



CFP BOARD

**CFP[®] EXAM
CANDIDATE
PREPARATION
TOOLKIT**

“Pursuing CFP® certification requires a serious dedication of time and effort. But the rewards it offers are well worth the effort. CFP Board research has shown that the clients of CFP® professionals tend to be more satisfied with their financial planning engagements and are more likely to recommend their planner to family or friends.”

CFP Board developed this guide for candidates who are on the path to CFP® certification. The guide outlines steps for effective study in preparation for the exam.

Candidates come to the CFP® exam from various backgrounds. Perhaps you recently completed a degree or certificate program. Or it's been some time since you studied in school.

You might have broad experience in financial planning. Or you have more specific knowledge related to one of the financial planning specialties.

CFP Board developed this guide to provide you with the right knowledge and skills, regardless of your background. A good strategy will help you to understand your strengths and weaknesses. The strategy will enable you to address gaps in learning as well as strengthen your test taking abilities.

Are you ready?

We encourage you to embrace this opportunity for development. Experience the personal and career growth that comes from earning CFP® certification. Use this *Exam Candidate Preparation Toolkit* as a guide to apply your best in preparing for the CFP exam.



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“CFP® certification shows clients that their prospective financial advisor has a foundation in all types of finances, can solve financial problems, can devise successful strategies to meet financial goals and will act as an advisor, counselor and coach.”

CHARTING YOUR PATH TO CFP® CERTIFICATION

Chart your path to CFP® certification. Take steps that improve your chances of success by developing an exam prep strategy. Consider the following to ensure you have an optimal learning environment.

MOTIVATION	ENVIRONMENT	SITUATION	PERFORMANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-view/behavior • Presence of career role models • Outcome expectations • Knowledge of job market • Access to career options • Quality of life associated with career • Superior financial rewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational support for pursuit of certification • Employer policies supporting pursuit of certification • Flexible work requirements • In-house development activities within field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/emotional support • Supportive economic condition • Physical health • Supportive family interactions • Work/life balance • Life phase • Hardships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education/training • Experience • Skills, competencies, and abilities • Coping mechanisms

The framework outlines four key areas that influence your wellbeing as a student. Your position relative to these factors will help you to address barriers to certification.

Be aware of conditions that impact your performance. Consider all aspects of this framework from your motivation to environmental concerns.

- **Motivation**
Revisit your motivation for pursuing certification.
- **Environment**
Work with your employer to help balance work and life commitments that might derail your studies.
- **Situation**
Make sure you have the social and emotional support you need from your friends and family.
- **Performance**
Address gaps in your training and work experience.

Monitor these factors throughout your studies to stay on track for success. Finding balance across these elements will enable you to perform at your peak.

MOTIVATION

First, let's start with your motivation for pursuing CFP® certification.

CFP Board believes that the public deserves high-quality personal financial planning services delivered by professionals who have demonstrated the ability to provide competent and ethical services to clients and are committed to acting in their best interest.

The CFP® certification prepares you for a career-long commitment to meet the ever-changing needs of your clients.

CAREER GROWTH PROSPECTS

Career opportunities in the financial planning field are expected to grow more than 15% by 2026, according to the Labor Department. U.S. News and World Report ranks Financial Advisor as #6 in Best Business Jobs in 2020.

Baby boomers are approaching or reaching retirement age, and millions of Generation Xers are raising families and saving for their later years. Many will require professional guidance to successfully confront an increasingly uncertain economic future. As a CFP® professional, you can get personal satisfaction from helping your clients plan for their futures while simultaneously building your career.

Earning your CFP® certification requires a commitment to learning and a solid grounding in financial planning. Those who have become CFP® professionals will tell you that the work is worth the effort. In fact, according to a survey of CFP® professionals, 91% of respondents are very satisfied with their career in financial planning and would recommend CFP® certification to other financial professionals.

With your CFP® certification, you'll have two distinct advantages:

- You'll have the knowledge and skills to ensure you have the confidence, competence, and credibility to elevate your practice to the highest level and distinguish you from other financial planners.
- Your CFP® certification assures clients and potential clients that you have achieved the respect, recognition and preferred status that come only to the top professionals in the field.

Now that we've established the key benefits of certification, the next step is to develop a plan.

For more information on the exam requirements, download the CFP® Exam Candidate Handbook at [CFP.net/Exam Handbook](https://www.cfp.net/Exam_Handbook).

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Your learning environment will ensure that you feel safe, secure, and empowered. Seek organizational support for certification in the workplace.

The following tips can help you to put in place the supportive learning environment you will need as you prepare for the exam.

ENLIST EMPLOYER SUPPORT

- Enlist support from your employer to address work and time commitments.

Take initiative

- Discuss your certification goal with your employer.
- Share your training needs and class workload.
- Look out for possible mentors.

Seek available company resources

- Ask about available resources for training.
- See if your company is willing to finance your study program. Ask for funds to cover study materials and a review course.
- Ask for opportunities to develop new skills.
- Get involved in new financial planning projects.

Be proactive and build a culture of learning at your firm. Look for a win/win scenario that supports your professional development without placing a burden on your employer.



FIND RESOURCES

Be sure to take advantage of all resources that will help prepare you for the exam. These can include the following:

Review courses

Many exam takers find that a review course – though not required – helps them prepare for the CFP® exam. CFP Board provides a partial list of available review courses at [CFP.net/reviewcourses](https://www.cfp.net/reviewcourses); others can be found by searching online. These courses and their providers are not endorsed or recommended by CFP Board.

CFP Board Practice Exam

CFP Board offers two Practice Exams to help candidates study for the CFP® exam. The Practice Exams are full-length, featuring 170 questions. They provide immediate scoring and feedback on correct answers with rationales. One CFP Board Practice exam is included FREE with your CFP® exam registration and, upon registration, will be accessible through your online account. The second CFP Board Practice Exam is available for purchase. Learn more about the CFP Board Practice Exam at [CFP.net/practiceexam](https://www.cfp.net/practiceexam).

IDENTIFY A MENTOR

Mentors can help you focus on time management, study strategy, staying motivated, dealing with work/life balance and more. By connecting with a mentor, you can gain valuable insights from your mentor's own experience preparing for and passing the CFP® exam.

Determine your needs

- Consider what you hope to gain from a relationship with a mentor.
- Know what you want to obtain before you begin the process of identifying your mentor.

Consider their qualities

- Select someone with more experience, who passed the exam, and who traversed a similar path to the one you are pursuing.
- Identify an individual with whom you can speak candidly about career and workplace issues.

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

"I've been thankful for the questions and answers members posted on the Candidate Forum during the time I was studying for CFP® exam. I owed the success of passing the exam to the experience and encouragement shared by the forum members."

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

"When studying, you can do so many of one style of test questions you start to feel like you know the answer to the question before you finish reading. I advise looking at multiple practice exams and buying the Practice Exams to get a different style of question — the questions are very close to the actual exam questions."

Be assertive

- Communicate your goal to pursue CFP® certification and demonstrate your interest and passion for the field.
- Ask your mentor to explain the skills and technical abilities missing from your repertoire.
- Set up meeting schedules. Be prepared with a list of topics or questions that address weaknesses.

CFP Board Mentor Program

The CFP Board Mentor Program connects candidates for CFP® certification with established CFP® professional volunteers in a relationship designed to provide free one-on-one guidance, advice and support. Details are available at [CFP.net/Mentor](https://www.cfp.net/Mentor).

SEEK PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

It takes courage and commitment to pursue certification, but don't embark on your pursuit alone. Seek out friends, colleagues and other candidates who will face the same challenges you will encounter. Build your network and use the support group to help you overcome obstacles related to work, time commitments, and gaps in learning.

Candidate Forum

CFP Board's Candidate Forum is an online community for those pursuing CFP® certification. Candidates can connect with their peers as they prepare for the CFP® exam to find advice and support, share resources and form study groups. You can also connect with others preparing for the upcoming exam in the Study Group Forum. The forum is accessible at: [candidateforum.CFP.net](https://www.cfp.net/candidateforum).

Make full use of available tools, advice, and resources. Take the initiative and start conversations. Collaborate with your peers. You can work as a team to design strategies that will foster success as you study and develop a plan of attack for exam day.

MANAGE YOUR TIME

Pursuit of the CFP® certification requires candidates to balance coursework requirements, studying and day-to-day work responsibilities. And who has the time? Factor in personal and family commitments and the challenge begins to be very overwhelming. Facing these obstacles, priorities must be set in order for you to achieve your goals.

Time spent

Knowing exactly how you spend your time can shed some light on activities that add little to your bottom line. Similar to working with clients to track spending, tracking your daily activities will help you assess how effective you are in budgeting your time and where you can carve out some extra study time.

Tracking

Write down everything that you do in a daily record. Yes, everything!

Record

Do you know where your time is actually going each day? If not, then it's time to start paying attention. Tracking your time is the best way to get control of your time. Follow the steps below to eliminate time wasters and refocus on your priorities.

Planning

Make an upfront investment to draft a plan that creates more time for yourself. Use your planning period to set your priorities so you can free up more time throughout your day.

Engage your family

Meet with your family to ask:

- What works well?
- What doesn't work well?
- What will we work on in the week ahead to improve?

Set your course

- Spend time on what is important.
- Zero in on what is critical and put trivial things aside.
- Revisit your goals to get a sense of what will help or hinder your accomplishments.
- Eliminate roadblocks.
- Create focus.

Refine your approach

- Develop a long-term plan that outlines mission critical activities and objectives that must occur to achieve your goals.
- Periodically list and reiterate your goals in order of priority.
- Spend half of your time working on two key priorities.

7 AM _____	2 PM _____
8 AM _____	3 PM _____
9 AM _____	4 PM _____
10 AM _____	5 PM _____
11 AM _____	6 PM _____
12 PM _____	7 PM _____
1 PM _____	8 PM _____

Analyze

Analyze the information you collected throughout your day. Pick **five** of your biggest time wasters and add up the time.

Time Wasters

Time Spent

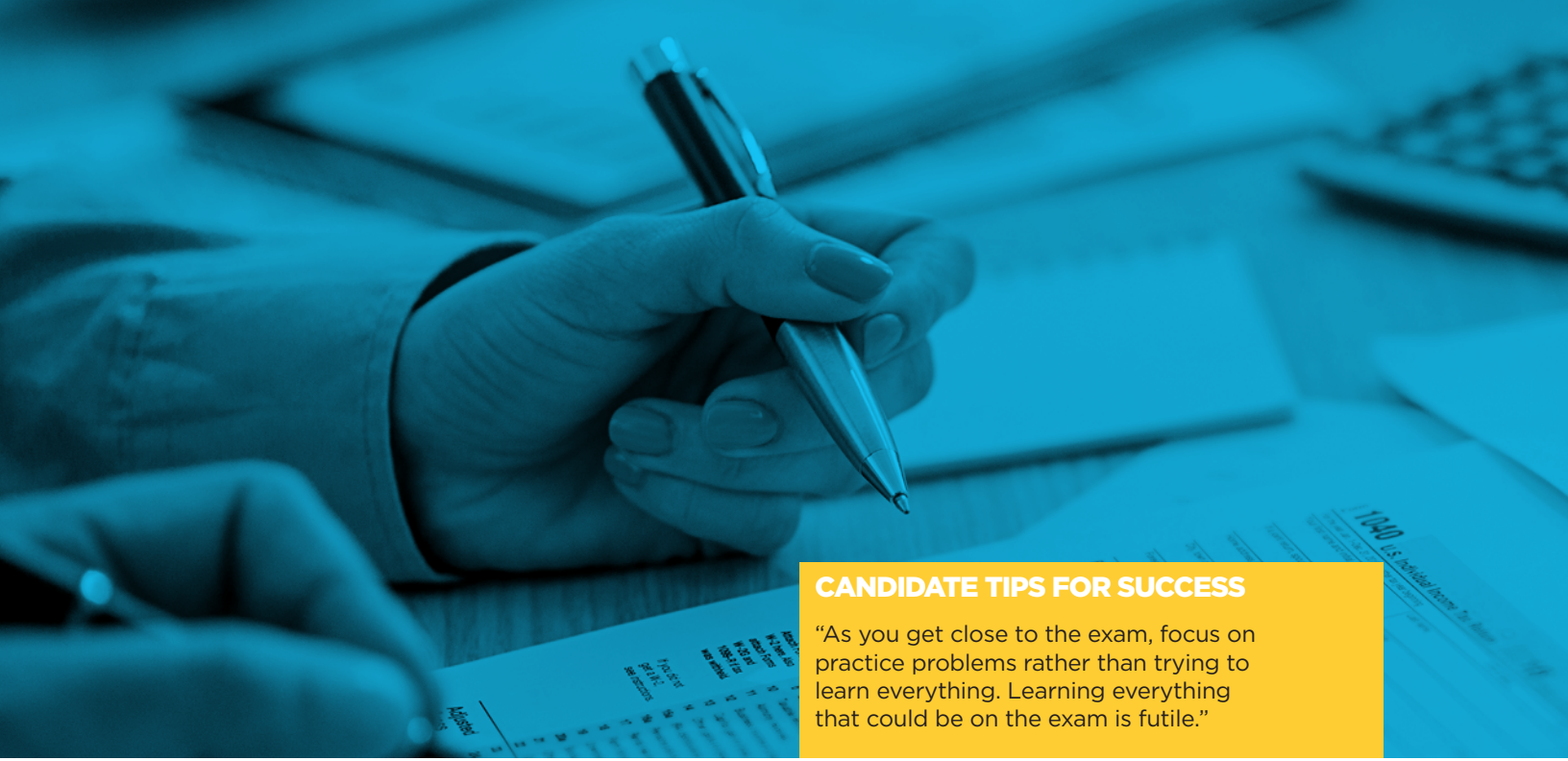
1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____
4 _____	_____
5 _____	_____

Adjust

Get your time back. List your priorities and rank them in order of importance. Focus 50% of your time on your top **two** priorities.

Priorities

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____



CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“As you get close to the exam, focus on practice problems rather than trying to learn everything. Learning everything that could be on the exam is futile.”

DEVELOP A TEST STRATEGY

EXAM STRUCTURE

A clear understanding of how the exam is structured will help you develop an approach for managing the time you spend preparing for the exam and the time you spend responding to the test questions during the exam. Take note of the following considerations as you study for the exam. Emphasize key areas in your studies to match the content coverage of the exam.

- The exam consists of 170 test questions.
- The test questions are administered in two 3-hour sections separated by a 40-minute break. Each 3-hour section is broken into two subsections, with the option for a short break between each.
- Each section contains 85 questions.
- Test questions are administered at random.
- Questions are not grouped by topic.
- All questions are multiple choice.

Blueprint

Be strategic in your approach to studying the Major Principal Topic areas.

50% of the exam is covered equally by the following topic areas:

- General Principles of Financial Planning 15%
- Investment Planning 18%
- Retirement Savings and Income Planning 17%

Focus your study to adequately cover the content in heavily-weighted areas.

35% of the exam covers the following areas:

- Risk Management and Insurance Planning 11%
- Tax Planning 14%
- Estate Planning 10%

For moderately-weighted topics, ensure your effort is managed accordingly.

15% of the exam will cover the following areas:

- Professional Conduct and Regulation 8%
- Psychology of Financial Planning 7%

Content with the least amount of weight accounts for 25 items out of 170 total questions on the exam. Be familiar with these areas and don't neglect them in your study, although they are less critical in terms of content coverage.

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“When you are doing a final review of topics, focus less on the individual numbers and facts, and ask yourself “Can I explain this concept; do I understand it fully?””

LEARNING PREFERENCES AND STRENGTHS

Understand your learning style and evaluate your strengths. Develop an approach to studying that plays to your strengths. Before purchasing resources, research exam prep provider offerings to see if their program aligns with your learning style.

For the Visual Learner

- Use images, maps, and graphic organizers to access and understand new information.
- Outline information.
- Create charts.
- Create study sheets.
- Develop self-test questions.
- Create visual images to connect the information to acronyms.

For the Learner with a Strong Preference for Reading and Writing

- Take significant amounts of notes.
- Revisit materials and abstract content through writing essays.

For the Auditory Learner

- Listen during lectures and interact in discussions to understand new content.
- Participate in a study group to enhance learning through interactions with your peers.
- Read passages out loud.
- Recite the main points of each text section.
- Explain information out loud.
- Discuss study material with a partner or study group.
- Record lectures and play them during daily commutes or while doing household chores.
- Teach the material to someone else.

For the Kinesthetic Learner

- Put financial planning principles into practice.
- Use scenarios and user stories in the context of the contextual variables and the student centered learning objectives.
- Actively draft recommendations and financial plans to address various circumstances.
- Take notes as you read texts.
- Create note cards, question cards and problem cards.
- Make up self-tests in the same format of the actual test and take them.
- Participate in study groups and review sessions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Gap Analysis.
- Practice Exam Strategy.

A self-assessment allows you to make the most of your study time by showing you where potential gaps in learning exist. A self-assessment not only focuses on potential gaps in learning relative to financial planning, it can also afford you a mechanism for mediating and self-regulating your study efforts.

Mediating role of self-evaluation:

- Offers a tool for guiding self-improvement by comparing one's performance with expert performance.
- Self-evaluation helps candidates organize learning in work-based contexts.

Gap Analysis

Understanding exactly what you know relative to the exam blueprint helps you to self-regulate your learning effort.

How do you measure your knowledge relative to the content addressed by the exam? CFP Board put together a set of Student-Centered Learning Objectives that provide specific statements that reflect the expected abilities students should possess once the course is completed. The Student-Centered Learning Objectives take the guesswork out of identifying potential gaps in acquired knowledge.

You might want to start with the Student-Centered Learning Objectives document provided in the appendix.

1. Review the learning objectives outlined in the Student-Centered Learning Objectives.
2. Evaluate your own abilities relative to the learning objectives.
3. Reflect on your understanding and rate your perceived ability relative to the learning objectives.
4. When applying the rating, use a simple 4-level scale that rates your performance from below performance standard to exceeds performance standards.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Below performance standard	Limited achievement of performance standard	Competent	Exceeds performance standard
Routine tasks	Routine and mid-complexity tasks	Routine and complex	Strategically important

This table provides an example of the rating scales applied to Life Insurance learning objectives.

LIFE INSURANCE (INDIVIDUAL)	L1	L2	L3	L4
a. Explain the underwriting factors commonly used in the life underwriting process.				
b. Differentiate between term, whole life, variable, universal and VUL policies and select the most appropriate type of coverage to match a client's specific circumstances.				
c. Calculate a client's insurance needs using alternative approaches, including the capital needs, human value, capital retention, income retention and income multiplier methods.				
d. Recommend whether a policy should be replaced based upon quantitative and qualitative factors.				
e. Describe common life insurance termination options.				
f. Recommend life insurance purchase and benefits distribution options based upon needs, financial resources, and cost.				

The Student-Centered Learning Objectives can be used as a framework for your Gap Analysis.

Once you complete the Gap Analysis, take a moment to formally reflect on what you have learned from this exercise.

- The rating scales you applied to your learning provide descriptions of performance levels and criteria for success.
- As you study, use these tools to monitor and evaluate your progress toward mastering financial planning concepts.

- Identify what you need to do to close the Gap.
- Describe what you will be able to do when the Gap is closed.

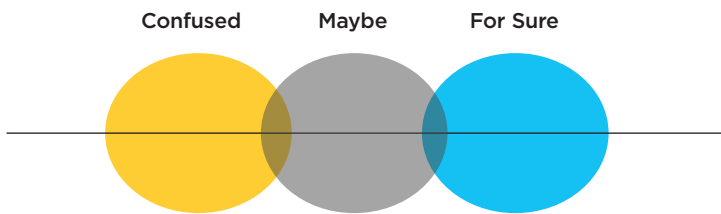


Practice Exam Strategy

As you study, be aware of potential errors in your judgment. At times, we feel that we have mastered certain subjects. However, an error in judgment can result in an illusion that we are strong in subjects that at the moment seem very easy to remember. Because these areas seem very easy, we make the mistake of underestimating our ability to forget.

To overcome this issue, it is recommended that candidates be practical in their approach to studying instead of being led by emotion. Use the following tips to overcome the false belief that you have achieved mastery over the material.

While taking practice exams draw the following diagram for each question.



Use the scale to record an “X” beside your perceived ability level relative to the content addressed in the question.

- Once you complete the practice test exercise, evaluate your perceived ability relative to your success in answering the question correctly.
- Any gaps between your perception and outcome will need to be addressed to avoid the illusion of being fluent in the area of competency when more study is needed.

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“Continue to put yourself in the discomfort of the testbank and mock exams. You may be tempted to stick in your comfort zone, of reviewing module materials and flashcards, but the mock tests are the closest replica of what you can expect on exam day.”

More Strategies

- When you encounter difficult passages in the material, after reading over the material several times, put the text book down and try to explain to someone what the passage says. Verbalizing the material is more powerful than going through the motions of reading a passage that does not make sense.
- If no one is around, write down what you understand the material from memory. Develop an outline and record your knowledge, aiming for succinct, coherent and clear descriptions of the material you just learned.
- Discussing what you know with your colleagues will help you to identify what you do not know.
- Study like you are preparing for a marathon. Marathon runners do not train by running 24 hours a day. Instead they take regular breaks to ensure they have recovered from their training efforts.

Excessive studying may actually be counter-productive. Take a more strategic approach and incorporate spaced interval repetition to space out your study effort. Introducing time intervals between study sessions is a powerful technique that will improve your recall and allow you to spend fewer hours studying. Be sure to develop a study routine that allows for you to take free time throughout the week between sessions.

TEST TAKER TYPES AND STRATEGIES

We collected some test-taking personality types and have assembled a few strategies to address typical short comings.

Read through the personality descriptions to see if you recognize any of the traits. If you find that the description fits, follow some of our suggestions.

Do you hurry through the exam?

- Desperately rushes through exam items to ensure you finish before forgetting what you have learned
- Anxious before the exam, obsessively repeating bits of information resulting in confusion
- Finishes before the majority of the test takers are halfway through the first section

Suggestions:

- Work on relaxation and managing your stress.
- Develop a plan of study that avoids cramming by providing ample time for review.
- Work on test taking strategies during your review process.

Do you have trouble completing tests on time?

- Moves methodically, answering each test question slowly and deliberately
- Last to finish
- Tendency to score better on the first section than the last

Suggestions:

- Take practice exams.
- Practice reading and answering items to increase your speed in responding to prompts.
- Monitor your time throughout the exam.
- Be aware of the total number of questions on the exam and the time allotted for each section.
- Scan questions and address more time-consuming questions later.

Are you a second guesser?

- Continuously changing answers that seem wrong
- Attempts the exam from the perspective of “correcting” flawed content

Suggestions:

- Unless you can clearly state why the answer is wrong, avoid erasing or changing answers.
- Progress through the test carefully and methodically, being aware to avoid erratic behavior.
- Do not use extra time to revisit answers.

Do you fear personal failure?

- Focused on a successful outcome on the exam
- Develop study plans that are never implemented
- Pursues a cramming strategy in preparation for the exam

Suggestions:

- Implement a plan of progressive study to cover the breadth of topics.
- Use timelines to complete each unit of study.
- Be consistent in following a schedule for exam preparation.

OTHER PERSONALITY TYPES**Over confident**

- Typically older and more mature
- Life experiences inform knowledge and insight
- Makes mistakes through judgment colored by personal beliefs and experiences by failing to account for expected norms and standards

Suggestions:

- Apply broad principles and standards to justify decisions made in testing.
- Recognize when you are making mental connections between your personal experiences and scenarios you encounter on the exam.
- Use professional standards to guide your decision making in testing situations.

Overanalyzer

- Drawn to the complexity of the situation
- Doubtful of your ability to master the topic
- Overanalyze the scenario and make the mistake of reading into the question
- Make incorrect assumptions about the intent of the question
- Bring in additional information instead of reading items as they are

Suggestions:

- Work on your confidence by scrutinizing your gaps in knowledge to ensure they are filled before taking the exam.
- Focus solely on what is presented within the item.
- Avoid overanalyzing what you read.
- Practice taking sample questions and cases.

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“It’s so important to **READ THE FULL QUESTION!** You’d be surprised at how many I continually got wrong on the practice exams, because of quickly glancing at the question and answering in a hurry. Of course I knew the answer, but if I had slowed myself down and read each word, I would have chosen the correct answer.”

EXAM DAY STRATEGIES

Multiple Choice Exams

1. Read the entire question before you look at the possible answers.
2. Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers; this way, the choices given on the test won't distract you from focusing on the question.
3. Read all the choices before choosing your answer to select the best one.
4. Eliminate answers you know are not correct.
5. There is no guessing penalty, so it's always best to take an educated guess if you are uncertain of the answer.
6. Don't keep changing your answer; usually your first choice is the right one, unless you misread the question.
7. Go through the exam and answer the questions you know first. Mark the others for review and then return to those you skipped. This will ensure that you don't lose time by focusing on questions that cause uncertainty.

Plan Your Exam Day

Become familiar with your schedule on exam day. Map routes to the test center in advance and practice driving there a week before your scheduled appointment. Plan to arrive at the testing center 30 minutes in advance of your scheduled appointment time. Review check-in procedures for the test center. Understand the center's rules and requirements. Identify how your appointment time will be allocated to specific activities so you know what to expect on exam day.

Do not neglect your health and personal well-being prior to the exam. Continue your social and recreational activities and take breaks throughout the course of your study.

Don't forget to get a good night's sleep the evening before your testing appointment. Part of managing test-related anxiety effectively comes from budgeting sufficient time to cover the material and time for adequate rest.

Test Drive

Exams are administered throughout the United States at computer-based Prometric testing centers. Prometric offers test takers the opportunity to take a 30-minute "dry run" of the test center experience prior to their exam, whenever the test center has available appointments. The program, called Test Drive, allows candidates to walk through, on a practice basis, all check-in and testing procedures that occur at the test center on test day.

The optional Test Drive experience costs \$30 U.S. and includes check-in, ID confirmation, documentation checking, image capture, seating, tutorial, a generic sample test, a survey of the experience, an end-of-test report and check-out.

Once checked in, you'll be exposed to the full testing experience described above, in addition to the use of lockers, testing at a computer for 15 minutes and exposure to TCAs walk-throughs, which occur during any actual test. While Test Drive will not necessarily represent the look, feel or content of your particular exam, it will allow you to experience samples of question types that you might encounter on the actual exam. Additionally, by driving to the testing center in advance, you can familiarize yourself with the parking situation, the location of the testing suite and the time it takes to drive to the center.

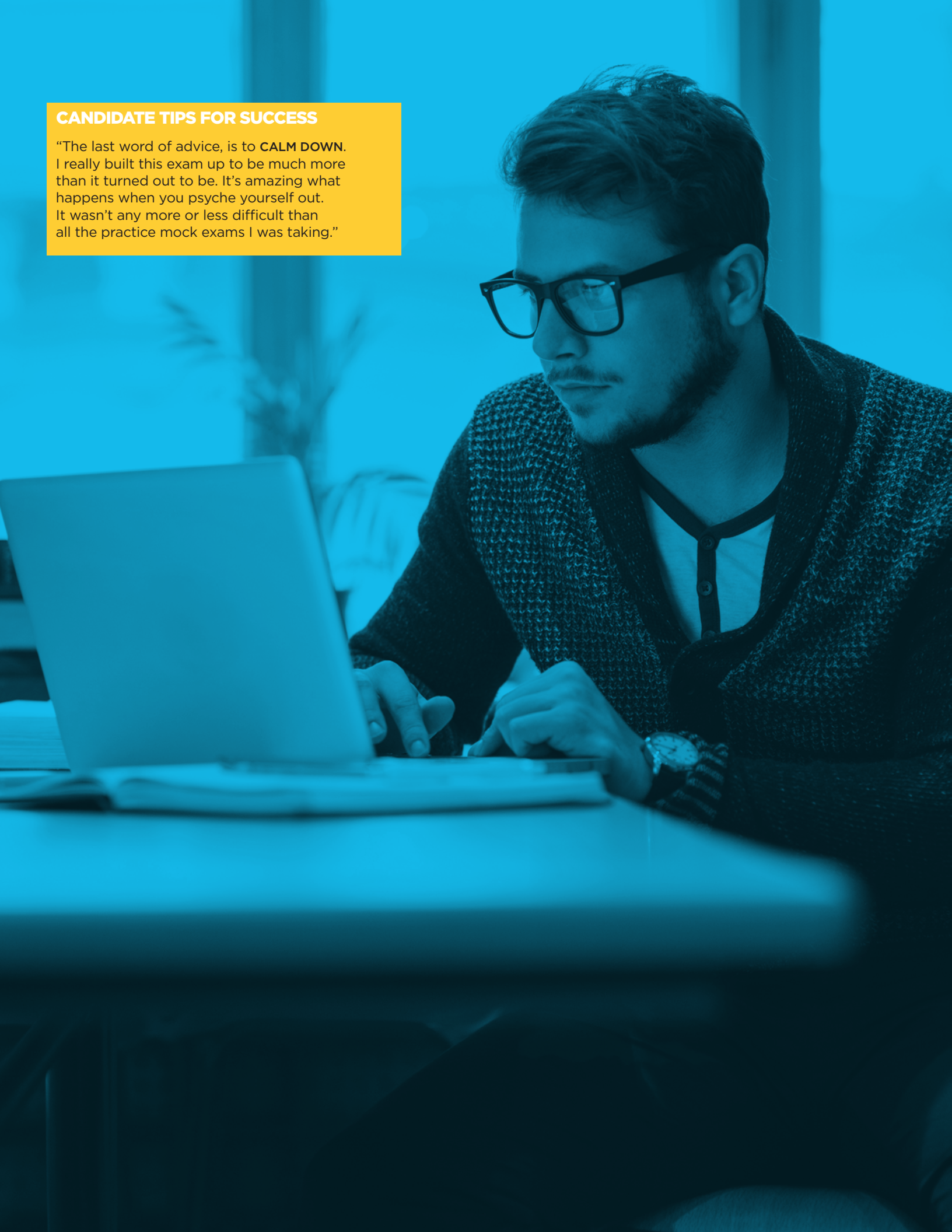
You can schedule a Test Drive appointment in the same manner as you would schedule an actual exam. Alternatively, CFP Board developed a tutorial that gives candidates an opportunity to become familiar with the test delivery software. [prometric.com/test-drive](https://www.prometric.com/test-drive)

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

"Exercise helps with daily stress. Consider taking a walk after an hour to two of studying. Sometimes I would work out and/or practice cello between study sessions, and that was always rejuvenating."

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“The last word of advice, is to **CALM DOWN**. I really built this exam up to be much more than it turned out to be. It’s amazing what happens when you psyche yourself out. It wasn’t any more or less difficult than all the practice mock exams I was taking.”



RIGHT MINDSET

Make sure you have the right mindset as you prepare for your exam.

Consider your thoughts and evaluate how they influence your behavior and ultimately your performance. Taking on the challenge of exam

preparation with the right mindset could lead to your success on exam day. We outlined a few negative thinking patterns related to the CFP® exam below. Focus making the shift from negative thinking to having the right mindset.

	NEGATIVE THINKING	RIGHT MINDSET
Belief	“The exam contains subjective test questions. To me, these types of questions do NOT test my knowledge of what I need to know to become a successful financial planner. These are VERY circumstantial questions and I feel I would have gotten several of those correct if they were presented in an essay or short answer format. Multiple choice does not seem like the correct format for recommendations. “	“To become a good test taker I need to understand what the question is asking by reading carefully. I can use my knowledge to evaluate which option is the best course of action.”
Expectation	“No resource exists to help me address subjective test questions.”	“With study and practice, I will be able to focus on the correct response.”
Attitude	“I have accepted I can’t pass the exam.”	“I’m going to use a well-rounded approach to studying practice exam items and reviewing areas where I am weak. I will truly review the questions I get wrong to understand WHY I’m choosing the wrong answers.”
What You’ve Learned	“The exam contains trick questions. It’s unfair to evaluate candidates with trick questions.”	“I’m in control. I can make the best of my situation to fill in the gaps in my learning. I can learn from my mistakes.”

Take a moment to reflect on the impact each negative thought has on your mindset and performance. The negative course of thinking shifts blame on perceived external barriers. The positive course of thinking seeks constructive ways to overcome perceived barriers. Be careful with your thoughts. You can spend precious study time being frustrated by the process, or you can change the way you look at things and allow yourself to move forward.

CANDIDATE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

“Remember the ways that you can gain confidence prior to exam day: getting consistent scores in your mock exams, test materials, and any assessments available. As much as you’d love to walk in feeling like a rock star on exam day, the test isn’t made to provide that level of assurance so just accept the discomfort, and control what is controllable.”

NOW IT IS TIME TO TAKE ACTION

As you start to map your strategy in preparation for the CFP® exam, take a moment to understand your current position, develop a vision for addressing your weaknesses and plan to address the barriers you will face.

First, set priorities and stick with them. Measure and monitor your success and progress. Find out what is not working and look for opportunities to change. Find support from individuals who will hold you accountable to your commitments. And finally, take action instead of focusing on what you perceive to be insurmountable barriers.

Remember, every individual is different. Use some or a combination of multiple strategies outlined in this toolkit to assist in your preparation for the CFP® exam. By implementing these techniques, you will be able to take control of your preparation and maximize your effort.



CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER BOARD OF STANDARDS, INC.

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