

Getting Started with the CFA Level I Exam

The Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Program is a globally recognized professional credential for those pursuing careers in investment management, corporate finance, financial advising, and related fields. If you're interested in taking the Level I Exam, here's what you need to know and how to prepare.


1. Explore the CFA Program

- Learn more about the program, requirements, and career benefits:
[CFA Program Overview](#)
- Review the student scholarship opportunity (which significantly reduces exam fees):
[CFA Student Scholarships](#)
- CFA Level I topics and their exam weights
<https://www.cfainstitute.org/programs/cfa-program/candidate-resources/level-i-exam#topic-weights>

2. Recommended Courses for Preparation

To build the right foundation for the exam, you should plan to take the following courses:

- ACCT 120A – Intermediate Accounting I
- FIN 129A – SMIF I
- FIN 129B – SMIF II
- FIN 138 – Options, Futures, and Other Derivatives
- ACCT 120B – Intermediate Accounting II (if possible)

 **Strongly recommended:** **At a minimum**, students should take FIN 138 and ACCT 120A. Without these, passing CFA Level I will be extremely difficult.

3. Scholarships & Application Timeline

- The department awards only three student scholarships per academic year, making the process highly competitive. The final decision on the selection of scholarship awardees will be made in January.
- Contact any of the following CFA professors, Dr. K.C. Chen, Dr. Mo Fallah, and Dr. Le Zhao, if you plan to apply for the scholarship.
- Be prepared to show strong academic performance and commitment to finance. Expect to study for 300 hours for the CFA Level 1 exam.