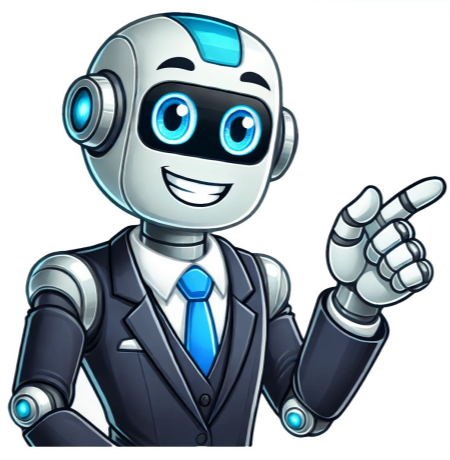


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## Is the cpa exam harder than the bar exam

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Keep in mind, the Bar exam has much more difficult requirements to even sit for the exam—you need to go to law school, which is quite a commitment, both financially and in terms of time. While the CPA requires accounting experience and coursework, there's a lower bar for entry for this test.Is CPA hardest exam in the world? The short answer is that the CPA exam is difficult. It is perhaps not the most difficult professional exam (most claim that the CFA exam is harder), but it's definitely not easy. Prepare to spend 300+ hours studying in total. Is the bar exam the most difficult? 1. Which State Bar Is Most Difficult? California is widely considered to have the hardest bar exam, due to its low pass rate and the difficulty of the content and constraints of the exam. Is the CPA harder than the LSAT? I found the LSAT much easier, but it plays more to my strengths. I struggle with memorization, and process mapping is harder for me...so the CPA exams took a lot of practice. You'll have some idea of how you'll do with the initial test...the dramatic 50 to 80 improvements don't happen as much with the LSAT. 35 related questions found Often considered the most difficult exam, Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR) has had the lowest passing scores of the four exams. You've probably heard quite a bit of intimidating details about how hard it is — it's long, it requires hundreds of hours of study time, it's so difficult that the average CPA Exam passing rate for first-time candidates is only 50%. Students especially struggle with timing when it comes to the performance test portion of the bar exam. Students often fail to practice performance tests under timed conditions before they take the exam. Then, they are surprised on exam day when they run out of time. The vast majority of law school graduates, 85 percent, take the bar exam once, according to a study by the National Conference of Bar Examiners that looked at data over five years. About 9 percent took the test twice. Less than 1 percent took the exam more than five times. A few refused to give up. Wondering how test-takers are doing as a whole? According to the most recent data released by the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE®), in 2021, of the 64,833 total persons taking the bar exam, 39,873 passed, which is an overall pass rate of 60% (down 1% from the previous year). The average CPA exam pass rate is around 50%. The CPA exam is notoriously difficult for a number of reasons. Overall, it covers an extensive amount of information—everything newly licensed CPAs will need to know to perform their jobs well. And each section of the exam has its own unique challenges. About half of the individuals who take the CPA Exam don't pass on their first attempt. According to the AICPA, the national average pass rate is 45-55%. Cumulative pass rates reported by the AICPA for the calendar year 2021 show that FAR had the lowest pass rate at 44.54% and BEC had the highest pass rate at 61.94%. Just look at the pass rates for first time exam takers. You passed the bar, but the CPA Exam will be much more difficult," came the advice from my CPA friends. My attorney colleagues had this to say, "Well, after studying for and taking the Bar Exam, the CPA Exam will be a piece of cake for you." Top 10 Hardest Exams in the WorldCivil Services Exam (CSE)GATE.GRE.Master Sommelier Diploma Exam (AI CA Exams.CCIE (Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert)Mensa International.CFA. A CPA designation is commonly recognized as difficult to achieve, making the certification even more impressive when earned. While California's bar exam may be largely perceived as the hardest one in the nation, some other states that may pose similar difficulty and the reasons for this include: Arkansas: Arkansas also has a grueling two-day test. It requires you to know several state and local laws, in addition to federal ones. The short answer: yes. Administered nationwide across all states and U.S. territories, the bar exam is widely known to be a test with an extremely high degree of difficulty. For first time test takers, the nationwide pass rate for the bar exam recently climbed to 79.64%. This makes passing the bar on your first try difficult, but not impossible. According to the American Bar Association, 74.82% of law students that took the bar exam within two years of graduating passed on their first try. While this is well above 50%, the passing rate has been on a steady decline. What State has the Easiest Bar Exam to Pass in the Country? If we look at bar passage rates alone the answer is South Dakota, which had a 93% pass rate last year. Contracts. Navigate any online form where law students confer with one another, and you'll soon realize that Contracts is often reported as the most complicated MBE subject. These fact patterns tend to be lengthy, for starters, so there's a lot to read and read carefully. CPA Exam Rate by Age As per the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA), the average age of qualified candidates in 2016 was 28.9 years at one of the examinations. In 2015, a NASBA report observed that the mean age of successful candidates was 29, with the median age being 25 years. The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Exam and the Bar Exam are two professional examinations that hold significant importance in their respective fields. The CPA Exam assesses candidates' knowledge in accounting and finance, while the Bar Exam evaluates a candidate's understanding of the law. Both exams demand tremendous dedication, hard work, and expertise to pass. However, the question of which exam is harder remains a subject of debate among aspiring accountants and lawyers. In this article, we will delve into this question and compare the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam, examining their respective difficulty levels, pass rates, and unique challenges. 1. What is the CPA Exam? The CPA Exam is a rigorous standardized test conducted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). It consists of four sections: Auditing and Attestation (AUD), Business Environment and Concepts (BEC), Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR), and Regulation (REG). Candidates must pass all four sections within an 18-month period to earn their CPA license. 2. What is the Bar Exam? The Bar Exam, also known as the licensure examination for lawyers, is administered by each state's bar association or board of bar examiners. It evaluates candidates' knowledge and understanding of the law, including subjects like criminal law, constitutional law, and civil procedure. Each state has its own specific requirements and passing score criteria. 3. What are the pass rates for the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam? According to the AICPA, the 2020 cumulative pass rate for all four sections of the CPA Exam was approximately 55.2%. On the other hand, the pass rates for the Bar Exam vary significantly by state. In 2019, the National Conference of Bar Examiners reported an average pass rate of 60% for first-time takers. 4. What makes the CPA Exam challenging? The CPA Exam is renowned for its difficulty due to various reasons. Firstly, the vast amount of information that candidates need to comprehend and retain is substantial. Topics ranging from financial accounting principles to complex tax laws require a high level of understanding. Secondly, the exam's format includes multiple-choice questions, task-based simulations, and written communication tasks, necessitating candidates to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse formats. Lastly, the time commitment required for preparation is significant, as candidates often spend hundreds of hours studying to feel adequately prepared for the exam. 5. What are the unique challenges of the Bar Exam? The Bar Exam has its own set of challenges that aspiring lawyers must navigate. One of the primary difficulties lies in mastering the vast amount of legal principles and statutes across various subjects. The exam typically spans two or three days, with each day consisting of multiple components such as essay questions, multiple-choice questions, and performance tests. The pressure to perform well in a high-stakes, time-sensitive environment can also cause immense stress and anxiety. 6. Is one exam objectively harder than the other? Determining whether the CPA Exam is harder than the Bar Exam or vice versa is subjective. The difficulty of an exam depends on factors such as an individual's background, educational experience, personal strengths, and familiarity with the subject matter. While some individuals may find the structured nature of the CPA Exam more manageable, others may excel in the analytical challenges presented by the Bar Exam. Ultimately, both exams require substantial dedication and competence in their respective fields. 7. How do pass rates reflect the difficulty level? Pass rates can provide insight into the difficulty level of an exam, but they should not be the sole determining factor. The CPA Exam pass rates are comparatively lower due to the vastness of the material and the comprehensive evaluation of candidates' accounting knowledge. On the other hand, the Bar Exam pass rates may appear higher because the examination is state-specific, allowing candidates to focus their preparation on a narrower set of laws. However, pass rates alone do not provide a complete picture of the exams' difficulty levels. 8. Are there any statistics or quotes to support the comparison? While it is challenging to find direct statistics comparing the difficulty of the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam, industry experts and professionals often share their perspectives. Renowned accountant and author, Bryant Tanner, states, "Both exams test candidates' aptitude and require extensive study, but they differ in the subject matter. One cannot definitively claim that one exam is inherently harder than the other." It is essential to consider such expert opinions without relying solely on statistical comparisons. 9. Does the CPA or Bar Exam require more preparation time? Both exams demand significant preparation time; however, the length of preparation may vary depending on the individual's background and familiarity with the subject matter. Generally, candidates spend months studying for the CPA Exam, while aspiring lawyers often spend several weeks or months preparing for the Bar Exam. It is crucial to invest ample time in understanding the nuances of the exam and developing a comprehensive study plan to maximize the chances of success. 10. Can a candidate take both exams simultaneously? While it is possible to take the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam simultaneously, it is not advisable due to the demands of both exams. Candidates would need to divide their attention and efforts, increasing the risk of not performing at their optimal level in either exam. It is recommended to prepare and sit for each exam individually to give sufficient focus to the requirements of each profession. 11. Does passing one exam make the other easier? Passing one exam, whether it is the CPA Exam or the Bar Exam, does not necessarily make the other exam easier. While some foundational knowledge gained during the preparation for one can be beneficial for the other, the nature of subject matter and required skills differ significantly. Each exam demands a unique set of knowledge and expertise, necessitating individualized preparation. 12. Are there any alternative certifications available? Yes, apart from the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam, there are alternative certifications available in the accounting and legal fields. For accountants, certifications like Certified Management Accountant (CMA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), or Certified Financial Planner (CFP) provide specialized knowledge and can enhance career prospects. Similarly, lawyers can pursue alternative certifications like Certified Legal Manager (CLM) or Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP) to specialize in specific legal areas. 13. What career opportunities open up after passing these exams? Passing the CPA Exam opens up a world of opportunities in the accounting and finance industry. Certified Public Accountants can work in various roles such as auditors, tax consultants, financial analysts, or managerial accountants. On the other hand, the Bar Exam is a prerequisite for becoming a licensed attorney, enabling individuals to practice law by working in law firms, government agencies, or establishing their own legal practice. 14. How does the difficulty of these exams impact career success? The difficulty of these exams does play a role in shaping career success to some extent. Candidates who pass these rigorous exams demonstrate their commitment, knowledge, and ability to excel in their respective fields. Employers often value individuals who have successfully navigated these exams, considering them suitable for challenging and demanding roles. However, it is crucial to note that career success is influenced by a combination of factors, including practical experience, networking, and ongoing professional development. 15. Can I prepare for these exams without expensive review courses? While review courses can be beneficial, it is not impossible to prepare for the CPA Exam or the Bar Exam without expensive courses. Numerous affordable or free study resources, including textbooks, practice exams, and study groups, are available. However, self-study requires self-discipline, organization, and a comprehensive study plan. It is essential to evaluate individual learning preferences and consider budget constraints when deciding on the preparation method. In conclusion, comparing the difficulty level of the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam is subjective, as each exam presents unique challenges in its respective field. The CPA Exam demands a comprehensive understanding of accounting and finance concepts, while the Bar Exam requires extensive knowledge of the law. Both exams require significant dedication, hard work, and expertise to pass, with pass rates varying by exam section and state. It is essential for aspiring professionals to evaluate their strengths, commitment, and career goals before embarking on their journey to complete either exam. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. If you're comparing the difficulty level of these two tests, you may be wondering, "Is the Bar or CPA Exam harder?" Both accountants and attorneys must prove their knowledge and skill by passing an exam. For those who want to be certified accountants, this test is the CPA Exam. For aspiring attorneys, the final assessment is the Bar Exam. But which of these two exams is more difficult? I will break down the information, including CPA Exam pass rates, so you can make an accurate determination. What is the CPA Exam? In the United States, as in many countries, the CPA Exam is the test that determines whether an accountant will be licensed as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) states that the framers of the CPA Exam design it "to assess the knowledge and skills entry-level CPAs need to practice public accountancy." Most jurisdictions have some education requirements to become a licensed CPA, and a candidate must have a bachelor's degree. Some, but not all, states require this degree to be in accounting. Certain college accounting programs are geared toward taking the CPA Exam, but others are not. (Check out this article about CPA pass rates by school.) Most boards also have CPA work experience requirements, usually 1 to 2 years in public accounting or related positions. Finally, any accountant who wants to be licensed in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands must pass the CPA Exam. Students take the exam at Prometric testing centers in four parts over the course of 16 hours. The AICPA (Association of International Certified Public Accountants) writes the test. CPA candidates must pass all three Core sections, which include Auditing and Attestation (AUD), Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR), and Regulation (REG). In addition, candidates must pass one Discipline section, but you can choose from three different CPA Discipline sections, which include Business Analysis and Reporting (BAR), Information Systems and Controls (ISC), and Tax Compliance and Planning (TCP). What is the CPA Exam Like? When students set out to take the CPA Exam, they naturally want to know what to expect. In short, aspiring accountants should prepare for a substantial undertaking. Throughout the 4 CPA Exam sections, students will encounter: Multiple-choice questions Task-based simulations CPA Exam Format & Pass Rates Multiple-choice questions appear in all sections and test CPA candidates on various accounting concepts. Also, in each section, test-takers respond to task-based simulations such as completing a tax form, preparing financial statements, or creating journal entries. CPA pass rates indicate that the FAR section is the most difficult. How is the CPA Exam Administered and Scored? The AICPA both administers and scores the test. In each section, test-takers will receive a score on a scale from 0 to 99. Aspiring CPAs must earn at least 75 points to pass each section. Fortunately, you don't have to pass all four sections on the same day. You do, however, have to pass all four parts within 13 months of passing your first section; this is often referred to as the "30-month rolling window" rule. Finally, if you do not pass a section on your first attempt, you must wait until your CPA scores have been officially released to try again. Fortunately, the scheduling of the CPA Exam is now continuous throughout the year, allowing for quicker retakes. CPA Vs. Bar Exam Now that we've looked at an overview of the CPA Exam, we'll review information about the Bar Exam. After all, some accountants take the LSAT and pursue law school to strengthen their careers in tax. What is the Bar Exam? Just as professional accountants must take an exam to become CPAs, attorneys must also pass an exam to be licensed to practice law. The Bar Exam, according to the American Bar Association (ABA), is an exam that individual states design and administer. In some areas, a particular state's bar association may offer the exam. In other states, the highest state court in the jurisdiction may be in charge of the Bar Exam administration. To become a licensed attorney, applicants must first take and pass the LSAT to enter an accredited law school. After graduating, students must receive a passing score on the Bar Exam. In recent years, in addition to individual state exams, the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) has created the Uniform Bar Exam (UBE). The NCBE has standardized the Bar Exam by creating a portable, multi-state test. Consequently, those who pass the UBE can practice in about three dozen different states, plus the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands. However, the UBE does not cover all states or US territories. Thus, in jurisdictions that do not accept the UBE, aspiring attorneys must take the specific exam for the jurisdiction where they hope to practice. What is the Bar Exam Like? Different states' and territories' Bar Exams vary. Since the UBE is the most common exam, however, we'll focus on this version. There are three sections on this exam and different weights are assigned to each: 50%: Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) 30%: Multistate Essay Examination (MEE) 20%: Multistate Performance Test (MPT) The sum of your points earned from all three portions adds up to your final score. Bar Exam Format The first portion of the exam, the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), is a 200-question, multiple-choice test. The test covers legal principles (contracts, constitutional and criminal laws, evidence, real property, torts, and civil procedures) and legal reasoning. It also tests applicants' abilities to see fact patterns. Similarly, the essay portion (the MEE, or Multistate Essay Examination) tests applicants' abilities to communicate effectively through writing. Test-takers must differentiate between relevant and non-relevant information and provide a reasoned analysis. The essays address seven different topics, including business associations, conflict of laws, family law, secured transactions, and trusts and estates. The final portion, the Multistate Performance Test (or MPT), provides real-life situations in which applicants must demonstrate their lawyering skills. The goal of this section is to show that candidates are capable of putting basic knowledge of the law into practice. How is the Bar Exam Administered and Scored? States give the MBE examination twice a year: on the last Wednesday of February and the last Wednesday of July. Furthermore, Bar Exam candidates are allotted 6 hours to complete this section of the exam. The NCBE offers the MEE on the Tuesday preceding the Bar Examination in February and July. In other words, that's the Tuesday before the last Wednesday in those months. As for timing, the MEE portion of the UBE consists of six 30-minute questions. The MPT test is offered on the same two days as the MEE and consists of two 90-minute exams. Usually, candidates take the UBE over two days: the MEE and MPT on Tuesday and the MBE on Wednesday. In very rare and special circumstances – for example, with the recent business closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic – additional testing dates may be offered. Furthermore, in response to COVID-19, the NCBE will also offer the MEE/MPT on September 9 and September 30. It is up to each individual jurisdiction to determine which of those two dates to offer the MEE/MPT. Each state or jurisdiction scores its exams in its own state. Additionally, each state then has the right to decide what a passing score is for its jurisdiction. The score needed to become a licensed attorney in each state, therefore, will be different. The passing score will even vary even if the state accepts the Uniform Bar Exam. The CPA Exam vs. the Bar Exam So, is the CPA Exam or Bar Exam harder? The basic format (multiple-choice questions, essays, and thinking through complex problems) is the same for both tests. However, the tests themselves are very different in a number of ways. Exam Format One essential difference between the CPA Exam and the Bar Exam is that the CPA is uniform in all 55 jurisdictions. Additionally, the score needed to pass is the same for every candidate in every state. Conversely, for Bar Exam candidates sitting in states that do not honor the UBE, test-takers will have very different tests. Thus, pass rates could be wildly different. Arguably, this makes the Bar Exam the more difficult test. Exam Timing There are, however, some elements of the CPA Exam that do make it a harder test. For example, the Bar Exam offers testing on very specific days. In contrast, the rolling 30-month window, waiting period for re-takes, and planning across many dates can make taking the CPA Exam more difficult and require candidates to jump through a lot of hoops. It can take candidates many years to pass all four sections of the CPA Exam. Conversely, it is possible to pass the entire Bar Exam over the course of two days with proper preparation. Even with proper preparation, the CPA Exam will take even the most qualified and prepared candidates at least two months to take and pass. Exam Content The actual content of the CPA Exam and Bar Exam is obviously very different, as they require knowledge from different fields. However, the overall goals of each exam are somewhat similar. The AICPA has modified the CPA Exam to test candidates on the application of learned material, so rote memorization won't be helpful. Similarly, the Bar Exam requires candidates to form conclusions and apply knowledge rather than repeat the text of laws. Overall, the CPA Exam requires candidates to endure studying, testing, and possible re-takes over a much more extended period than the Bar Exam does. And due to the drawn-out nature of the CPA Exam, it stands to reason that pass rates aren't going to be exceptionally high. Passing Rates & CPA vs. Bar Difficulty Conclusion When it comes down to it, how many candidates pass the CPA Exam vs. the Bar Exam? Historically, the CPA Exam has about a 50% pass rate. In other words, only half the candidates who take the CPA Exam at any given time pass. That's pretty tough. The Bar Exam, for its part, is harder to gauge, since there is more than one exam, and some are harder than others. The California Bar Exam, for example, is notoriously hard, and California does not accept the UBE. Concluding a general Bar Exam pass rate is even more difficult using the UBE as a yardstick. Each state has a different required score to pass. However, unlike CPA Exam candidates, students taking the Bar Exam have had exposure to standardized, computer-based testing before. While the LSAT doesn't cover the same material as the Bar Exam, it does serve as an introduction to the challenges that difficult computerized tests present. Because CPA Exam candidates may not have experienced a standardized test that comes close to the magnitude of the CPA Exam, candidates taking it may have more difficulty passing. Is the Bar or CPA Exam Harder? Overall, however, the passing rates for the UBE average between 50% and 60%, a little higher than the CPA Exam. So, more Bar Exam candidates pass the Uniform Bar Exam vs. the CPA Exam. Therefore, I conclude that based on pass rates and the length of testing time required, the CPA Exam is harder than the Bar Exam, depending on where you take your Bar Exam. Enjoy complimentary access to top ideas and insights — selected by our editors. You might not believe this, but some accountants and attorneys compete for who had the tougher journey to pass their credentialing exam. I sat for the Bar Exam a few years ago and passed on my first try after finishing law school at the age of 58. However, my master's degree is in accounting, so two years after passing the bar, I decided I might as well try to obtain my CPA license by sitting for the CPA Exam as well. Of course, everyone thought I was a bit crazy, and that is something I expected. What I did not expect was the debate surrounding which exam is harder. "Surely, the CPA Exam is much more difficult. Just look at the pass rates for first time exam takers. You passed the bar, but the CPA Exam will be much more difficult," came the advice from my CPA friends. My attorney colleagues had this to say, "Well, after studying for and taking the Bar Exam, the CPA Exam will be a piece of cake for you." It had not occurred to me that sitting for both exams would create a competition among my highly educated colleagues as to who had it worse in their path toward licensure. But it did. So, here is my honest assessment of the two exams Qualifications to sit for the exams To sit for the Bar Exam, most states require a law degree from an accredited law school. This takes between two to three years beyond an undergraduate degree. This means around 210 hours of formal education. A few states allow for you to sit without a law degree, or you may substitute some years of law school with an apprenticeship. However, good luck with passing the exam if you do not have a law degree as the pass rate is around 26 percent, and you may not get hired even if you do pass. Clients and firms are not excited to hire someone who did not attend a good law school. And you must have a law license to practice law.To sit for the CPA Exam, you must have a bachelor's degree and a total of 120 to 150 hours of education. Some states will allow you to begin the testing process with 120 hours completed, but you must have 150 hours of formal education to obtain a license. Usually, the coursework is specific and must be approved by your state's regulatory agency. You may work in the accounting field without a CPA license, which is different from the legal profession, which requires a legal license for most areas of practice. As an accountant, you may prepare taxes and do bookkeeping, although a CPA license allows you to represent a tax client before the IRS and sign off on audits, carrying higher prestige and salaries.Exam structuresEach state has its own requirements for the Bar Exam. Many states now participate in the Uniform Bar Examination while others still administer their own tests. The exam is offered twice a year and consists of a minimum of a two-day testing process. Each state has designated testing halls, and exam takers sometimes must drive across the state to sit for the exam. Sixteen areas of the law are tested, including all areas of criminal, constitutional, contract, property, torts, evidence, civil legal procedures and more. The exam asks 200 multiple choice questions. The second part of the exam consists of six formal essay analyses of legal issues, and two Multistate Performance Tests (MPT). The MPT is designed to test a future attorney's ability to use fundamental skills in a realistic task-based situation to complete a task that a beginning lawyer should be able to accomplish. The exam is taken in July and February in large testing halls, and a retake is not possible for six months if you fail. The results are not released for two to three months after the exam date. The wait is long and stressful. The results are ultimately posted on a state website for the world to see.The CPA Exam was previously tested in a similar manner as the Bar Exam, with the exam given over a few consecutive days. Now the exam is divided into four sections, with each section tested at the exam-taker's convenience. The exam consists of Financial Accounting and Reporting, Regulations, Business, and Audit. Within each section are many subtopics. Each is rigorous and demands weeks, if not months, of preparation. The exam is taken at a testing site in the examinee's region or community. The results are available in as little as 10 days, depending on how close to the predetermined exam result release dates when you sit for the exam. You may reschedule as often or as soon as you would like if you fail. Since the result turnaround is quite fast, the stress involved is much lower than the Bar Exam. Furthermore, the results are in a private portal that only you can access.Exam pass ratesThe Uniform Bar Exam has an initial pass rate that varies by state and law school. Where you went to school can make a difference. An average estimate for first-time pass rates is 70 percent. There are many Bar Exam study materials, and all are similar and excellent. What really matters in determining success is your GPA in law school. Those who finish in the bottom of the class fare less well than those toward the top of the class. Furthermore, research indicates that first-year law school performance may be one of the best indicators of Bar success. The most important reason for wanting to pass the first time is that waiting six months for a retake is costly and damaging to an exam-taker's career. This is due, in part, to the process. You study for several months after completing law school, then take the exam with hundreds of people in a large hall. Everyone knows when you are sitting, and whether you passed or failed. The CPA Exam is not quite such a public affair.The CPA Exam is also a rigorous process. Candidates have an 18-month window to study and sit for the four-part exam once they have been approved as a candidate. The first-time pass rate for all four sections is less than the Bar Exam. Some statistics put the number of candidates who pass all four sections the first time between 13.9 percent to 20 percent. And, like the Bar Exam, where you went to school seems to matter. Different universities report much different success rates in the first-time pass rates of their graduates. Most CPA candidates allow themselves the full 18 months to complete the four sections. Each section has a different pass rate, with Financial Accounting and Reporting as the lowest. The best thing about the CPA Exam is it is a private affair. You test in a quiet testing center, no one knows when you are testing and, if you fail, no one will know that either. You can test as many times as it takes to pass each section if it is in the 18-month window. This exam also has excellent study materials. These materials vary greatly in cost and quality. The materials you choose may make more of a difference than the Bar Exam materials, but examinees should plan on completing all materials in their package for the best chance at success.So, which is harder?Both exams are difficult! They are very different. Both require years of dedicated academic study and preparation. The content in each field is extensive and mind-boggling to some degree. However, there are stark differences in the physical stamina needed for each exam.The Bar Exam is taken over two days and every legal topic is tested. You must have a memory that can shift gears dramatically over two long, consecutive days. You may receive an essay over a criminal procedure matter, and 15 minutes later be asked to analyze the legal ramifications of property or contract transactions. Your multiple-choice questions can vary from the expectancy damages for a contract dispute, to the constitutional rights of an individual in an Article 1 debate. The information tested is an inch deep and a mile wide. At the end of the two days, you are mentally and physically exhausted. The Bar Exam itself is a sprint. For two days, you will run as hard and fast as you can to finish a grueling race. But when you are done, you are done — unless, of course, you failed! Then you must wait an additional four months to try again.The CPA Exam is a marathon. You usually test only one section at a time, but the next day, you wake up and begin to study for the next section. The race could take you 18 months. The information tested is a mile deep, but only a block wide for each exam. By the third exam, you are thinking you will never pass all four sections. You must continue to rally for months and months. But each exam is compartmentalized and short compared to the Bar Exam.So which exam is harder? In my opinion, the actual question people are asking is, "Who is smarter, an attorney or an accountant?" That is why they want me to tell them which exam is harder. As someone who has taken both exams, the answer is both exams are hard. Both exams and professions need perseverance, intelligence and dedication to succeed. Personally, I find the CPA Exam the less stressful exam only because I can take it more often, it is in sections divided to be taken over an extended period of time, and it is a more private endeavor. The content is not easier at all, but the exam process is less arduous. Both CPAs and attorneys truly earn their credentials. Both fields deserve respect for the effort it takes to have their license hang on their walls.