



**Media contact:**

Samantha Strong, NATP public relations and digital content manager  
[sstrong@natptax.com](mailto:sstrong@natptax.com)  
800-558-3402, ext. 1178

Nancy Kasten, NATP marketing and communications director  
[nkasten@natptax.com](mailto:nkasten@natptax.com)  
800-558-3402, ext. 1172

## **NATP urges DOE to reverse accounting degree reclassification, citing risks to the tax workforce and taxpayer access**

**APPLETON, Wis. (Dec. 3, 2025)** – The National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP) is calling on the U.S. Department of Education to reverse its recent decision to classify accounting degrees as “non-professional,” warning the move could restrict student access to accounting programs and weaken the nation’s tax-preparation workforce at a time when taxpayers increasingly rely on trained guidance.

In a [letter to Education Secretary Linda McMahon](#), NATP urged the department to reconsider the new definition of “professional degree,” which excludes accounting and several other regulated, public-facing fields.

Under the department’s proposal, degrees designated as “non-professional” would be subject to lower federal borrowing limits. NATP warns that this change could deter students from entering accounting, a licensed, education-dependent profession foundational to taxpayer compliance.

“Accounting is a profession built on rigorous education, ethical standards and oversight,” said Scott Artman, CPA, CGMA, CEO of NATP. “Reclassifying accounting as ‘non-professional’ misrepresents the realities of this work and risks reducing access to the education future tax professionals need. That’s not just a workforce issue; it’s a taxpayer issue.”

More than 80 million taxpayers rely on paid preparers each year. NATP states that limiting the pipeline of future accounting graduates could have far-reaching consequences, particularly for underserved communities and small businesses that rely on qualified tax support.

The association’s letter outlines three primary concerns:

**1. Reduced access to accounting education**

Lower borrowing limits could make accounting and advanced coursework less accessible for many students, including those from low-income backgrounds or rural communities where educational opportunities are already limited.

**2. Threats to the tax-professional workforce**

The accounting and tax-preparation industries are facing well-documented workforce shortages. Additional barriers to accounting degrees could deepen the talent gap and limit the availability of trained professionals.

**3. Risks to taxpayer service and compliance**

Tax laws grow more complex each year. A reduction in trained preparers may increase filing errors, limit taxpayer assistance options and strain IRS resources.



“Every taxpayer benefits when knowledgeable, well-trained professionals are available to help them navigate the tax code,” Artman said. “We’re asking the Department to work with those who understand this profession best. A fair and accurate classification system should strengthen access to essential public-facing professions – not restrict it.”

NATP is encouraging the Department of Education to restore accounting to the list of recognized professional fields or reevaluate loan thresholds for degrees that lead to licensed, regulated work. The association also expressed its willingness to collaborate with the Department to ensure the final policy reflects the needs of students, professionals and the taxpayers they serve.

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**About the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP):** NATP is the leading organization supporting tax professionals with education, advocacy and resources to help them serve taxpayers accurately and ethically. With more than 23,000 members nationwide, NATP provides industry-leading training and professional support to keep tax preparers informed in a complex, evolving tax landscape. Headquartered in Appleton, Wis., NATP ensures tax professionals have the knowledge, tools, and community they need to succeed. To learn more, visit [www.natptax.com](http://www.natptax.com).

**Looking for a tax expert?** Tom O’Saben, EA, director of tax content and government relations at the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP), is available for phone or video interviews to discuss federal tax topics including tax law change and its implications, taxpayer issues, tax preparer regulation and more. To schedule an interview with O’Saben, contact [sstrong@natptax.com](mailto:sstrong@natptax.com) or [nkasten@natptax.com](mailto:nkasten@natptax.com).