



GUIDE TO MAJORS AT YESHIVA: ACCOUNTING

Choosing a major can be stressful, but it is important to understand that you can pursue almost any career regardless of which major you choose. While there are some exceptions, most entry-level positions simply require general transferable skills—those that can be learned in one setting and applied in another. Relevant experience through internships and activities is generally more important to employers than a major. It is best to choose an area that you find interesting and where you have the ability to do well.

What is the Accounting Major?

Accounting involves carrying out the fundamental tasks of preparing, analyzing, and verifying financial documents in order to provide information to clients. Accountants and auditors help to ensure that businesses are run efficiently, public records are kept accurately, and taxes are paid properly. Accounting also provides the opportunity to analyze and influence corporate strategies, evaluate new business opportunities, and develop a wide set of business skills. Government accountants maintain and examine the records of government agencies and audit. In addition to the liberal arts and business core course requirements, accounting majors complete coursework in Intermediate, Advanced, and Management Accounting, Auditing, Business Law, and Tax.

What can I do with a Major in Accounting?

The accounting major prepares students to work within the accounting industry in a wide range of roles. Public accountants perform a broad range of accounting, auditing, tax, and consulting activities for their clients. Management accountants record and analyze the internal financial information and manage the budgets of the companies for which they work. Internal auditors verify the effectiveness of their organization's internal controls and check for mismanagement, waste, or fraud.

Accounting also provides a strong business foundation which can be a springboard into other industries, including finance, law (often with a specialization in tax), management (such as a CFO of an organization), and public policy. A PhD in Accounting can also lead towards a career as a professor at the University level, teaching either undergraduate or graduate students.

Careers that utilize knowledge of Accounting include:

- Certified Public Accountants
- Management Accountants
- Internal Auditors

- Government Accountants
- Controller
- Budget Analyst
- Financial Analyst
- Tax Accountant
- Forensic Accountant
- Cost Accountant

Skills and Abilities

Accountants need to have strong math skills, be detail-oriented, and work well with numbers. It is also extremely important to have abilities in analysis, interpretation and business strategy. Excellent communication skills and the ability to work well as part of a team are also highly desired by employers.

Master's Degree

As of August of 2009, accounting students seeking to become certified public accountants (CPA) in New York State (as well as in most other states) are required to complete 150 credits, of which 33 are accounting credits, a number that is beyond the credit hours obtained in a typical undergraduate degree.

Sy Syms offers two graduate programs that can be completed in one-year and provide the credit hours needed to meet the new state requirements. The Master of Science in Accounting Program will include nine required courses and one elective. Topics covered will include: taxation, financial statement analysis, business valuation, advanced managerial accounting, computer auditing, ethics and corporate responsibility, management and leadership, forensic accounting, contemporary accounting topics, and not-for-profit and governmental accounting. The Master of Science in Taxation Program is a flexible tax degree that provides students and professionals with a competitive advantage in the field in recognizing the importance of tax matters in the business world. Four classes are offered each fall and spring semesters with additional classes offered in the summers to allow students to complete all requirements for the degree and also for those who may need extra coursework in accounting and taxation to fulfill New York State credit and content area educational requirements. Coursework conveys a basic knowledge of the major technical, conceptual, ethical and research issues in the area of taxation, and provides training in the practical and planning aspects as well. Topics covered will include: Estate Tax, State Taxation, Federal Income Tax, International Tax, Deferred Compensation & Employee Benefits, Tax Research, Taxation of S Corporations and their Shareholders, Reorganizations and Liquidations, and Ethical Tax Practice and Procedure.

Some students may be able to reach the necessary credits as undergraduates by taking two finance courses currently cross-listed as accounting courses: The Financial Crisis and Financial Statement Analysis (note: these classes are only offered once a year and may be converted into honors courses in the future). They would then need to take additional courses in any other area to reach the overall 150-credit requirement.