



Exploring GBA Business Opportunities for the Accounting Sector

Professional Qualifications, Practice Requirements, Policy Incentives

With the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) now progressing at full speed, how can Hong Kong businesses get a head start and take advantage of the immense business opportunities that are being created in the region?

The GoGBA Go-to Guide for Accounting Services, produced by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), sets out to help Hong Kong-based accounting firms and professionals with the first steps to exploring opportunities in the GBA. The information contained in this guide is current as of April 2024. For the latest updates, please visit the websites of the relevant platforms to obtain detailed information and the most up-to-date policies, or consult with professional advisers according to your specific needs.

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1. Cooperating with Accounting Services in the GBA

Under the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area promulgated in February 2019, Hong Kong will strengthen its role as an international centre for asset management and risk management. The three territories are also encouraged to jointly set up bodies to promote the development of professional services, including accounting and auditing, as well as facilitate cross-boundary professional practices.

In recent years, the accounting sector in Mainland China has undergone rapid development, with Guangdong Province being one of the most active regions in this field due to its close economic and trade ties with Hong Kong. With the ongoing development of the GBA, new business opportunities continue to emerge, and many Hong Kong accounting firms and professionals are now considering expanding their businesses into the GBA.

Overview of the mainland accounting sector

As of 31 December 2023:

Number of accounting firms in
Mainland China

10 665

Number of accounting
firms in Guangdong

1 127

(Including 388 in Shenzhen)

Ranking by number of accounting
firms in Mainland China[#]

No.1 – Guangdong

Data Source:
The journal of CICPA 2024, 1st issue



As of 31 December 2023:

Number of Chinese CPAs in
Mainland China

102 017

Number of Chinese
CPAs in Guangdong

11 364

(Including 4 555 in Shenzhen)

Ranking by number of Chinese
CPAs[#]

No.2 – Guangdong

Data Source:
The journal of CICPA 2024, 1st issue



This GoGBA Go-to Guide for Accounting Services offers detailed information on the Chinese Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination, the qualification application process, guidelines for establishing an accounting firm in the GBA, and relevant policy incentives in respective GBA cities. It is designed to serve as a comprehensive business guide for Hong Kong accounting professionals looking to expand into the GBA.

[#] Based on the numbers and rankings published by the Content Management Interoperability Services of the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CICPA)

CEPA

In 2003, Hong Kong and Mainland China signed the "Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" (CEPA). Having now been in effect for more than 20 years, CEPA has facilitated the integration and interoperability of the economies, trade and commerce between Mainland China and Hong Kong and lowered industry entry barriers. Hong Kong's accounting professionals have benefited from a range of preferential policies, including:

- 1 The commercial presence of Hong Kong's accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services in Mainland China is eligible for national treatment.
- 2 Hong Kong residents meeting certain criteria can sit for the National Uniform CPA Examination. Those who have passed the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) Qualification Programme Module Examinations are exempt from four papers, namely "Accounting", "Auditing", "Financial Cost Management", and "Corporate Strategy and Risk Management".
- 3 The temporary "Provincial Licence to Perform Audit-Related Services", which allows Hong Kong accounting firms to conduct auditing business in Mainland China, now lasts for five years.
- 4 For Hong Kong permanent residents applying to be a partner of a mainland accounting firm, the length of auditing experience they have acquired in Hong Kong is considered equivalent to the length of auditing experience in Mainland China.



Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation

Hong Kong and Mainland China signed the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (Ecotech Agreement) in 2017. Key points under this agreement regarding cooperation within accounting services include:

Standard

1

Improving the operational mechanism for the ongoing convergence of accounting and auditing standards between the two territories.

Supporting Hong Kong accounting professionals who have qualified as Chinese CPAs to become partners in mainland accounting firms and, similarly, supporting mainland accounting professionals who have qualified as Hong Kong CPAs to become partners in Hong Kong accounting firms.

2

Partner

Accounting Firms

3

Supporting mainland accounting firms in setting up representative offices and branches in Hong Kong while developing member firms.

Encouraging accounting firms in the two territories to strengthen cooperation and exchange in business activities such as deepening Belt and Road development and providing auditing services for the overseas listing of mainland enterprises.

4

Interaction

2. Acquiring a Chinese CPA Qualification

Hong Kong accounting professionals can become Chinese CPAs in Mainland China and leverage their expertise to engage in auditing, accounting consultancy and accounting services in the GBA. They can capitalise on their professional strengths to achieve significant career development goals within the GBA.

How can Hong Kong Accounting Professionals Become Qualified Chinese CPAs in Mainland China ?

Enrol as a practising member of the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CICPA)

03

Engage in auditing practice for 2 years or more

02

Obtain the "Certificate for Passing All the Required Subjects of the National Uniform CPA Examination"

01



Obtain the "Certificate for Passing All the Required Subjects of the National Uniform CPA Examination"

Hong Kong accounting professionals can acquire this Certificate by one of the following two methods:

01

- 1 Path 1: Pass the National Uniform CPA Examination in Mainland China.
- 2 Path 2: Under the CEPA framework, passing the HKICPA Qualification Programme (QP) grants exemptions for four subjects of the National Uniform CPA Examination for Certified Public Accountants in Mainland China. Candidates then need to pass the remaining subjects, which include Taxation Law, Economic Law and an Advanced Stage Examination.

1 **Pass the National Uniform CPA Examination in Mainland China**

2 **Pass the HKICPA QP + receive exemptions + pass the non-exempt Chinese CPA examination subjects**

6+1

6 Hong Kong accounting professionals applying directly for the National Uniform CPA Examination will first attend the Professional Stage Examination, which consists of six subjects: Accounting, Auditing, Financial Cost Management, Taxation Law, Economic Law, and Corporate Strategy and Risk Management. Candidates can apply for all six subjects at the same time or apply for selected subjects.

1 The National Uniform CPA Examination has two stages: the Professional Stage and Advanced Stage. After passing the Professional Stage Exam, candidates need to take the Advanced Stage Exam (two papers).

N+2+1

N Students with appropriate academic backgrounds may apply for exemptions for up to 10 Associate Modules of the HKICPA QP. Exemptions are determined based on academic transcripts, course syllabi and other relevant criteria. Students are required to pass the remaining subjects to successfully complete the QP.

2 Upon fulfilment of the above conditions, candidates will be exempted from taking four subjects in the National Uniform CPA Examination in Mainland China. They will still need to attend the remaining two examinations of Taxation Law and Economic Law.

1 Take the Advanced Stage Exam (two papers) after passing the Professional Stage Exam.

(The National Uniform CPA Examination is a closed-book, computerised exam)



Acquisition of Chinese CPA Qualification

The National Uniform CPA Examination in Mainland China is usually open for registration every April with the examination held annually in August. Details are set out below:

Professional Stage Examination

Requirements	<p>Candidates may apply to take the Professional Stage Examination provided they have full civil capacity and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a college degree or above recognised by the relevant administrative body; • Hold CPA certificates (or other equivalent qualifications) recognised by the laws of the Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR, Taiwan or foreign countries.
Exam Subjects and Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting (3 hours) • Auditing (2.5 hours) • Financial Cost Management (2.5 hours) • Taxation Law (2 hours) • Economic Law (2 hours) • Corporate Strategy and Risk Management (2 hours)
Question Type	<p>The examination questions are divided into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple-choice questions focusing on candidates' knowledge comprehension; • Short answer (analysis) questions and calculation (analysis) questions, focusing on the examination of candidates' basic application ability; and • Comprehensive questions and case study questions, focusing on the examination of candidates' comprehensive application ability.
Application Fee	<p>HK\$1,000 per subject for those taking the Professional Stage Examination in Hong Kong. If the examination is taken outside Hong Kong or Macao, the fee will be in accordance with the relevant local regulations.</p>

Advanced Stage Examination

Requirements	<p>Candidates may apply to take the Advanced Stage Examination provided they have full civil capacity and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have obtained a certificate for passing the Professional Stage of the National Uniform CPA Examination.
Exam Subjects and Duration	<p>The Advanced Stage Examination has two papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper 1 (3.5 hours): focusing on assurance practice, the content mainly covers specialised areas such as accounting, auditing and tax law; and • Paper 2 (3.5 hours): focusing on management consulting and business analysis, the content mainly involves specialised areas such as financial cost management, corporate strategy and risk management, and economic law.
Question Type	Comprehensive case study questions.
Application Fee	<p>HK\$2,000 per subject for those taking the Advanced Stage Examination in Hong Kong. If the examination is taken outside Hong Kong or Macao, the fee will be in accordance with the relevant local regulations.</p>

Procedures for subject exemptions in the National Uniform CPA Examination

Exam exemption subjects and the process

Hong Kong applicants should submit the following information by mailing/delivery to the CICPA or its liaison office in Hong Kong for exemption:

- 1 The exemption application form, which can be downloaded and printed from the website of the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants (<http://www.cicpa.org.cn>);
- 2 A recent bare-headed ID photo;
- 3 A copy of the current year's exam registration form or a copy of the exam transcript/admission card within four years;
- 4 A copy of the Hong Kong Identity Card or passport; and
- 5 A copy of the HKICPA membership certificate (only applicable to those who have become members of the HKICPA on or before 29 July 2008) or a copy of the HKICPA Professional Qualification certificate and a copy of the result slip.



Engage in Auditing Practice for Two Years or More

02

To become a practising member of the CICPA, you need to have two years or more auditing services experience in Mainland China in addition to passing the CPA examination.

For Hong Kong accountants applying to become practising members of the CICPA, the auditing experience acquired in Hong Kong is equivalent to the same period of auditing experience in Mainland China.

For Hong Kong permanent residents applying to be a partner of a mainland accounting firm, the length of auditing experience they have acquired in Hong Kong is considered equivalent to the length of auditing experience in Mainland China.

2 Years

Enrol as a Practising Member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants

After completing the above two steps, submit an application to register as a practising member of CICPA through the provincial CICPA where the accounting firm is located, and on the unified supervisory platform of the CICPA.

03

Accounting professionals ➤ Accounting firms ➤ Provincial CICPA

Certificate of CPA,
application form and
relevant documents

Submit application

Review and approval



Practising vs Non-Practising Members

CICPA practising memberships are granted to CPAs who have worked full-time in an accounting firm and been engaged in audit-related activities for at least two years, while non-practising memberships can be applied for after obtaining the Certificate for Passing All the Required Subjects of the National Uniform CPA Examination. Non-practising CPA members generally work in universities, enterprises and institutions.

Professionals who have obtained the Certificate for Passing the National Uniform CPA Examination and have no intention to practice for the time being may first become non-practising members of the CICPA, and then convert to practising members when needed.

- Practising member dues are RMB1,500 per person annually
- Non-practising member dues are RMB100 per person annually



Other Accounting Profession Certificates in Mainland China

In addition to the CPA examination, the Chinese government also conducts examinations for certificates of accounting professionals, including primary, intermediate and senior accounting levels. Certificate holders primarily engage in internal accounting and financial tasks within enterprises, but they do not possess the legal qualifications to sign audit reports in the same way as registered CPAs.



CPA vs Certificate of Accounting Professional

- **CPA:** CPAs are legally qualified to sign audit reports and licensed to practice.
- **Certificate of Accounting Professional:** This is categorised into three levels: primary, intermediate and advanced. It mainly evaluates the professional ability and technical standard of accountants in their daily work and is one of the important evaluation bases for the employment and career advancement of accountants.

Other Accounting Profession Certificates in Mainland China (continued)

Details of the Certificate of Accounting Professional Examination

Item	Primary	Intermediate	Advanced
Specific Application Requirements[#]	High school graduation (including high school, junior college, vocational high school and technical school) and above qualifications recognised by the Ministry of Education.	Must meet one of the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtained a college degree and worked in accounting for 5 years; 2. Obtained a bachelor's degree and engaged in accounting work for 4 years; 3. Obtained a double bachelor's degree or graduated from a postgraduate programme and worked in accounting for 2 years; 4. Obtained a master's degree and engaged in accounting work for 1 year; or 5. Obtained a doctoral degree. 	Must meet one of the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The basic conditions for holding the post of senior accountant as stipulated in the Trial Regulations on Professional Positions in Accounting; or 2. The evaluation conditions as declared for the qualification of a regional or department senior accountant post as approved by the provincial department of finance, department of human resources and social security or the central unit.
Other Requirements	Need to pass all subjects in one examination year to obtain the primary qualification certificate.	Need to pass all subjects in two examination years to obtain the intermediate qualification certificate.	Need to download and print the examination results on the " National Accounting Assessment and Certification Website " and take the examination within 3 years.
Examination Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of Economic Law • Elementary Accounting Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate Accounting Practice • Financial Management • Economic Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Accounting Practice
Question Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Accounting Practice: single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions, indefinite-choice questions. • Fundamentals of Economic Law: single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, indefinite-choice questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate Accounting Practice: single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, calculation and analysis questions, comprehensive questions. • Financial Management: single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, calculation and analysis questions, comprehensive questions. • Economic Law: single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, calculation and analysis questions, comprehensive questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Accounting Practice: case study questions (open-book exam).
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Accounting Practice: 1.75 hours • Fundamentals of Economic Law: 1.25 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate Accounting Practice: 2.75 hours • Financial Management: 2.25 hours • Economic Law: 2 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Accounting Practice: 3.5 hours

[#] In addition to the basic conditions, candidates must also conform with specific application requirements

List of Talent Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards in the GBA



Cities in the GBA offer a range of policy support, subsidies and incentives to attract professional talents

Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Guangdong Province	For overseas high-end and urgently needed talents working in the GBA, the portion of the individual income tax paid in the nine cities of the Pearl River Delta that exceeds 15% of the tax amount calculated based on the taxable income shall be subsidised by the government of the nine cities of the Pearl River Delta. The subsidy is exempt from individual income tax.	(Chinese version only) Notice in relation to Further Implementation of Individual Income Tax Preferential Policies in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area	
Guangzhou	<p><u>Lump sum capital:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-6 months of cumulative work: RMB100,000-200,000 <p><u>Family support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised household registration: for individuals intending to register their household as well as their spouse and children Talent Green Card: those with no intention to register their household can still enjoy the same treatment as Guangzhou citizens in areas such as housing purchases, vehicle purchases, children's school enrolment, etc. <p>Further subsidies provided by the Nansha New Area in Guangzhou:</p> <p><u>Living allowance:</u> RMB30,000-120,000</p> <p><u>Lump-sum funding:</u> RMB200,000 (for those serving as a company partner or joint venture shareholder)</p> <p><u>Annual subsidy:</u> RMB35,000 (for those who have worked full-time in Nansha for more than one year)</p> <p><u>Lump-sum funding for professional qualification:</u> RMB20,000-50,000</p> <p><u>Monthly subsidy:</u> Up to RMB5,000</p>	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice on the Issuance of the Implementation Measures of Supporting Project for High-level Financial Professionals in Guangzhou (2nd Amendment)</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Notice of the Office of the Guangzhou Nansha District Administrative Committee and the Office of the People's Government of Guangzhou Nansha District on Issuing the "Various Measures for Promoting the Cluster Development of Professional Finance and Taxation Service in the Guangzhou Nansha New District (Free Trade Zone)"</p>	
Shenzhen	<p><u>Lump-sum incentive for those who will/have obtained accounting certificates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB10,000-50,000 <p><u>Lump-sum incentive (employed persons):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB20,000 for those who have worked for 3 years consecutively <p><u>Lump-sum Incentive (college graduates):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB3,000-10,000 <p><u>Monthly subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum RMB1,000, subsidy period up to 18 months <p><u>Rental subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to RMB1,560 and shall not exceed a maximum of 3 years <p>Further subsidies provided by Qianhai, Shenzhen:</p> <p><u>Employment subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to RMB5,000/month for a maximum of 3 years <p><u>Lump-sum business start-up incentive:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to RMB1 million as a lump-sum business start-up incentive 	<p>(Chinese version only) Action Plan for High-quality Development of Certified Public Accountants and the Asset Appraisal Industry (2023-2025) by the Shenzhen Municipal Finance Bureau</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Detailed Implementation Measures on Further Supporting the Employment and Entrepreneurship of Hong Kong and Macao Youth in the Shenzhen Municipality</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Notice in relation to the Twelve Measures in relation to Supporting the Development of Employment and Entrepreneurship for Hong Kong and Macao Youth by the Shenzhen Municipal Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone Administration</p>	

List of Talent Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards in the GBA (continued)



Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Zhuhai	<p><u>Lump-sum incentive:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded according to 100%-300% of professional talents' personal income in the previous year's income contribution to the economy of the district, and according to 100% of the income from the transfer of equity's contribution to the economy of the district 	<p>(Chinese version only) Measures for Support for the Development of Financial Industry in the Zhuhai High-Tech Industrial Development Zone</p>	
	<p><u>Rental and living subsidies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional talents with full senior and deputy senior titles can get a RMB350,000 and RMB250,000 housing subsidy respectively (granted over 3 years at the rate of 40%, 30% and 30%) For intermediate title professional talents, full-time master's degree students and senior technicians can get RMB38,000 rental and living subsidy; full-time bachelor's degree students and technicians can get RMB26,000 rental and living subsidy (to be paid in equal instalments over two years) 		
Foshan	<p><u>Funding subsidy (paid over 5 years at 30%, 20%, 20%, 15%, 15%):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB0.5-2.5 million settlement subsidy RMB0.5-7.5 million housing purchase subsidy 	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice in relation to the Implementation Measures of Introducing and Cultivating Talents Support Work in the Foshan Municipality</p>	
	<p><u>Living allowance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talents with postdoctoral research experience of 2 years or more in foreign (overseas) universities will be granted a living subsidy of RMB100,000 <p><u>Lump-sum fund (paid over 5 years in 20% increments):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB0.5-2.5 million growth award RMB1.5-7.5 million working funds 		
Huizhou	<p><u>Settlement allowance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctoral students are entitled to a RMB200,000 settlement subsidy (paid in increments of RMB60,000, RMB70,000 and RMB70,000 over 3 years) RMB300,000 settlement subsidy for professional and technical talents (paid in equal increments over 3 years) 	<p>(Chinese version only) Implementation Measures in relation to Issuance of Settlement Subsidies for the Newly Introduced Talents by the Human Resources and Social Security Bureau of the Huizhou Municipality</p>	
	<p><u>Lump-sum Incentive:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB10,000 for master's degree fresh graduates and senior professional and technical talents RMB5,000 subsidy for fresh bachelor's degree graduates and intermediate professional and technical talents. (The subsidy for other recent undergraduates outside the qualifying conditions is RMB3,000.) 		



List of Talent Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards in the GBA (continued)

Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Dongguan	<p><u>Funding subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master's degree students: RMB60,000 (granted over 2 years at a ratio of 5:5) Doctoral students: RMB200,000 (granted over 3 years in the ratio of 4:3:3) Vocational qualification personnel: RMB60,000-300,000 subsidy (distributed over 2-3 years) Individual tax paid in Dongguan City in the previous year of RMB30,000 or more: RMB20,000 <p><u>Apprenticeship subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctoral students: RMB3,000/month, up to 3 months Master's degree students: RMB2,000/month, up to 3 months 	<p>(Chinese version only) Interim Measures for the Introduction and Cultivation of Innovative Talents in the Dongguan Municipality</p>	
Zhongshan	<p><u>Talent subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB200,000-2 million (granted over three years in the ratio of 4:2:4, of which 50% is a housing purchase subsidy and 50% is a comprehensive subsidy) <p><u>Lump-sum subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postdoctoral researchers: RMB120,000 for R&D and RMB300,000 as a living allowance Newly introduced and nurtured doctoral degree talents: RMB200,000 Newly introduced and nurtured full-time master's degree and associate title talents: RMB30,000 Newly selected "Zhongshan Craftsmen" skilled talents: RMB10,000-100,000 	<p>(Chinese version only) Zhongshan Twenty-three Measures for the High-Quality Development of New-era Talents</p>	
Jiangmen	<p><u>Lump-sum subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMB3,000-5,000 <p><u>Monthly subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduates: RMB82-273 	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice of Jiangmen City Employment and Entrepreneurship Subsidy Application Handling Guidance List</p>	
Zhaoqing	<p><u>Lump-sum subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-time employment or returning to employment in Zhaoqing: RMB1,000 after paying social security for 6 months Workers who are employed for the first time in Zhaoqing or returned to Zhaoqing and are buying their first home in Zhaoqing: RMB10,000-20,000 housing purchase subsidy 	<p>(Chinese version only) Ten Measures of Zhaoqing City to Ensure Employment for Enterprises</p>	

3. Establishment of Accounting Firms in Mainland China

Types of Accounting Firms

An accounting firm is an organisation established in accordance with the law in Mainland China that undertakes the business of certified public accountants. According to the requirements of the Measures for the Practice Licensing and Supervision and Administration of Accounting Firms issued by Mainland China, an accounting firm may take the form of "general partnership", "special general partnership" or "limited liability company". An accounting firm is required to apply for a practice permit from the provincial finance department where it is located within 60 days from the date of obtaining the firm's business licence.

General partnership

- More than 2 partners with all partners meeting the prescribed conditions;
- Written partnership agreement;
- A place of business.

Special general partnership

- 15 or more partners who are Chinese CPAs and with all partners meeting the prescribed conditions;
- 60 or more Chinese CPAs;
- Written partnership agreement;
- A place of business;
- Other conditions prescribed by laws, administrative regulations or the Ministry of Finance in accordance with the authorities.

Limited liability company

- More than 5 shareholders, with all shareholders meeting the prescribed conditions;
- Registered capital of no less than RMB300,000;
- Articles of Association jointly formulated by the shareholders;
- A place of business.

Types of Accounting Firms (continued)

What are the Requirements for Being Partners (Shareholders) of an Accounting Firm ?

- Must be qualified as a practising Chinese CPA;
- Has not received any administrative penalty for their practice in the three years before serving as a partner (or shareholder);
- Has provided auditing services in the accounting firm in the last three consecutive years and for not less than 10 years on an accumulative basis, or has provided auditing services in the accounting firm in the last five consecutive years after obtaining their CPA practising qualification;
- Has not had their application rejected or disapproved, or their practising licence for an accounting firm revoked by the provincial public finance department for fraud, bribery or any other illicit means of obtaining a practising license for the three years before serving as a partner (or shareholder); and
- Has a stable domicile within Mainland China with a living term no less than six months each year and has consecutively resided in China in the last five years or more.

What are the Additional Requirements for Being Chief Partner (Principal Accountant) ?

A general partnership accounting firm and a special general partnership accounting firm are required to set up the post of chief partner, which should be held by the partner that implements partnership affairs. A limited liability accounting firm is required to set up the post of chief accountant, which should be held by the legal representative who is also a shareholder of that firm. Other requirements include:

- Having a stable domicile within China with a living term of no less than six months each year and having consecutively resided in China in the last 10 years or more; and
- Possessing the capability and experience necessary to represent the accounting firm and fulfil the duties granted by the partnership agreement or the company's articles of association.

Procedures for Establishing an Accounting Firm



How to apply for a practising licence for an accounting firm ?

To establish an accounting firm, approval is required from the Ministry of Finance or the financial departments of the provinces, autonomous regions or municipalities directly under the Central Government.

Where the provincial finance department accepts an application, it should announce the acceptance within **5 days** and make a decision to approve or disapprove the practising licence of an accounting firm within **30 days**. Upon approval, the department should, within **10 days** after making the approval decision, issue the applicant with a written decision to approve the practising licence, issue the practising certificate for the accounting firm, and make a public announcement.

The applicant is required to submit the following files to the approving authority:

- 1 An application form for the practising licence of an accounting firm.
- 2 Documents showing that the partners (or shareholders) of the accounting firm have the necessary practising experience within the prescribed conditions.
- 3 A summary statement on the CPAs that plan to practise in the accounting firm.
- 4 The uniform social credit code (as seen on the business licence).



What are the business incorporation procedures in addition to the above practising licence approvals?

Business One Link Platform

For other matters related to registering a business in the GBA, opening a bank account, corporate income tax and value-added tax, please visit the GoGBA go-to guide series.

The Peoples Government of Guangdong Province has launched a one-stop platform for efficient enterprise start-up, where applicants can register for enterprise establishment, engrave official seals, apply for invoices and tax-control equipment, register for employees' insurance coverage and so on.



[Business One Link Platform \(gdzfwf.gov.cn\)](http://gdzfwf.gov.cn)

Supervision and Inspection of Accounting Firms

Accounting firms in Mainland China are subject to supervision and inspection by the Ministry of Finance, local regulatory bureaus and provincial finance departments. In principle, supervision inspections are conducted every one to five years, focusing on the quality of practice, practice licensing conditions, integrated management, corporate independence, information security, professional risk prevention, and the practice status of the firm's certified public accountants.




List of Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards for Accounting Firms in the GBA

Cities in the GBA encourage industry development by providing a range of policy support, subsidies and rewards for the establishment of accounting firms




Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Guangzhou [#]	<p><u>Settlement support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firms with an operating income of RMB10 million and above in the previous year: a one-time grant of RMB1 million Top 50 and top 100 firms listed in the "Comprehensive Evaluation of Top 100 Accounting Firms (Publicity Draft)" or "Announcement on the List of Top 100 Tax Firms with Operating Income in Taxation Firms Industry": a one-time grant of RMB2 million and RMB1 million respectively Branches of financial and tax professional service organisations that are independently audited and ranked in the most recent top 100 ranking, and with an operating income of RMB10 million or above in the previous year: a one-time settlement support of RMB500,000 <p><u>Operation support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lump-sum grant of RMB400,000 	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice of the Office of the Guangzhou Nansha District Administrative Committee and the Office of the People's Government of Guangzhou Nansha District on Issuing the "Various Measures for Promoting the Cluster Development of Professional Finance and Taxation Service in the Guangzhou Nansha New District (Free Trade Zone)"</p>	
Shenzhen	<p><u>Phased incentives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful settlement: a graded and phased grant of up to RMB5 million Newly licensed special general partnership accounting firms: a graded and phased grant of up to RMB20 million Accounting firms recognised by the Ministry of Finance as "specialised and exemplary" models: RMB500,000 Accounting firms participating in the development of international standards: RMB500,000 Accounting firms participating in the development of domestic standards: up to RMB250,000 <p><u>Lump-sum support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For accounting firms listed in Luohu's statistics in the previous year and with a business revenue of over RMB100 million who are upgrading their Shenzhen branches to regional headquarters: up to RMB10 million <p><u>Office rental support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For newly established accounting firms or those newly relocated from outside Shenzhen: office rental support for up to 900 square metres annually for a maximum of three years, with the support standards covering 50%-70% of the actual rent 	<p>(Chinese version only) Action Plan for High-quality Development of Certified Public Accountants and the Asset Appraisal Industry (2023-2025) by the Shenzhen Municipal Finance Bureau</p>	

[#] Some policy support is only available for firms in the Nansha District of Guangzhou





List of Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards for Accounting Firms in the GBA (continued)

Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Shenzhen	<p><u>Settlement support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For newly relocated or newly established accounting firms: up to RMB100 million over three consecutive years <p><u>Support for the purchase of office space:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For accounting firms with a consolidated contribution over RMB10 million or an operating income over RMB100 million in the previous year: receive up to 20% of the purchase price of the office building with a maximum of RMB100 million paid over five years <p><u>Employee welfare support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting firms with revenue over RMB10 million: talent housing support for their employees with 3-15 units of talent housing in the first year, and a cumulative maximum of 45 units of talent housing Provide “elite talent” recommendation quota for accounting firms, with nominated candidates enjoying up to RMB800,000 in talent support <p><u>Settlement support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For qualifying accounting firm headquarters, based on the national top 100 rankings: up to RMB50 million 40% of the total incentives will be given in the year when the declaration is passed, 30% will be given in the second year upon meeting review conditions, and 30% will be given in the third year upon meeting review conditions <p><u>Practice support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the number of full-time practising CPAs declared for the project award: up to RMB20 million 40% of the total incentives will be given in the year when the declaration is passed, 30% will be given in the second year upon meeting review conditions, and 30% will be given in the third year upon meeting review conditions <p><u>Ranking support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For first-time entries into the top 100 ranking: a maximum reward of RMB10 million Ranking improvement incentive: up to RMB20 million <p><u>Business support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives are given based on the number of reporting units and business amounts, with a maximum annual award amount of RMB10 million paid in one lump sum upon approval <p><u>Specialised support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For accounting firms that meet the reward conditions and are selected as municipal, provincial or national "specialised and innovative" firms: an incentive reward of up to RMB500,000 <p><u>Social security support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing graduates from Hong Kong and Macao universities within two years of graduation, with a labour contract of more than one year: social insurance subsidy for a maximum of 2 years 	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice of the Office of the Guangzhou Nansha District Administrative Committee and the Office of the People's Government of Guangzhou Nansha District on Issuing the “Various Measures for Promoting the Cluster Development of Professional Finance and Taxation Service in the Guangzhou Nansha New District (Free Trade Zone)”</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Implementation Measures for Further Supporting the Employment and Entrepreneurship of Hong Kong and Macao Youth in Shenzhen</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Notice in relation to the Twelve Measures in relation to Supporting the Development of Employment and Entrepreneurship for Hong Kong and Macao Youth by the Shenzhen Municipal Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone Administration</p>	  

List of Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards for Accounting Firms in the GBA (continued)

Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Shenzhen	<p><u>Employment support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurship-led employment subsidy: for hiring fewer than 3 people, a subsidy of RMB2,000 per person is given; for hiring more than 4 people, an additional RMB3,000 per person is given, with a maximum of RMB30,000 <p><u>Lump-sum support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lump-sum subsidy of RMB500,000 will be given to municipal-level Hong Kong and Macao youth innovation and entrepreneurship bases. A subsidy of RMB100,000 will be given to those with excellent entrepreneurship project assessment results <p><u>Training support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who have completed the entrepreneurial training programme can apply for a training subsidy of RMB2,000-10,000 <p><u>Internship support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For enterprises that have accepted Hong Kong and Macao youth interns: a subsidy of RMB1,000 per month per intern, with a subsidy period not exceeding 6 months <p>Qianhai, Shenzhen additional support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidy of RMB10,000 for each Hong Kong and Macao youth hired for internship (maximum of RMB200,000) Enterprises accepting Hong Kong and Macao youth internships are subsidised up to RMB6,750/month (maximum of 6 months) 		
Zhuhai	<p><u>Start-up support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A personal start-up guarantee loan of up to RMB300,000 for individuals; enterprises that create employment opportunities for more than 5 people can apply for up to RMB500,000 	<p>(Chinese version only) Measures for Support for the Development of Financial Industry in the Zhuhai High-Tech Industrial Development Zone</p>	
Huizhou	<p><u>Human resources support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprises recruiting fresh college graduates in their graduation year: a one-time expansion subsidy of RMB1,500/person <p><u>Loan support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the guaranteed rate for financing for talent enterprises, with the annualised guaranteed rate not exceeding 1% 	<p>(Chinese version only) Notice of "Huizhou City Implementing a Package of Policies and Measures for Solid Stabilisation of the Economy" (People's Government of Huizhou City)</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Measures on Financial Support for Talent Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Huizhou</p>	 












List of Policy Support, Subsidies and Incentives for Accounting Firms in the GBA (continued)

Region	Policy Support, Subsidies and Rewards	Details	QR Code
Zhongshan	<p><u>Phased support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business revenue growth of 10%-20% – RMB80,000 reward; business revenue growth of more than 20% – RMB100,000 reward <p><u>Talent attraction support for service agencies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the talents are evaluated as special talents, they will be awarded RMB30,000/person for A-type stalls, RMB25,000/person for B-type stalls, RMB20,000/person for C-type stalls, and RMB10,000/person for D-type stalls 	<p>(Chinese version only) Fifteen Articles on Striving for the Economy and Promoting High-quality Development Benefitting Enterprises in 2023 in Zhongshan City</p>	
Jiangmen	<p><u>Recruitment support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprises recruiting personnel who are employed in Jiangmen for the first time: RMB500/person, with a maximum of RMB100,000 for the same enterprise Operational human resource service organisations that introduce non-city labour force to the city for the first time: RMB400/person. For firms introducing more than 100 people, the subsidy will be increased to RMB500/person, with a maximum of RMB100,000 for the same firm <p><u>Skills training support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees who have obtained vocational skill level certificates and meet the relevant conditions: RMB1,000-3,000 training subsidy Enterprises that file a record and organise employees to carry out enterprise new-style apprenticeship training: RMB5,000-8,500 per person/year as the standard subsidy <p><u>Start-up subsidy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible start-up enterprises: a lump-sum subsidy of RMB10,000 Subsidy for the actual total rent paid: up to RMB6,000/year 	<p>(Chinese version only) Policy measures in Jiangmen City for running a good bureau plus getting a good start</p> <p>(Chinese version only) Notice of Jiangmen City Employment and Entrepreneurship Subsidy Application Handling Guidance List</p>	 
Zhaoqing	<p><u>Start-up support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive support of up to RMB100 million for strategic scientists, RMB2-15 million for innovative entrepreneurial teams, and RMB1-6 million for leading talents' project support 	<p>(Chinese version only) Opinions on optimizing the implementation of the Xijiang Talents Plan</p>	



The latest official updates and other useful information:

Relevant Information

Useful links	
<p> (Chinese version only) Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-02/18/content_5366593.htm#1</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) The journal of CICPA 2024 http://cicpa.org.cn/ztl1/zgzckjs/zazhi2024/202403/t20240321_64748.html</p>	
<p> Agreement on Trade in Services under Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement https://www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/tradeservices/acc_liberalization.html</p>	
<p> Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation https://www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/legaltext/files/cepa15_main.pdf#page=13</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Mutual Exemption Process for Some Examination Papers between Mainland and Hong Kong CPAs https://www.cicpa.org.cn/ztl1/exam/exam_foreign/201210/t20121022_19325.html</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Accounting and Financial Evaluation Center, Ministry of Finance - Examination Policy http://kzp.mof.gov.cn/list.jsp?class_id=01_03_02</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Measures for the Practice Licensing and Supervision and Administration of Accounting Firms (2017 Revision) https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2017/content_5241921.htm</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Regulation on Practice Licensing and Supervision of Accounting Firms (2019 Revision) https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2019/content_5392297.htm</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Measures for the Supervision and Inspection of Accounting Firms https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2022/content_5699931.htm</p>	
<p> (Chinese version only) Policy Interpretation of Several Measures to Promote the Clustered Development of Professional Financial and Taxation Service Industry in Guangzhou Nansha https://www.gz.gov.cn/qx/nsqrmzf/zcd/ytdzc/content/post_9245518.html</p>	
<p> The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants https://www.hkicpa.org.hk/en</p>	



Relevant contacts for accounting sector:

Names of Relevant Authorities	Enquiry Hotline	Address
The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants	+852 22877228	27/F., Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong
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Department of Finance of Guangdong Province	020-83170170	No. 376, Beijing Road, Guangzhou
Guangzhou Nansha Management Bureau	020 8498 6039	Nansha Commerce And Industry Comprehensive Service Building, Nansha District, Guangzhou, China
Qianhai Authority	0755-12345	T1 Building, Qianhai Mansion, No. 123 Guiwan 5th Road, Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone, Shenzhen, China
Guangzhou Institute of CPA	020-38922350	4302, Tower B, Sinopec Building, No. 191 Tiyu West Road, Tianhe District, Guangzhou, China
Shenzhen Institute of CPA	0755-83515440	DEF, 12/F, SAR Newspaper Building, No. 6008 Shennan Avenue, Shenzhen, China
Zhuhai Institute of CPA	0756-2529357, 2529355	No.16-18, Kangning Road, Xiangzhou District, Zhuhai, China
Foshan Institute of CPA	0757-83939105	2701, Block 4, Binhaiyuting 1, No.3 Dongping 2nd Road, Chancheng District, Foshan, China
Huizhou Institute of CPA	0752-2881796	9/F, Municipal Finance Bureau, No. 6 Wenhua 1st Road, Jiangbei, Huizhou, China
Dongguan Institute of CPA	0769-22990059, 22995509	10B, 10/F, Building B, Shenghe Plaza, No. 3 Shenghe Road, Nancheng District, Dongguan, China
Zhongshan Institute of CPA	0760-88818072	Office of ICPA, 2nd Floor, Accounting Building, No. 39, Qiguan West Road, East District, Zhongshan, China
Jiangmen Institute of CPA	0750-3507073	No. 21, Huayuan Middle Road, Jiangmen (9/F, Municipal Finance Bureau)
Zhaoqing Institute of CPA	0758-2229343	Room 402, Zhaoqing Municipal Finance Bureau, No. 8 Xin'an Si Road, Zhaoqing, China

The information above was collected and compiled by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and authorised by the HKTDC's GoGBA Business Support.

GoGBA

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GoGBA business tools
[WeChat mini programme]



GBA updates
[WeChat official account]

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