

# Steps

## to Initial CFP® Certification

### REVITALIZE | YOUR CAREER

*whether going it alone or as part of a team –  
by earning the certification that is rapidly becoming the industry standard*

### GAIN | THE FINANCIAL PLANNING KNOWLEDGE YOU NEED

*to serve your clients better*

### EXPERIENCE | A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

*by earning the financial planning certification that consumers recognize,  
respect and demand*

## 1 | Complete the Education Requirement

Before applying for the CFP® Certification Examination, you need to complete the education requirements set by CFP Board. You can fulfill the education requirement through one of three paths:

### ▶ Complete a CFP Board-Registered Education Program

There are more than 285 academic programs at colleges and universities across the country from which to choose. These programs include credit and non-credit certificate programs, undergraduate and graduate degree programs. They use various delivery formats and schedules, including classroom instruction, self-study and online delivery. Many of CFP Board's Registered Programs also offer in-house educational programs for individual companies.

### ▶ Apply for Challenge Status

Certain degrees and professional credentials fulfill the educational requirement and allow you to sit for the CFP® Certification Examination.

Academic degrees and credentials that fulfill the educational requirements include:

- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)\*
- Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC)
- Licensed attorney\*
- Ph.D. in business or economics
- Chartered Financial Analyst® (CFA®)
- Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU)
- Doctor of Business Administration

*\*Inactive license acceptable*

### ▶ Request a Transcript Review

Certain industry credentials recognized by CFP Board, or the successful completion of upper-division level college courses, may satisfy some or all of the education requirements set by CFP Board.

### New Education Requirement Beginning 2007

Beginning in January of 2007, a bachelor's degree, in any field of study or program, will be required to obtain CFP® certification. After January 2007, individuals must have a bachelor's degree in order to become a CFP certificant.

Individuals not planning on obtaining a bachelor's degree must complete the **entire** certification process, including the education, examination, experience and ethics requirements, by January 2007. Candidates for CFP certification should allow time for any possible retakes of the CFP® Certification Examination, as well as adequate time to complete the rest of the certification process by this date.

Please visit [www.CFP.net/become](http://www.CFP.net/become) for more information.

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CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

BOARD OF STANDARDS, INC.

## 2 | Pass the CFP® Certification Examination

The CFP® Certification Examination tests your ability to apply your financial planning knowledge to client situations. The 10-hour exam is divided into three separate sessions. Because of the integrated nature of financial planning, however, each session may cover all topic areas. All questions are multiple choice, including those questions related to case problems.

The exam is administered three times a year – generally on the third Friday and Saturday of March, July and November – at about 50 domestic locations. The application deadline is approximately seven weeks prior to each exam date (e.g., February 1, June 1 and October 1). Application forms can be downloaded at [www.CFP.net/become](http://www.CFP.net/become) or you can call 800-487-1497 to have one mailed to you. Completed applications, including payment of the \$595 fee, **must be received** by the deadlines printed on the applications – there are no exceptions.

### ► Review Courses

CFP Board maintains a list of review courses, offered by independent firms, designed to assist individuals in preparing for the CFP® Certification Examination. A current list of review course providers is available at [www.CFP.net/beome](http://www.CFP.net/beome). CFP Board neither evaluates the quality of the review courses nor endorses any program.

## 3 | Meet the Experience Requirement

At least three years of qualifying full-time work experience are required for certification. Qualifying experience includes work that can be categorized into one of the six primary elements of the personal financial planning process. Experience can be gained in a number of ways including:

- the delivery of all, or of any portion, of the personal financial planning process to a client.
- the direct support or supervision of individuals who deliver all, or any portion, of the personal financial planning process to a client.
- teaching all, or any portion, of the personal financial planning process.

## 4 | Adhere to the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility and Pass Background Check

After you have met the education, examination and work experience requirements, you must disclose past or pending litigation or agency proceedings and agree to abide by CFP Board's *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility* and *Financial Planning Practice Standards*. A background check will also be conducted.

## 5 | Pay Certification Fees

Upon successfully completing the first three steps, fees will apply as follows:

- A one-time, non-refundable initial certification application fee of \$100 for the background checks as noted above.
- A biennial certification fee of \$300.

## 6 | Receive Authorization to Use the CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP® marks.



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### Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc.

1670 Broadway, Suite 600, Denver, Colorado 80202-4809

P: 800-487-1497 F: 303-860-7388

E: [mail@CFP-Board.org](mailto:mail@CFP-Board.org) W: [www.CFP.net/become](http://www.CFP.net/become)



CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™



The certification marks above are owned by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. and are awarded to individuals who successfully complete CFP Board's initial and ongoing certification requirements.

➤ For further details on the CFP® certification process, download the *Guide to CFP® Certification* from CFP Board's Web site or call CFP Board to obtain a copy.