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GAO’s Response to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants’ Professional Ethics Executive Committee’s Exposure Draft, Proposed Revised Interpretation Uniform CPA Examination and Continuing Professional Education (ET Sec. 1.400.020, 2.400.020, and 3.400.020)

This letter provides GAO’s comments on the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants’ (AICPA) Professional Ethics Executive Committee’s (PEEC) exposure draft, Proposed Revised Interpretation CPA Examination and Continuing Professional Education (ET Sec. 1.400.020, 2.400.020, and 3.400.020). GAO promulgates generally accepted government auditing standards, which provide professional standards for auditors of government entities in the United States.

We support PEEC’s efforts to update the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct to improve and clarify the code of conduct for auditors related to the certified public accountant (CPA) exam and certified professional education courses. We believe that in the current environment, an update to the code of conduct is necessary to address recent sanctions related to violations by firms. We believe that a change should be made to the proposed second paragraph to include an allowance similar to what is in the first paragraph. Specifically, we suggest the language in bold below be added to the second paragraph.

*.02 A member who (a) solicits or knowingly discloses questions or answers of any continuing professional education course examination (other than one for which collaboration is expected and permitted) **without the course administrating entity’s written permission** or (b) falsifies attendance at a continuing professional education course shall be considered to have committed an act discreditable to the profession, in violation of the “Acts Discreditable Rule”*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions about this letter or would like to discuss any of our responses, please feel free to contact me at (202) 512-3133 or dalkinj@gao.gov.

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Financial Management and Assurance