

UW – Milwaukee
Concerns with Current 21/21 Rule

General Concerns

1. The reality is that students with only a BBA do not do well on exam. UWM had NASBA track CPA performance for all our BBA graduates with degrees in accounting who did not pursue a graduate degree. There were 316 degrees conferred in 2010, 2011, and 2012 but only 58 (18%) had attempted the exam by Dec. 2014 and 40% of that group had passed all 4 parts. For MS-PA's, during the same period, 88% of graduate students took the exam with a 77% pass rate.
2. Why is Wisconsin unique in not requiring degree in accounting or equivalent (which could be the 21/21 rule)?
3. Will absence of degree requirement, increase NASBA processing time because of course by course evaluation? Or, will NASBA do automatic evaluation if degree is indicated and they know school meets requirements?

Concerns about MSA Students

MSA students have a non – accounting undergraduate degree and are studying accounting at the graduate level. At UWM, 34% of the students have a business undergraduate degree and 66% have non-business undergraduate degree. MSA students graduating in 2014 scored at least 20 percentage points higher than the national average on each exam part. In 2014, their pass rate was 77.2% of parts taken.

These students have an average age of 32.7 and are prized by employers for their diversity.

The current 21/21 rule creates the following issues for MSA students:

1. The program contains 30 credits in accounting (including one law course) and can require up to 18 credits of foundations. Non-business undergraduate students could have as few as 12 business credits when they complete the MSA program. The proposed law would require 9 more credits that are not demanded by employers. In 2014, MSA students had a 76.9% pass rate on BEC compared to a national average of 55.5%. Nine additional credits would add a semester to completion time requiring additional tuition and probably increase school loan debt.
2. Past and current MSA graduates believed they were qualified to take the Exam and are now prevented from doing so without taking 9 additional credits. Current students also relied on the existing law when entering the MSA Program and now face an unplanned additional burden. This is retroactive application of the law.

Possible solutions could be:

1. The problem would be solved by requiring an accounting degree or course work that comprises the “equivalent” of a degree from an accredited school.
2. If the 21/21 rule is to be imposed on MSA students, it should only apply to students graduating after 2018.
3. Students meeting the 150 credit rule for licensure could be allowed to take the Exam. (A degree is currently required for license)