills, to have a reasonable chance of successfully completing the program. Most educational entry requirements have focused on the individual's previous academic experience and performance. However, IFAC member bodies may consider educational entry requirements more holistically, including alternative entry points into professional accounting education programs (for further implementation support see the [Perspectives Paper](#) on determinants of performance). For example, individuals who do not have the requisite academic qualifications may still be allowed entry if their work experience is of an appropriate nature and duration to complete a professional accounting education program.

4. **Why does IES 1 not state specifically what the educational entry requirements should be?**

Educational entry requirements are not specified within IES 1 because the determinants of successful completion within each professional accounting education program are likely to vary dependant on the context in which the program is offered. This is demonstrated in the [Perspectives Paper](#) on factors that contribute to successful completion of a professional accounting education program. Depending

on the results of their own analysis, IFAC member bodies may adopt different educational entry requirements for their professional accounting education program.

5. Why should IFAC member bodies set educational entry requirements?

Educational entry requirements into a professional accounting education program are important for the following reasons, they:

- (a) Protect the public interest by helping individuals considering a career as a professional accountant make informed decisions about their education choices. Entry requirements achieve public protection as they allow entrance only to those individuals with a reasonable chance of successfully completing the professional accounting education program, while not representing excessive barriers to entry.
- (b) Ensure that only those individuals with a reasonable chance of successfully completing the professional accounting education program can gain access.
- (c) Help prepare individuals to participate in the professional accounting education program.
- (d) Highlight the various pathways individuals may follow to gain access to the professional accounting education program.
- (e) Ensure that IFAC member body resources (e.g., financial and human) are efficiently allocated.

6. How are educational entry requirements set?

IES 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 provide the essential elements for professional accounting education programs. IES 2, 3, and 4 set out the learning outcomes expected of an aspiring professional accountant by the end of Initial Professional Development (IPD).

The learning outcomes identified in IES 2, 3, and 4 enable the IFAC member body to determine the nature and level of prior learning or experience required by the individual to successfully complete the professional accounting education program. For example, some programs may require completion of secondary education whereas others may require a university degree for entry.

IFAC member bodies may set out the key factors for a reasonable chance of successful completion, such that the entry requirements for any professional accounting education program ensure that individuals considering a career as a professional accountant have the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to develop the required professional competence of a professional accountant. This may involve taking into account factors such as (a) the economic, business, and regulatory environment, (b) the prerequisite knowledge required, (c) the expected learning to be acquired, (d) the role of the professional accountant, and (e) any other relevant factors.

IFAC member bodies are encouraged to analyze the data available from their professional accounting education programs in order to:

- Review the progression and overall completion rates of the program; and
- Review the various points at which individuals fail to proceed to the next stage or drop out of the program.

A review of the data assists IFAC member bodies in considering what factors leads to successful or unsuccessful completion of the program. Regular review of the professional accounting education program assists in ensuring that the educational entry requirements continue to provide individuals with a reasonable chance of successful completion.

7. What are the implications when an IFAC member body has shared or no responsibility for the professional accounting education program?

IFAC member bodies operate in different jurisdictions, under various regulations, and with differing mandates. The setting of educational entry requirements may not always be the direct responsibility of the member body but could reside with governments, firms, universities, or other educational institutions. However, IFAC member bodies are encouraged to use their best endeavours to comply with the requirements of IES 1.

8. What could an IFAC member body communicate and how?

IFAC member bodies are required to explain the rationale for the principles to be used when setting educational entry requirements to stakeholders, including relevant education providers and individuals considering a career as a professional accountant. IFAC member bodies are also required to make relevant information publicly available to help individuals assess their own chances of successfully completing a professional accounting education program. In order to make informed decisions, individuals and other stakeholders benefit from transparent and accurate information, such as:

- The educational qualification(s) required to enter the professional accounting education program;
- The minimum grades required to enter the professional accounting education program;
- Information about alternative pathways or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL);
- Technology requirements. For example, access to a computer or the internet, and ability to use certain software programs; and
- An overview of the professional accounting education program and the learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the program.

Additional information that can assist individuals in making informed career decisions could include:

- Statistics on progression and completion rates over time;
- Information about the delivery model¹ of the program;
- The financial and time commitment required to complete the program;
- Information about the assessment methodology and examples of previous assessments;
- Self-assessments to determine career interests and aptitude; and
- Employment prospects and supporting statistics.

¹ Full-time or part-time; on-line, distance or blended model.

IFAC member bodies can use engaging and innovative ways of sharing information with individuals considering a career as a professional accountant to promote informed career decisions.

9. **What is the benefit of reviewing educational entry requirements on a regular basis?**

Reviewing educational entry requirements on a regular basis enables IFAC member bodies to respond to changes in the context in which the professional accounting education program is offered and the environment in which individuals operate.

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