

# How Many Years to Complete CA? Factors Affecting It & Journey

[CA](#) degree is a dream for many, but a typical question that cropped up in people's minds is how many years it takes to get a CA degree. CA is a program conducted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. With highly rigorous training and bringing together theoretical knowledge with practical training, it has been one of the most challenging and prestigious professional qualifications. The minimum time one takes to finish the course is 5 years, but this may vary depending on the pathway of a student. Three stages must be completed and include CA Foundation, CA Intermediate, which is also referred to as CA Inter, CA Final, and the mandatory period of CA articleship. It will also break down the duration of each stage, course structure, and factors that may influence the total time needed to qualify as a Chartered Accountant.

## What is CA?

CA's [full form](#) is Chartered Accountant. This course is a professional program for dealing with complex financial and taxation matters. The student will acquire expertise in a deep understanding of subjects like accounting principles, auditing, tax laws, corporate finance, and business regulations. It is considered to be the most highly valued qualification across the globe for any finance professional. The course CA is operated by [ICAI](#), wherein the student obtains both theoretical as well as practical knowledge. So, it will have three stages:

- **CA Foundation:** The first and entry-level to start with the course for the students after completion of class XII.
- **CA Intermediate:** [IPCC](#) It is the mid-level course that is available to the students, who have successfully cleared the foundation exam or taken through the direct entry route at the end of graduation.
- **CA Final:** It is the last and highest level of the course.
- Besides passing such tests, students have to undergo 3-year training in [Articleship](#). This practical exercise gives real exposure to students dealing with accounting, auditing, and taxation; hence empowering them for a proficient career.

The CA qualification is very diversified because it provides options for practice in various industries like corporate finance, public practice, or even entrepreneurship.

## CA Eligibility Criteria

A study of the [CA eligibility criteria](#) is one of the critical steps before entering the CA program. The course is available to students who complete Class XII besides graduates and postgraduates. Based on one's educational qualifications, there are mainly two routes leading to entry to the course,

- **Foundation Route:** For students entering CA from class XII.
- **Direct Entry Route:** Open to graduates and postgraduates who meet the percentage criteria.

Both pathways have requirements to ensure that the students are well-prepared for the challenges of the course.

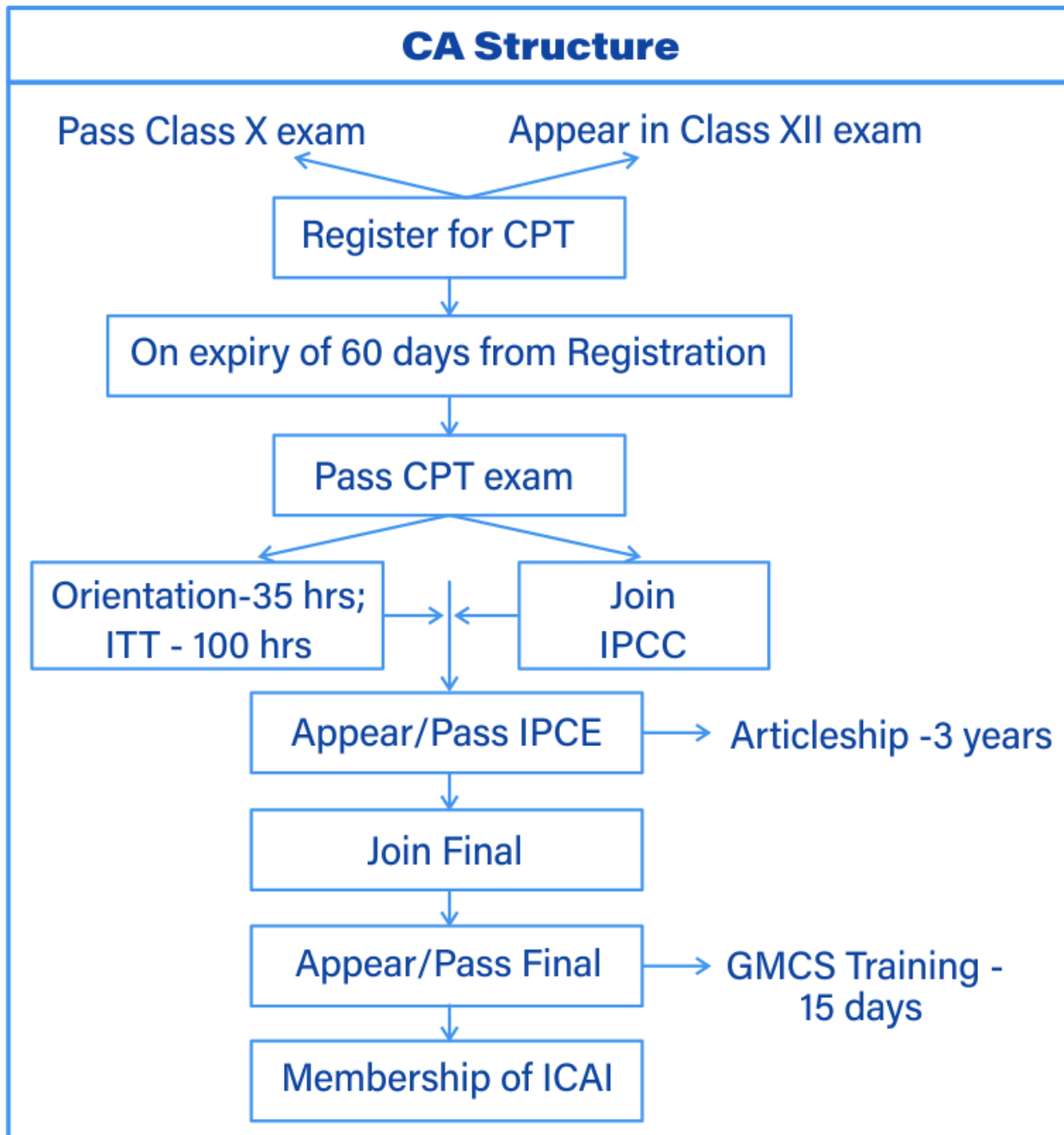
## How Many Years to Complete CA?

The minimum number of years it will take to complete CA would be 5 years, as a student enters the program through the CA Foundation route. The time taken will be as follows: 6 months for the Foundation course, 8 to 10 months for CA Intermediate, 3 years for the articleship, and 6 to 12 months for CA Final preparation. Students entering through the Direct Entry Scheme, which is available for graduates, postgraduates, and students who have cleared the intermediate levels of CS or CMA, can complete the course in about 4.5 years. However, the actual duration may extend depending on how many attempts are required to clear each exam stage.

The structure of CA courses is always planned in an immaculate design, ensuring every student gains intensive knowledge about accounts and finance at the same time while acquiring ample practical skills, therefore the time taken varies depending on devotion, consistency with which one stays, and can handle studies accompanied by articleship training.

## Understanding the CA Course Structure

The [CA course](#) is structured into three levels. Each level adds to the previous one in a way that forms a holistic learning experience. Besides these exams, students must undergo practical training through articleship, which is also a prerequisite for becoming a Chartered Accountant.



### CA Foundation

The first level is [CA Foundation](#), an entry-level examination, which exposes students to the most basic concepts in accounting, economics, and law. It is more for students joining the CA course after completing Class 12. Students need to enroll for the course at least four months in advance of the exam, and it takes six months, in total, to prepare for the examination. The CA Foundation subjects comprise Accounting, Business Laws, Mathematics, and Economics. To pass this stage, a student has to score 40% at least in each paper and 50% in aggregate.

### CA Intermediate

The [CA Intermediate](#) course extends from the knowledge obtained in the Foundation course. The syllabus consists of advanced topics like Accounting, Taxation, Financial Management, and Auditing. It

is divided into two groups. The student can choose to appear for both groups together or one group at a time. A student must have cleared the Foundation course or qualified for the Direct Entry Scheme to get registered for CA Inter. Preparation time for CA Inter differs and generally ranges from 8 to 10 months.

### CA Articleship

The unique feature of the CA course is the articleship. This is an exclusive experience that differentiates the CA course from any other professional course. The three-year practical article training equips the students to experience audit, taxation, financial reporting, and compliance practices. Articleship training is a must and provides a first-hand view of the responsibilities of a Chartered Accountant. Several students experience this phase as difficult because, simultaneously, it involves both articleship and preparing for CA Final exams.

### CA Final

The most advanced level of the course is the [CA Final](#). Some of the topics in this group include Financial Reporting, Strategic Financial Management, and Advanced Auditing. CA Final exams check if the student can put the theoretical knowledge into practical applications. A student can appear for the CA Final exams in the last six months of his article, but for that, the student needs to have cleared both groups of CA Inter.

## Factors Affecting the CA Course Duration

While the normal scenario for completion time of CA would be 5 years in total for the foundation route and 4.5 years for a direct entry to the CA program, various variables can extend beyond this normal period before one finally sits for and gains the qualification certificate. One obvious variable is the attempt times required. The CA qualification is infamous because most candidates get knocked out on the very first attempt as it's also a notoriously competitive qualification. Each failed attempt extends the period by six months, making the course completion period longer.

Another factor is the articleship period. Even though the usual duration is three years, the extra leaves taken during this period must be compensated, which makes the training timeline extend. Further, students doing additional courses alongside CA or breaks between exams take a longer time to qualify.

Therefore, students must approach their studies with a disciplined mindset and plan properly to ensure the timely completion of the CA course. A structured study plan along with regular effort can help in minimizing the likelihood of delay.

## How CA Results Impact the CA Course Duration?

CA results determine the total time taken to complete the course. Students have to score at least 40% in every subject and 50% in aggregate to pass. If a student fails in any one subject, he has to reappear for all subjects of that group during the next exam cycle. This may add six months to the timeline for every failed attempt.

Students should understand the concepts rather than memorize them to have better chances of passing on the first attempt. They can identify their weak areas and improve performance by practicing regularly, giving mock tests, and solving previous year's question papers.

## Planning Your CA Journey

To complete the CA course within the minimum time frame, students must adopt a strategic approach. During the Foundation stage, accounting and business laws must be properly developed. In CA Inter, one should try to divide his or her time effectively between studies and articleship preparation. A reputed CA firm may be selected during the period of articleship to get proper exposure and networking. At last, a proper time allocation for the CA Final is required to achieve success.

## CA Course Duration FAQs

### 1. Years to complete CA through the Foundation route?

The minimum time required to complete CA through the Foundation route is 5 years. This includes three years of articleship and preparation for exams.

### 2. How many years to complete CA through Direct Entry?

If one enters the course through Direct Entry, he or she usually takes about 4.5 years to complete the course if all the exams are cleared on the first attempt.

### 3. How many years is the CA articleship?

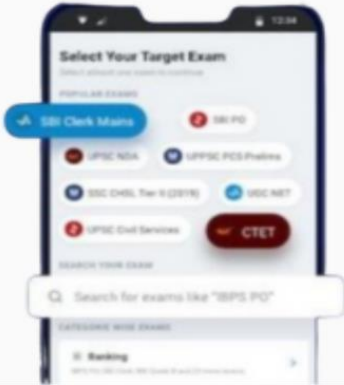
CA articleship is a three-year practical training program where students work under a practicing Chartered Accountant to gain hands-on experience in the field.

### 4. Can I complete CA faster if I am allowed to skip articleship?

No, articleship is mandatory. The ICAI requires that all students undergo practical training of three years to qualify as Chartered Accountants.

### 5. What happens if one fails a CA exam?

If you fail a CA exam, you will have to reappear for that group in the next exam cycle. Every failed attempt adds six months to the total duration of the course.



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