

# The ABCs of Valuation Accreditations

## A quick reference guide

There are a considerable number of business valuation accreditations. You may have looked at an appraiser's business card and thought it looked like "alphabet soup." When in the market for a business valuation, it is important to understand these acronyms to assist you in selecting a service provider. Below is a quick reference guide to help you interpret the accreditations by understanding how each is obtained – prerequisites, coursework/exams, and experience requirements. Understanding which accreditations are more difficult to obtain and which are easier will help you understand perspective and, perhaps, the quality of the work you can expect.



### Professional Accreditation Criteria

Organization	Certification	Prerequisites	Course/Exam	Reports	Experience/Other
<b>American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)</b>	ABV—Accredited in Business Valuation	Be AICPA certified or member with current CPA license	Pass an 8-hour, comprehensive, multiple-choice exam	–	Substantial involvement in at least 6 business valuation engagements, or provide evidence of 150 hours that demonstrate substantial experience
<b>American Society of Appraisers (ASA)</b>	AM—Accredited Member	Obtain four-year college degree or equivalent	Complete four courses of three days each and pass one half-day exam following each course, or complete one all-day challenge exam and USPAP exam.	Submit two actual reports from within the last two years to satisfaction of board examiners	Two years full-time equivalent (e.g., five years of 400 hours of business appraisal work per year equals one year full-time equivalent). One full year of requirements is granted to anyone who has a CPA, CFA, or CBT designation with five years of practice held.
	ASA—Accredited Senior Appraiser	Meet AM requirements	–	–	Five years of full-time or equivalent experience, including two years for AM.
	FASA—Fellow of American Society of Appraisers	Meet ASA requirements, plus be voted into College of Fellows on the basis of technical leadership and contribution to the profession or the Society.	–	–	–
<b>Institute of Business Appraisers (IBA)</b>	AIBA—Accredited by IBA	Complete four-year college degree or equivalent; possess business appraisal designation from AICPA, ASA, or NACVA, or complete IBA eight-day Appraisal Workshop.	Complete comprehensive written exam.	Submit one report for peer reviews.	Provide four references of character and fitness.
	CBA—Certified Business Appraiser	Complete four-year college degree or equivalent. Complete IBA's 16-hour course 1010 (Report Writing).	Pass six-hour exam. Applicants may be exempt from the exam if they hold the ASA, ABV, CVA, or AVA designation.	Submit two business appraisal reports showing professional competence.	Successfully complete 90 hours of upper-level business valuation course work (at least 24 hours from IBA) or five years of full-time, active experience as a business appraiser. Provide four references (two personal, two professional).
	BVAL—Business Valuator Accredited for Litigation	Obtain business appraisal designation from IBA, AICPA, ASA, NACVA, or CVA candidate who has passed the exam.	Five-day Expert Witness Skills Workshop and four-hour exam.	–	Provide letters of reference from two attorneys, or complete 16 hours of education in the area of law in which the appraiser will testify.
	MCBA—Master Certified Business Appraiser	Obtain four-year college degree and two-year postgraduate degree or equivalent; hold CBA designation for at least five years and hold one other designation (ASA, CVA, or ABV).	–	–	Ten years of full-time practice. Provide three reference from MCBA's with personal knowledge of applicant's work.
	FIBA—Fellow of the Institute of Business Appraisers	Meet all CBA requirements, plus be voted into College of Fellows on basis of technical leadership and contribution to the profession and the Institute.	–	–	–
<b>National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts (NACVA)</b>	AVA—Accredited Valuation Analyst, includes prior GVA designation	Obtain business degree and/or an MBA or higher; member in good standing of NACVA.	Complete five-day course; four-hour exam; additional eight-hour exam for applicants without accounting fundamental background.	Provide case study for exam.	Two years full-time or equivalent business valuation or related experience, or ten or more business valuations. Provide three personal references, three business references, and a minimum of one letter of recommendation from an employer or another CPA.
	CVA—Certified Valuation Analyst	Have college degree, unrevoked CPA license, and be a member in good standing of NACVA.	Complete five-day course; pass two-day exam; four-hour proctored exam plus take-home exam with case study.	Provide case study for exam.	Two years of experience as a CPA. Provide three personal references and three business references.
	CFFA—Certified Financial Forensic Analyst	Possess one of the following designations: CVA, AVA, AM, ASA, CBA, CBV, CFA, CMA, CPA, or CA; hold advanced degree in economics, accounting, or finance, or undergraduate degree and MBA.	Complete two-week course and eight days of training at NACVA's Forensic Institute; pass two-part exam; four-hour proctored exam plus take-home exam with case study.	Submit case study report under Fed. Rule 26, or report admitted into evidence within the last three years.	Provide one business and two legal references. Substantial experience in ten litigation matters, including five in which a deposition or testimony was given.

Source: Valuing a Business, 5th Edition: The Analysis and Appraisal of Closely Held Companies

- AIBA** Accredited IBA (Institute of Business Appraisers)
- AM** Accredited Member (American Society of Appraisers)
- ASA** Accredited Senior Appraiser (American Society of Appraisers)
- AVA** Accredited Valuation Analyst (National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts)
- BVAL** Business Valuator Accredited for Litigation (Institute of Business Appraisers)

- CBA** Certified Business Appraiser (Institute of Business Appraisers)
- CFA** Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA Institute, formerly Association of Investment Management and Research)
- CFFA** Certified Forensic Analyst (National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts)
- CPA/ABV** Certified Public Accountant Accredited in Business Valuation (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants)

- CVA** Certified Valuation Analyst (National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts)
- FASA** Fellow of American Society of Appraisers
- FIBA** Fellow of Institute of Business Appraisers
- MCBA** Master Certified Business Appraiser (Institute of Business Appraisers)