

6 steps to getting business analysis certification

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If you want to earn the designation of Certified Business Analysis Professional but are confused where to start, you've come to the right place. I'll break the process down into six small steps. I will briefly explain the process and discuss how you must prepare. Data suggests that many people who apply for the exam do not pass or even attend. Before you start, you should know that there's only around 2, 000 CBAPs. This explains that getting a Business Analysis certification is no easy job.

The basics steps involved are:

Step 1: Understanding BABOK

Step 2: Meeting the requirements

Step 3: Earn required amount of PDs

Step 4: Submit the application and schedule the exam

Step 5: Prepare for you Exam

Step 6: Pass the Exam

Is CBAP the right choice for you?

Before you invest your time preparing for the exam, find out if becoming a CBAP is essential for you. Of course, you will learn a lot while preparing for the exam. But, will the business analysis certification benefit you in other ways?

If you do not have convincing internal motivations to dive into the process, stop here. After you decide to continue your journey towards the

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certification, start preparing for the CBAP. Take one step at a time. Note that the time needed to prepare vary from person to person.

Step 1: Understanding BABOK

According to IIBA, a CBAP is a senior business analyst professional. This is why the first step would be to understand the content of the BABOK, which is a dense text. You might need to read it several times before you comprehend it completely.

Many who set out to get business analysis certification joining a BABOK study group enhances the overall experience. The study groups can be informal. These groups usually focus on reading and discussing the contents. There are some formal groups which emphasize on exam preparation. An IIBA chapter, an employer or individual who wants to host one can arrange a study group.

Step 2: Meeting the requirements

The BABOK states that you have to meet certain requirements before applying for the CBAP. They are:

- 5 years of business analysis experience. This is equivalent to 7, 500 hours.
- 900 hours of experience in minimum 4 out of the 6 knowledge areas.
- Minimum 21 hours of Professional Development in the last 4 years. I will discuss this in the next section.
- Minimum education requirements

- 2 references from a client, career manager or Certified Business Analysis Professional recipient.
- Signed Code of Conduct

People working in a business analyst capacity for many years are not aware of the BA profession. When they learn about it, they are often surprised that they can apply for the CBAP. There are also people who discover that their past job roles have a mixture of non-BA responsibilities. They feel disappointed as even though they had the BA title for a long time, they have not gathered the required experience.

You will find that documenting your experience builds confidence. Individuals interested in the Business Analysis certification can consider the CCBA® designation if they are concerned about the experience requirements. This designation is an intermediate level certification.

Step 3: Earn required amount of PDs

Like I mentioned earlier, you have to earn 21 documented professional development hours (PDs) in the last four years. There are certain training opportunities and conferences for business analysis certification which qualify for these professional development credits. IIBA® EEP™ Bridging the Gap and Laura's virtual professional development courses qualify for PDs.

You might also check with the local chapter to check if group study can provide the chance to earn PDs. It will also help prepare for the CBAP exam.

Step 4: Submit the application and schedule the exam

You will have to submit your application to IIBA. IIBA website lists the complete CBAP certification process.

After your application is approved, schedule the exam after 2 to 3 months. You can reschedule the exam if you want. You will also have the option to retake the exam if you don't pass. You can schedule to take the CBAP exam again within one year of your application approval. Scheduling it quickly will keep you motivated.

Step 5: Prepare for the Exam

While you prepare to sit for the exam, make sure your knowledge of the BABOK is precise. You must be able to recall it easily. There are many ways to embrace the information. Your options vary from prep courses to study guides.

Rely on a workbook or study guide if you study better independently. Most people follow the BA Mentor's CBAP® & CCBA™ Workbook for the business analysis certification. It helps to read the BABOK actively. You can also use flash cards and exam simulations. They will help to confirm how much you have actually learnt. Prep courses for CBAP can walk you through the BABOK. They also provide a forum where you can address any concerns or doubts.

I think rewriting points from the BABOK is a great way to assimilate the knowledge. The CBAP exam simulators are also an essential part of the preparation. The simulators will help you prepare for more counter-intuitive aspects of the business analysis certification exam.

Step 6: Pass the Exam

Obviously, the most crucial step to attaining a business analysis certification is to pass the CBAP exam. Sit for the exam and then do your best. Many people fail the exam on their first try.

If you cannot pass the CBAP exam in your first time, do not lose hope. You can schedule another exam within one calendar year of your application approval.

When you pass, celebrate your success for a few days. You've worked hard and earned the business analysis certification. Stay in touch with the profession and your professional development. Remember that re-certification is needed after every three years.

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