



# CFP BOARD

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### OCTOBER 15TH ASK THE EXPERT: FINDING SUCCESS AFTER FAILING THE CFP®

# EXAM

🔒 Thread closed by the administrator. It is viewable, but not accepting new replies.



asktheexpert

[Add a tag](#)



Sara Maloney 11 days ago

[Hello everyone, Mark your calendars for our Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam Ask the...](#)

1. October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

2

RECOMMEND



[Sara Maloney](#)

Posted 11 days ago

Edited by Sara Maloney 9 seconds ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hello everyone,

Mark your calendars for our **Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam Ask the Expert on October 15 from 1-2:30 pm ET!**

Our experts are:

- [@Robert Rea](#), CFP® professional and CFP Board Mentor
- [@Eric Rodriguez](#), CFP® professional and CFP Board Mentor
- [@Sarah Specht](#), Candidate for CFP® certification
- [@Bryan Ruiz](#), CFP® professional and CFP Board Mentor

They will be available to answer your questions on all things related to preparing for the CFP® exam – specifically staying motivated, tips on how to study again, and finding success after an unsuccessful

exam attempt.

We welcome you to ask questions, follow the discussion, and/or provide your own input on this topic! Our experts will be using @mentions in the discussion, so when you ask a question, you will receive a notice from the @mention when you get a response.

Get your questions ready, we are looking forward to answering them!

#asktheexpert

-----  
Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
-----

2. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Our event is now LIVE! Please post any questions you have on this thread and an expert will respond to it directly on this thread. Our experts will be using @mentions in the discussion, so when you ask a question, you will receive a notice from the @mention when you get a response.

Here are some ways to involve yourself in today's session:

1. Stay on this thread and refresh your screen to watch live what's being posted and post your own discussion post to get an answer.
2. Click the Follow star at the top of this thread and you will get real time emails from this thread so you can stay live without having to be on the page the whole time.

3. Post your question on this thread and check back later for an answer and read through the rest of the discussion.

We look forward to answering your questions!

#asktheexpert

-----  
 Sara Maloney  
 Community Manager  
 CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
 -----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

3. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Micala Patschke

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi everyone! Thank you for your time today. My question is how to stay motivated and confident when studying again/ re taking the test. I am worried when I re test I will get in my head and have "the fear of failing again" on my mind. Any advice on how to avoid this? Also a second question is how to not get burned out while studying/getting overwhelmed with the information? Thank you for any help you could give.

Micala

-----  
 Micala Patschke

Student  
Main Street Financial Solutions  
Cypress TX  
(713)515-3039

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

4. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Micala Patschke The best way to stay motivated is to write down your why. Why are you trying to get the CFP marks? Why is it important? Who are you doing it for? How bad do you want it? Once you find your why, figure it out what you need to do to get it. For me it was finding a new live review provider, getting a solid schedule in place, and sell out 100% to studying. Re burn out, don't over study, 2-4 hours per day up until the last few weeks is good enough. Once you get into the last few weeks you can turn it up a notch, but balance is key. Continue take day offs for mental breaks, exercise, and do other things as well. Your brain needs to rest.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose CA  
(408)647-0518

-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

5. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Micala Patschke

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Thank you Eric, this was very helpful! I felt so confident going into the exam in September and was scoring on practice exams where in the target range and unfortunately didn't pass. Going in so confident and feeling okay about the exam and then ending up with a failing grade makes me worried about getting in my head the next time I take it. Thanks again!

Micala

-----

Micala Patschke  
Student  
Main Street Financial Solutions  
Cypress TX  
(713)515-3039

-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

6. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Micala Patschke Totally understand, the first time I took it I was getting 80%'s on the practice exams. I thought the exam was going to be a breeze. I later found out, I wasn't picking the best out of 2 answers. I wasn't reading questions properly, I was kinda winging it based upon memorized practice exam answers. Study the material more vs. taking a bunch of practice exams. I scored a 50% on my last final practice exam, fixed what I got wrong, and passed the CFP last Nov.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose CA  
(408)647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

7. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi @Micala Patschke. I know the challenges associated with retaking this bear of an exam. Try looking at it like eating a bowling ball, one small piece at a time. We all learn differently. Maybe a study period in the morning, one on the commute (if safely possible) and one in the evening is possible, plus the weekend. Shoot for an amount of time that works best for you. Once you read the exam review books thoroughly at least once, focus the rest of your prep on a robust quiz bank. Keep resetting them until you are able to average in the 80's or higher. Focus on year weaker areas first, but ensure you review all topics. Take a pre exam test to see how you do. If you can get 60% or higher this is a good sign. Plus, if you can consistently score in the 80's on the quiz banks, this is a good indication too. Sometimes studying with someone else helps. But we are all different. Whatever works best for you. Best wishes.

-----  
Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
Montclair, VA  
(703) 946-1198 (cell)  
[rsrea@hotmail.com](mailto:rsrea@hotmail.com)  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

8. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Joy Toomer

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Not sure how to join. Please advise.

-----  
 Joy Toomer  
 CA  
 Seeking CFP  
 Westlake Village CA  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

9. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi @Joy Toomer,

You're here! Post any questions you have on this discussion thread or read along.

-----  
 Sara Maloney  
 Community Manager  
 CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

10. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Joy Toomer

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Thanks!

-----  
 Joy Toomer  
 CA  
 Seeking CFP  
 Westlake Village CA  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

11. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Allen Minton

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



#asktheexpert

Good Afternoon, I took the test in Sep, and did not pass, I plan to take it again in March, would you recommend a break for a few weeks to prevent burn out and refresh, or just keep on going.

-----  
Allen Minton  
Flagship Representative  
The Vanguard Group  
Drexel Hill PA  
(484)524-2637  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

12. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

Hi @Allen Minton

I would take a break of at least 2 weeks, give yourself time to recharge, spend time with friends or family, just enjoy yourself. You worked hard to prep in September and you need to build up the stamina to study again! Only way to do that is to recharge your batteries!

-----  
Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

13. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Allen Minton

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Thank you

-----  
 Allen Minton  
 Flagship Representative  
 The Vanguard Group  
 Drexel Hill PA  
 (484)524-2637  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

14. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Allen Minton Definitely take a break. I wouldn't start studying again until December. 12 weeks is a good barometer (sp).

-----  
 Eric Rodriguez  
 CA  
 WealthBuilders, LLC  
 San Jose CA  
 (408)647-0518

-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

15. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

Edited by Sara Maloney 6 seconds ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Allen Minton, I agree with Sarah, and take a break. You might even want to rethink taking it in March and go for July instead, depending on your scores. You may also want to look at buying a different set of exam review books to read. Many are offered for sale on this site. And access to a different quiz bank will help. Focus on your weaker subjects first, but do review all subjects! Best wishes.

-----

Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
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-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

16. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Terrence Ransom

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hello,

I had an unfortunate experience with the September exam (remote testing) where about 1/3 of the way through my exam the screen went blank from an unexplained Error message. I lost about 20 minutes, and had several unanswered questions that I could not go back to when my exam was recovered, so undoubtedly I did not pass.

My review instructor recommended waiting to retake the exam in March to allow myself time to regroup mentally and emotionally. So, I am taking advantage of that time by studying at a slower pace until about three months out.

However, what do you recommend for a study strategy?

-----  
Terrence Ransom  
Relationship Consultant  
The Vanguard Group  
San Tan Valley AZ  
480-277-2840  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

17. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

@Terrence Ransom Oh man, I'm sorry to hear that. That is incredibly frustrating. Here is what I would do. First, I would take time to relax and recharge. Don't start studying until Dec. Find a test prep program that fits your learning style. For me, I needed someone to literally read the books with me and share examples while reading. That was Danko. Then I would get your schedule sorted out. A game changer for me was being intentional with my time and blocking off 1-3 hours every morning to study while everything was fresh. That made such a difference for me, I cant stress that enough. Study in the morning, don't study at night.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
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-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

18. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Terrence Ransom

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi Eric,

Thank you for the advice. My firm paid for Kaplan, but I also signed-up for Danko. These national exams have always been a challenge for me, and "test anxiety" is something I am learning to control so that I don't "overthink" the answers. Also, memorization is not a strength for me, but I do understand concepts. Would you say that to keep the material "fresh" I should start slowly with 1-3 (M-F) hours per day, and 7-10 (Sat/Sun) hours = Total 25 hours per week until December. Then, start Danko late December until the exam on March 16? Also, there is so much material, what scores should I be averaging on the Q-Banks and practice tests? (Note: The CFP practice tests seemed very different than the test September, 2020). Your advice is welcome!

-----  
Terrence Ransom  
Relationship Consultant  
The Vanguard Group  
San Tan Valley AZ  
480-277-2840  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

19. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Terrence Ransom Great questions. Yeah, start slowly you don't want to burn out. You never want to run the marathon before the marathon. You build up to it. You want to peak right when you take the exam. 25-30 hours/week is ideal until the last 4 weeks then you turn it up a notch. Don't focus too much on practice exam scores. I was scoring in the 50-60's and I passed the exam because I knew the material. Keep in mind the test is putting you in a position to truly be a financial planner in each question. That is how I approached every question, what is the best thing for this client. Re memorization, I would practice memorizing using flash cards. For example, during the entire study process I made a goal to memorize 3-5 flash cards per day. For example it could be a flash card on Debt to income ratios <28% of gross (PITI), <36% of gross income (total monthly debt) <20% of net income (consumer debt). The day before the exam I could recite the definition of any card I had in my pile It was roughly 300 cards. It was a lot of work, but I didn't want to take the test again. I wanted to do everything in my power to pass. I needed an edge, this was one way of getting it. I would highly recommend flash cards so you understand/memorize key concepts that will be tested.

-----  
 Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
 Founder  
 WealthBuilders, LLC  
 San Jose, Ca  
 408-647-0518  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

20. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Lisa Bolten

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Are the practice exams (provided by CFP org when we sign up for the exam), the same each time? I'm waiting until March 2021 to retake and hoping that I get different practice exams than the two provided for the Sept exam.

-----  
Lisa Bolten  
student  
Pennsylvania State University  
Kennett Square PA  
(302)650-7732  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

21. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Lisa Bolten

I can say that mine were different from the one I took back in October 2019 and then August 2020. Just have to remember to use the correct tax code when taking an older exam!

-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

22. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 3 days ago

Edited by Sara Maloney one second ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Lisa Bolten,

Each practice exam (CFP Board Practice Exam 1 and CFP Board Practice Exam 2) contains the same 170 questions each time it is added to your account. The practice exams are designed to assist candidates in their preparation for any administration of the CFP® exam based on the current Job Task Domains and Principal Topic areas, and can help identify the Principal Topic area(s) one needs to review further to improve proficiency. We hope you still find them useful as you prepare for March.

-----

Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

23. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Brandon Marinelli

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi there and thanks for taking the time to help answer our questions:

I used Practice Exam I as my gauge to assess where I stood in the categories a week before my actual exam. I did well on Practice Exam I but unfortunately on Exam day I had two areas that were deficient. The confusing part was I did very well in these two areas on the practice exam.

My questions are two fold:

1. Is it wise to use Practice Exam II as a gauge or are these practice exams more to get you familiar with the format of the questions.
2. Regarding the questions themselves, I feel that my industry experience made me answer the subjective questions differently:

How would you suggest we answer "Best Answer" type questions. Example being about a

moderately aggressive investor (at retirement) and how to invest his 401k funds, seeing his current assets are all moderately aggressive. The logical sense says he is older and needs to diversify and supplement with more conservative investments to balance risk. Or is it the other side that his moderately aggressive requests should still be honored.

thx again

-----  
Brandon Marinelli  
Senior Vice President, Investments  
Raymond James  
Avon CT  
(860)920-5040  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

24. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi @Brandon Marinelli

I have linked a post I did. I've taken this exam 3x. I took the practice exam before my 2nd exam and did great....however did not pass the actual exam and also did worse from test 1.

<https://candidateforum.cfp.net/communities/community-home/digestviewer/viewthread?GroupId=13&MessageKey=98aac36e-0940-40e8-824e-e33c3fd9a143&CommunityKey=640aae66-0133-4b15-86da-303f8e414931&tab=digestviewer&ReturnUrl=%2fcommunities%2fcommunity-home%2fdigestviewer%3fcommunitykey%3d640aae66-0133-4b15-86da-303f8e414931%26tab%3ddigestviewer>

One thing I will say is I psyched myself up for the 1st exam. I thought the questions would be written more difficult. Don't get me wrong they are hard and subjective but seeing them made me realize not as hard as I thought.

For me I used Dalton before my 3rd time. I really like their question bank and while tough questions I felt as it helped me prepare for the subjective nature a little better.

-----  
Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

25. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



**Brandon Marinelli**

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Thanks Sarah - I actually read your entire post before, very helpful and thanks for sharing.

-----  
 Brandon Marinelli  
 Senior Vice President, Investments  
 Raymond James  
 Avon CT  
 (860)920-5040  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

26. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Brandon Marinelli I'm not sure which practice exams you are referring to? I'm going to assume the CFP boards exams? If so, It's more the former, they are to get you accustomed to the format of the questions. #2, yes sometimes having industry experience can hurt you as it did me. You have to throw your biases out the window and answer the questions based upon what the CFP board believes is the right thing to do for the client in question. What I found is once I tackled the areas I wasn't good at, then I went back and studied ALL of the sections with equality. I didn't study tax more than general principles or general principles more than risk management. I treated each section as if my pass/fail depended on it.

I'm not too sure about your question regarding risk tolerance. I would need to see the question in totality.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
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(408)647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

27. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Brandon Marinelli The best I can offer is think back to your education and the exam review material, and use that info to answer the questions. Don't try to rationalize based on your work experience. Sounds easier than doing it, but if you review the material in detail, and work the quiz bank like your life depended on it, you can do this. Best wishes.

-----  
Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
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(703) 946-1198 (cell)  
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-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

28. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Raghunathan Rajagopalan

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi I took the exam in September and didn't pass it. I was confident and questions are not tough and had enough time to finish. I am in dilemma taking the November exam and what would be the recommendation ? I know it all depends on how I have prepared, what I should do in the next 20 days to crack it ? or is it too early to take the exam ?

-----  
Raghunathan Rajagopalan  
Wealth Management Advisor  
Northwestern Mutual  
Franklin WI  
(414)559-6797  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

29. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

@Raghunathan Rajagopalan I don't think you should ever rush study for the CFP exam. I think you should study minimum 12 weeks out, so I would recommend recharging and get a solid study plan for March. You don't want to take this exam 2 more times, you want to PASS the next time. This is the hardest test you will ever take, but with the right plan/study schedule you will PASS! Stick with it!

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose CA  
(408)647-0518  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

30. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



John Wimberly

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Thanks for the program today. Very helpful.

My first attempt was July 2019. had 4 Greens and 4 Red areas. I'm aware that I'm have Lost most of the crammed info (I took the courses from Byrant Univ in 10 months.. Looking back, see that the material was good, but for me, the exposure, engagement and grasp was NOT.) I'm tentatively targeting July 2021 for exam. And have put a tentative study plan together for it. Nov-Feb (reviewing weaker areas PLUS working on strengths w/ focus. March - begin practice examining 10-20 hours /week. April/May/June....review course w/ ???(Danko again or other). Would anyone like to weigh in on this....

-----  
 John Wimberly  
 Financial Rep  
 COUNTRY Financial  
 Birmingham AL  
 205-408-5746  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

31. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Lily Zhang

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi all, Thanks for organizing this Sara and experts for their time & input. Sounds like if we failed in Sept, we should wait til March or even later. Just curious is there any support for taking it in November while the information is still fresh?

-----  
Lily Zhang  
Associate  
DiversiFi Capital LLC  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

32. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Fresh vs Ready is what I would compare.

I would be worried about burn out. I started studying for July 2020 in April. I stopped when we learned that the July exam would not happen May 5th. I started studying for Sept 2020 mid July. So to study as hard as you did leading up to September and then continue on.....that would make me nervous for anyone's sanity!

If it feels good in your gut go for it! If you are somewhat questioning it, taking a break and being fully rested and ready for March is also not a bad idea.

-----  
Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041  
-----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

33. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Virginia Hagen

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hello,

Thank you for taking time to offer this discussion. It was encouraging to receive the diagnostic of the eight sections to highlight where I need to focus more attention. I am signed up for Kaplan review course. Is there a recommended schedule of how to get through all of the material? I am starting with the two areas where I fell below the required level of knowledge.

Thank you,  
Gina Hagen

-----  
Virginia Hagen

CFO  
Hagen  
Topanga CA  
(818)648-1626

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

34. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi Everyone! Excited to be here and hoping to help as you ramp up to PASS your CFP exam!!!

---

Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

35. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Galen Zimmerman

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi There! I have taken the exam twice now and have not passed either time. I felt super confident going into this last exam, but was pretty disappointed when all of the work I put into studying didn't pay off once again. I am going to be sitting again for the November exam while the material is still fresh. What are some of the best ways to help myself from burning out and staying motivated during these last final weeks before the exam?

-----  
Galen Zimmerman  
Student  
Seneschal Advisors, LLC  
Gig Harbor WA  
(509)607-6749  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

36. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Peter Nguyen

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

I am in the same boat Galen. I am linking up with another candidate this weekend to discuss the exam. If you would like to join. I would also like to hear best practices for preparing for the exam. I am using the Dalton materials and at a point where I am now memorizing the answer and not the concept. Does having study groups help?

-----  
Peter Nguyen  
Financial Consultant  
Charles Schwab  
Naples FL  
(239)432-5345  
-----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

37. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi @Galen Zimmerman, First I would ask you if you passed each of the sections that were 17%, and maybe inquire what were your highs and lows.....

I can understand wanting to take while it's "fresh" but you have a shortened time to prep. I stayed motivated because I knew that every night I studied or each Saturday and Sunday I missed out on family time that it would be the last time. If you fail the test 3xs you do have to wait for 1 year to re-take....I knew I didn't want to wait a year so I kept telling myself either pass or fail I would have a mandatory year off.

Just ensure you really know the concepts :) Best wishes!!!!

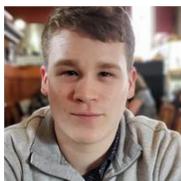
-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

38. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Galen Zimmerman

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi Sarah,

The only section that was 17% that I didn't pass was retirement. My highs were Tax, General Principals, Professional Conduct, Education Planning. My mid sections were investments and insurance. My lows were Retirement and Estate.

I am currently trying to study what I don't know, but am starting to feel like I am beginning to burn out. It's hard to have said no to my friends and family over the past year, and I want nothing more than to be able to spend that time with them again. I think I will try to utilize the mindset you used to try and help me maintain motivation.

-----  
 Galen Zimmerman  
 Student  
 Seneschal Advisors, LLC  
 Gig Harbor WA  
 (509)607-6749  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

39. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

My strategy was to make sure that all the sections that were 17% I passed for sure. I focused on Estate next (Insurance and Tax were sections I always passed)

Just know, time will fly by. I missed so many events, kids soccer, softball, even a family bday party for my kiddo. Sucks so bad. Wanna know what didn't suck. The night after I passed sitting around a bonfire with my husband and 3 girls as they ran around the yard and screamed "moms done studying"

Best of luck!

-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

40. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Galen Zimmerman I know exactly how you feel, I passed on my third try. If you are already feeling burn out, you might want to post pone. You should be going into the exam feeling fresh and confident. You don't want to feel mentally exhausted before the exam. That being said, if you don't think you need to post pone, the last few weeks are essential. I would suggest not doing a lot of test questions. When I failed 2x before, I was doing 200-500 questions per day leading up to the exam. It was a bad strategy. The 3rd time i did less than 800 over a 3 week period. I was focused more on knowing the information.

-----  
 Eric Rodriguez  
 CA  
 WealthBuilders, LLC  
 San Jose CA  
 (408)647-0518  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

41. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Raghunathan Rajagopalan

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

I am in the same boat like you Galen. But not fully prepared yet

-----  
 Raghunathan Rajagopalan  
 Wealth Management Advisor  
 Northwestern Mutual  
 Franklin WI  
 (414)559-6797  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

42. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Erica Cordova

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

Hey Galean,  
I'm in the same situation. I also have the same questions how to approach these last few weeks and prepare as much as I can.

-----  
Erica Cordova  
CA  
North Star Resource Group  
San Diego CA  
(619)339-0882  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

43. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Walter Jezak

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi Sarah,

When I took the test last year I struggled with overthinking the questions. I have over 30 years experience in the business, but the way some of the questions were asked I am sure I pulled in too much of my own experience to answer the questions. How do I pick up on exactly what the question is asking? Is that simply done by doing 5000 practice questions.

-----  
Walter Jezak  
Financial Service Representative  
MassMutual  
Windham NH  
603-681-0447  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

44. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

Good question @Walter Jezak. Having more experience can help in some instances for the exam and make it a little more challenging in others. I always asked myself "what does the CFP board want" how I may work with my clients is not always the CFP standards as far as prioritizing goals, selecting investments, more of the subjective questions. That can make the exam tough but knowing General Principles, Ethics is important. I would read through the documents the CFP Board publishes on their site too.....<https://www.cfp.net/get-certified/tools-and-resources>

-----  
Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

45. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Kyle Cassaday

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

Hi Sarah hope you're doing well. Specifically what documents should we focus on?

-----  
Kyle Cassaday  
Associate  
Cassaday and Company Inc.  
McLean VA  
(703)506-8200  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

46. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Kyle Cassaday

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



- What percentage of questions are going to relate to the CARES act and what will they look like?
- Last time I took it (September) I was asked a question about 2018 taxes. Is this something that I can expect to see again from other years prior to 2020?
- The CFP gave me two practice exams for free. I bought 2 additional practice exams but the ones I paid for are identical to the ones I got for free. How do I get a refund and additional CFP practice tests?
- One of the questions on the free practice tests gives the incorrect answer. Who do I talk to about this?
- This is the last time I am able to take the exam. I have run out of time every single time I've

sat for it. I have been denied everytime I have requested extra time. Is there someone I can talk to about this? Are there any extra resources for people who are taking it the final time.

- I dont understand my scores on my last test. I havent understood my scores on any of my tests. Is there anyway I can see the test I took in 2016 since 4 years have passed?

- Can someone explain to me the system used to score the exam?

-----  
 Kyle Cassaday  
 Associate  
 Cassaday and Company Inc.  
 McLean VA  
 (703)506-8200  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

47. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



VENU KAMIREDDY

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Sarah - First of all thanks for your time to helping on this.

I definitely new to CFP, and following all the updates on the discussions for the last few days. I am looking to attend the test in July 2021, can you please suggest the roadmap, what needs to be study and what are not. I am thinking to signup DALTON full pledge course in this week.

Thanks,

-----  
 VENU KAMIREDDY  
 Financial Professional  
 TARISH FINANCIAL GROUP LLC  
 ASHBURN VA  
 (617)633-4965  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

48. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Joy Toomer

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I haven't taken the practice exam yet. How helpful do you think it will be at this juncture?

-----  
 Joy Toomer  
 CA  
 Seeking CFP  
 Westlake Village CA  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

49. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Joy Toomer The practice exams are great to understand format and how the questions are asked. But, don't gauge your test readiness on the practice exams. You should focus more on being an expert on each section. Know your formulas, definitions, rules, etc. A good test prep provider is essential. I used Danko.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

50. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Coley Davis

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hello,

I have utilized both Dalton & Ken Zahn for my exam prep and unfortunately did not pass the exam.

It seems that I am doing well with the readings/concepts and test bank questions but, when it comes to practice exams I am on the verge of a Pass or Fail (Always getting down to the two best answers and selecting the incorrect one). I even hired a private tutor and was told that I understand the material and concepts; thus, it is a shock as to why I did not pass? It was recommended I practice as many questions as possible, even though it feels I have done more questions than possible and put in more hours of preparation than any exam prep ... Any recommendations on what to focus on in order to pass the exam or test taking tips?

Should I buy CFP Practice exams and focus on those?

Respectfully,

Coley IV

-----  
Coley Davis  
Financial Executive Associate  
C.B. Financial Insurance Services, Inc.  
San Diego CA  
(858) 602-9819  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

51. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

@Coley Davis You might be getting test anxiety/getting burnt out on test questions. I was in the same boat, not picking the best of two answers. What helped me was not doing as many practice exam questions. The first 2x, I took way too many practice exam questions. I was burnt out. Focus more on the concepts, cases, use flashcards, study in the morning.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

52. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Samuel Ramli

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



The new format which breaks within the 3 hours sections is much more disturbing rather than helpful.

First, It eliminates the ability to go back to all flagged questions for this section.

Secondly, if one was to take a break there is no need to have to force everyone into unwanted break And requires one to make a decision. It does not pause the time if one opt to take a break. Lastly by making this notice of breaks I lose few seconds to a minute in reading the written messages for the options. Will there be a consideration to remove this mid section breaks and allow full 3 hours sections with no breaks or allow testers to see all flagged items in the 3 hours sections. (I can review all flagged items within 85 questions, instead of within only 42 questions). Do the experts have any tips for this new format?

-----  
Samuel Ramli  
Private Client Advisor  
JPMorgan Chase  
Woodland Hills CA  
805-341-4090  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

53. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Samuel Ramli

I think you have to focus more on things you can control. It's highly unlikely the CFP board will make any changes to the exam format. At this point should be focusing on your study plan and taking a live review course.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose CA  
(408)647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

54. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Jeffrey Otway

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi Samuel,

Thank you for the advice. I do have a plan at the moment and will look at taking another live course. What are your suggestions on 1-3 days prior to the exam. I left my study plan to allow a few days to give myself rest and perspective. Thanks!

-----  
 Jeffrey Otway  
 Financial Consultant  
 TD Ameritrade  
 Frankfort IL  
 (815)274-2103  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

55. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Samuel Ramli, I was also a little taken back with the new format. But good news, we now know what the format is, so that is completely a mindset thing. Know that you have approx 42 questions per section and you have to complete the section before being able to move on. For me it didn't impact my time, and you still have the 3 hours you are not required to take a break, personally I did not.

-----

Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
(319)364-3041

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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

56. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Brandon Littleton

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Where's the link to the webcast?

---

Brandon Littleton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Form Advisory Group  
Murfreesboro TN  
615-500-1478

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

57. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Andrew O'Hearn

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I thought this was a webcast as well. It seems its just a live Q&A on the chat board

-----  
 Andrew O'Hearn  
 Director  
 Cerulli Associates  
 Medway MA  
 (617)406-8163  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

58. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

Posted 4 days ago

Edited by Sara Maloney 9 seconds ago

Hi @Brandon Littleton and @Andrew O'Hearn,

There is no webcast--the event is taking place right here on this discussion thread. Post any questions you have here or read along!

-----  
 Sara Maloney  
 Community Manager  
 CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

59. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Christopher Rupp

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Do we get anything from the CFP board in writing showing us the areas we need to focus on versus just the email I received the day after I failed the test? Plus, what is the pass rate for those taking the test a 2nd and 3rd time, and what score is needed to pass? Thanks.

-----  
 Christopher Rupp  
 Ohio  
 Grove Legacy

Oakwood OH  
(937)654-1228

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

60. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Hi @Christopher Rupp. I hate to burst your bubble, but my experience was that I could throw away my results and start fresh. I have degrees in accounting and insurance. My first job out of college was in taxes. Guess which areas were weak for me during my second sitting of the exam? Tax and insurance! Just my luck.

The best advice I have is to treat the exam like new because your strength in one area may be a weakness on a different exam.

---

Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

61. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 3 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Christopher Rupp,

If you are unsuccessful, your preliminary report will include a diagnostic indicative of your strengths and weaknesses across the Principal Topics.

You can view exam statistics [here](#).

-----  
Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

62. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Hovik Arakelian

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi, everyone. Thanks for taking the time to do this for us.

Considering how detailed some of the prep material can be in any given section, how would you counsel we spend our last few weeks of preparation? Should we spend the time to memorize what seem to be really detailed information (ex: social security taxation bend points, section 1231 gain, etc.) or try to abstract up and tie things together? There's an ocean of information to retain but the test is constrained to time and questions so not everything can be covered.

Sincerely,

Hovik Arakelian

-----  
Hovik Arakelian  
Director of Development  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee FL  
(305)849-6647  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

63. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

Edited by Sara Maloney 8 seconds ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

▼

@Hovik Arakelian, the last few weeks are for refining what you don't know. This is a great time also to simulate test conditions as much as possible on your own. Try timing your practice questions, and try doing them with mental fatigue. It's a stressor that you can get used to feeling as the real exam is approaching. Also take note of your objectively weak areas. Anything that is notably weak (30-50% scores vs 70%+) is an area that needs refinement. Don't fear what you don't know. This is the time to strengthen a weakness.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

64. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Otto Rivera

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi All,

Any suggestions for a test-taker that moves at a slower pace?

Thank you

-----  
 Otto Rivera  
 Financial Planner  
 White Lighthouse Investment Management  
 Saint Cloud FL  
 (407)508-9908  
 -----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

65. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hey @Otto Rivera. Have you tried timing yourself during practice questions just to get a sense of how long on average it takes you to answer a question? I found I take about a 1:50 per question on average without feeling rushed. That gave me just enough time to flag the ones that would take me longer to read or do and circle back to them. I think I ended each exam with about 3 minutes left. That doesn't sound like a lot, but that was after each review and re-review of my flagged questions.

-----  
 Bryan Ruiz  
 Tennis Warehouse  
 Atlanta, GA  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

66. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Otto Rivera

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Thank you Bryan, I appreciate the response.

-----  
 Otto Rivera  
 Financial Planner  
 White Lighthouse Investment Management  
 Saint Cloud FL  
 (407)508-9908  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

67. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Connor Lantz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi All,

I just recently took and failed the CFP exam for the 4th time. Obviously very devastating considering the time, money, and sacrifices spent. Any other words of wisdom you can offer for someone in my situation? I can honestly say I put in the time and even hired a tutor for this last attempt and was scoring "appropriately" on all pre-study exams/questions. As you are aware, I believe you only have a lifetime maximum 5 attempts for this exam. Thank you all for your time!

-----  
Connor Lantz  
Senior Client Service Liaison  
SBI Wealth Management  
Richfield MN  
720-470-5626  
-----

▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

68. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND

Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Connor Lantz I think you need to take a break and let your brain rest. Then I would switch up your study provider. I'm sure you know the material. At this point, you need to pull out all of the stops. You need to go into a little bubble for the next go around.

A couple of tips:

- Study in the morning
- Memorize flashcards -- you should be able to know every major financial planning topic in the book, there shouldn't be any surprises on the test
- Don't dwell on test scores, focus more on the concepts.
- Have a mental game plan -- focus on what you can control, flag questions if you don't understand them, don't dwell on one questions, best guess and move on.
- Focus on cases, this hurts a lot of folks
- Study 30+ hours per week
- If you can, take 2 weeks off of work before the next exam
- Do 10X more than you did that last go.
- Be honest with yourself, could you score 80% on each subject? If not, go back and read and use flashcards/road maps.
- Study in the morning, don't over study at night (you won't retain anything)
- Say no to friend/family functions, you need to eat, sleep, breathe the CFP
- Say no to distractions, turn off your phone during study time
- 2 weeks before the exam if you aren't confident, post pone it, you should feel very confident 2 weeks leading up to the exam
- Don't burn out, get sleep, exercise, take a day off from studying

You got this!

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®

Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

69. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Connor Lantz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

@Eric Rodriguez thank you for the advice, something I need right now! Feeling more motivated...

-----  
Connor Lantz  
Senior Client Service Liaison  
SBI Wealth Management  
Richfield MN  
720-470-5626  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

70. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Deanna Hartwell

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I am planning to retake the exam in November so I know the one additional item that will be included that was not on the September exam is the CARES Act. I imagine most questions would relate to the RMD waiver or penalty waiver, however, will the questions be specific and clear that they are referring specifically to 2020 rules under the CARES Act? In other words, will we know whether it is a generalized question about RMDs, for example, or an instance specifically in 2020?

-----  
Deanna Hartwell  
Paraplanner  
Ameriprise Financial  
Miami FL  
(305)670-5575  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

71. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Deanna Hartwell! I would be careful trying to gather what will be asked of you. If I can tell you anything, it would be everything "could" be tested. Knowing what is being asked of you instead of memorizing a question is the way to go!

-----

Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041

-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

72. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 3 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Deanna Hartwell You can view the CFP Board Key Elements of the CARES Act [here](#).

-----  
 Sara Maloney  
 Community Manager  
 CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

73. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Andrew McCrosson

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I've been running my own practice for over 10 years now... took all the classes through The American College and worked through the Dalton Review... Dalton was estimating about a 75% chance of passing when I sat for CFP in September... my practice is super busy Oct - January, so I knew I had to take the risk and try to pass in September or be at risk of stalling-out on my study effort. It seemed like with Dalton I had to put a lot of effort into Summarizing and Condensing the material... It seemed like Dalton took me way out into difficult areas that were not even questioned on the CFP exam and these difficult areas called for lots of study hours that didn't translate into relevant testing areas. Is there a meat and bones study tool/guide/process that focuses on the core concepts that are most likely to be tested?

-----  
 Andrew McCrosson  
 Financial Planner

Mutual of Omaha Advisors  
Bluffton SC  
(843)422-0424

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

74. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Andrew McCrossonZahn worked better for me in terms of distilling what was most important for passing the exam. They give you some overview, but it won't be as in-depth as Dalton's.

---

Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

75. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Joy Toomer

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi, Andrew -  
I'm having the same issue with Dalton- very frustrating! I would also like the answer to this question.  
Thanks!

-----  
Joy Toomer  
CA  
Seeking CFP  
Westlake Village CA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

76. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Zakary Karmikel

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I did well on all six courses and did very well on both CFP practices tests. Not sure of the way forward to pass. Am I better off 1) going back and studying all six text books again, 2) getting access to question test banks and just taking questions after questions (Note: All the test banks still have k-type questions which are not used on the test anymore) 3) paying for a review course, 4) buying flash cards or which combination of these ?

-----  
Zakary Karmikel  
CEO  
Executive Asset Advisors LLC  
Tucson AZ  
(520)261-1006  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

77. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Alan Morgan

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Is there a more current source manual than the 2013 CFP Handbook? I'm using the Wiley self study plan and it seems like I'm missing sections about exec compensation. I'd like to have a

second reference place.

-----  
 Alan Morgan  
 Client Wealth Associate  
 Mooresville NC  
 (704)840-8480  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

78. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Alan Morgan

This page helped me a lot: <https://www.cfp.net/get-certified/certification-process/exam-requirement/cfp-exam-preparation/exam-prep-resources>

-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

79. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Alan Morgan

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▼

Sarah,

Thank you for the reply; and yes, the 'handbook' is helpful in telling me what to study.

I'm looking for a source to read and study for the exam.

Does the CFP provide a complete competency resource more current than the one linked at Amazon.

[https://www.amazon.com/Financial-Planning-Competency-Handbook-Finance/dp/1119094968/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&qid=1602783926&refinements=p\\_27%3ACFP+Board&s=books&sr=1-1&text=CFP+Board](https://www.amazon.com/Financial-Planning-Competency-Handbook-Finance/dp/1119094968/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&qid=1602783926&refinements=p_27%3ACFP+Board&s=books&sr=1-1&text=CFP+Board)

-----  
Alan Morgan  
Client Wealth Associate  
Mooresville NC  
(704)840-8480  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

80. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 3 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Alan Morgan The competency handbook that you listed is the most recent version.

-----  
Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

81. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Karen Penta

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi Everyone,

I have several questions, how can we avoid exam anxiety? How do you know if I'm ready to sit in November? Should I be involved in multiple programs? I'm using Brett Danko, his program he suggest only his program. An as a guarantee to pass student of Dalton I have access to their test bank as well. I haven't Dalton's material in a while, but they offer an assessment quiz and suggest 70% before sitting. I used CFP practice exams as well - scoring 70s. I've seen posts where folks have tested i this range and still failed. I'd like to re-sit in November while the materials still fresh. How do I know when I'm ready? The personal and financial cost is adding up.

-----  
Karen Penta  
Trust Officer  
Bank of America Private Bank  
Warwick RI  
(401)952-5395  
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► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

82. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

Hi @Karen Penta

Avoid. That word to me means that you know something exists and you just pretend it doesn't :)

I would say face it head on. My first exam I broke out in hives from anxiety/worrying. Not fun. Second exam I was calmer. My third exam though I was the chilliest person ever. I knew that I studied, learned the material, no amount of extra days could have prepared me more. In my gut I knew I put everything I could into my 3rd time.

I used Dalton and averaged 72%. I did not take their exam, as I heard from others the questions were very hard and having taken the exam 2x before I knew what the questions were like. Comparing to others can hurt people. For me I was not a study group person. If I didn't know something I needed to learn it.

Best of luck to you!!!

Sarah

Here is a post that gives more of my timeline for taking this exam 3 times:

<https://candidateforum.cfp.net/communities/community-home/digestviewer/viewthread?GroupId=13&MessageKey=98aac36e-0940-40e8-824e-e33c3fd9a143&CommunityKey=640aae66-0133-4b15-86da-303f8e414931&tab=digestviewer&ReturnUrl=%2fcommunities%2fcommunity-home%2fdigestviewer%3fcommunitykey%3d640aae66-0133-4b15-86da-303f8e414931%26tab%3ddigestviewer>

-----  
Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
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(319)364-3041  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

83. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▾

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD ▾

Hello @Karen Penta and @Sarah Specht This one is pretty deep for me since I've a lot of exam anxiety for most of my lifetime. Sarah is right in that the time I passed, I had a very healthy attitude with the exam. My first time was nerves. The second was anger. The third was exasperation. My fourth? It was almost a game to me: go ahead and test me. I know what I'm doing. That moment of mastery and clarity was real, honest confidence. I wasn't even anxious about the what-if if I didn't pass because I knew that I gave my absolute best effort not just a "I tried." Had I not passed, I would eventually. That's confidence. I didn't study the day before the exam. I didn't open a book or look at a flash card during my break. That's confidence. And this is coming from someone with a pronounced case of imposter syndrome. You'll know when you're ready. It won't feel daunting. You'll be almost excited to take the exam. If there's anything that throws you off by this point, it probably would throw off everyone else. That's confidence.

I've also studied alone. I was in a bit of an isolated bubble when I studied. I realized at a young age that I don't do well in study groups. But do what works for you.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

84. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



We've heard from many candidates recently that staying motivated to study is difficult and frustrating after failing the exam even though they felt like they knew the material well enough to pass. Do you have any advice for these candidates based on your own experiences?

-----  
Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

85. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



It can be awkward to answer a question with a question, but to me the main question is "How much do you want this?" What worked for me, especially being a bit of an industry outsider, was keeping the material fresh. Keeping the material fresh then kept me interested in it. I also started making a bit of a game out of my practice questions. If I could see improvement in any area, that was feeding my interest. The motivation then was how much can I improve? A double-digit percentage jump is highly motivating. I'm also super stubborn about quitting anything. I have failed many exams in my academic lifetime, so this wasn't something new. This just happened to be the one exam I wanted most. I guess another motivator was trying to prove the exam wrong. Eventually, I just wanted to beat it.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

86. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I've been there. I failed the exam twice, passed on the third try. I used to tell myself after failing that I did everything I could and that I was well prepared. I was lying to myself. I didn't do everything that I could. I took short cuts when I was studying. I didn't prioritize the exam like I should've. I treated the exam like the Series 6,63 or 65 exams. The CFP exam is nothing like those exams. With those exams you can just take a bunch of practice exams and pass. This is an exam where you actually need to know the material cold. The reality is you need to ask yourself if you really gave it your best effort. Was your preparation world class? You can't study just enough to pass. You need to study harder for this exam than any exam you've ever taken. That will breed confidence and that's what you need when you walk into the testing center. As far as staying motivated, for me it really came down to my why. Why am I doing this? Why am I so committed to getting this done? Why the CFP marks? Once you have your why, you'll get motivated again to study. If the CFP was easy, everyone would have it. It's so worth it in the end.

-----  
 Eric Rodriguez  
 CA  
 WealthBuilders, LLC  
 San Jose CA  
 (408)647-0518  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

87. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Great question! Motivation can be challenging. For me I was also an athlete, and a competitive person by nature. Taking classes and studying for 2 years of my life and NOT getting the CFP(R) certificate just wasn't something I thought of. I HADE to compete it. My parents would not ever let me quit something, so that is in my DNA. This time around I told myself daily how amazing it would feel to pass. How much time I could spend with my 3 daughters and husband. I would have TIME back. I journal. So everyday I would write down 3 specific things I was thankful for. IE I am thankful that I have 2 strong legs, I am thankful that I have a supportive husband, I am thankful that I have an accommodating workplace. Actually thinking about happiness and things you are thankful for has been proven to create more happiness. Passing feels great. Knowing I put in the work to get here and did the time, I know that passing was not by accident.

-----  
 Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
 Montclair, VA  
 (703) 946-1198 (cell)  
[rsrea@hotmail.com](mailto:rsrea@hotmail.com)  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

88. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



That can be difficult. I don't discount that. Everyone has different motivators. One of mine is that I hate quitting. The way I saw it, I would either pass or run out of attempts. I also had a couple of silly little motivators. I taped all of my failure reports to the wall behind my laptop and

kept a CFP® coin on my desk. One was motivation borne of frustration, the other out of desire. It also helped that I just plain love learning. The hardest part was keeping things in a beginners mindset, but it still was fun for me to learn it all over again.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

89. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

▼

Hi candidates. I'm Bryan, and I took the exam four (!) times, but had a lot of personal growth throughout that experience. My intent is for anyone to avoid the experience I had and to offer support to anyone going through a retest. I know it's not easy, and I know it can be deflating, but it is doable!

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

90. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sebastian Parco

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



what would you recommend to 2nd time test takers in general?

is there anything you did differently after your 1st attempt that helped you pass?

what is your advice on tackling the subjective nature of the CFP exam?

How did you use your Exam Prep Provider to your advantage to passing? doing a lot of questions?

-----  
Sebastian Parco  
OSG Associate  
Fidelity Investments  
Millburn NJ  
(201)388-0693  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

91. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Jessica Bailey

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hello Everyone,

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. I have taken the exam twice now and have been unsuccessful both times, with my most recent in March. I am planning on sitting in March of 2021 to re-take. I have not looked over the material at all since I last sat in March of this year as I needed a major mental break. Any recommendations as to whether or not I should start picking back up materials slowly? (i.e. flash cards, charts, etc.). And also, when would be a good time to start hitting the books officially again? I am using Dalton as my course provider.

Any feedback/words of wisdom to get back on the horse is greatly appreciated!

Thank you

-----  
Jessica Bailey  
Financial Advisor  
UBS Financial Services  
Scottsdale AZ  
602-531-2723  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

92. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Jessica Bailey.

So, you can take time off. That's okay. I think it's even healthy. I'd say that it takes 3 months to prepare for the exam. 4 if you want to stretch it out. You can slowly get back into it, but I found that having my start date on the calendar and treating this seriously kept me in the routine. So, take your time for now, but once you start, go full throttle.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

93. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Kyle Cassaday

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Sara - I hope you are having a great day. I want to make sure I am doing this right and that my questions are answered. Can you respond to this?

- What percentage of questions are going to relate to the CARES act and what will they look like?
- Last time I took it (September) I was asked a question about 2018 taxes. Is this something that I can expect to see again from other years prior to 2020?
- The CFP gave me two practice exams for free. I bought 2 additional practice exams but the ones I paid for are identical to the ones I got for free. How do I get a refund and additional CFP practice tests?
- One of the questions on the free practice tests gives the incorrect answer. Who do I talk to about this?
- This is the last time I am able to take the exam. I have run out of time every single time I've sat for it. I have been denied everytime I have requested extra time. Is there someone I can talk to about this? Are there any extra resources for people who are taking it the final time.
- I dont understand my scores on my last test. I havent understood my scores on any of my tests. Is there anyway I can see the test I took in 2016 since 4 years have passed?
- Can someone explain to me the system used to score the exam?
- What percentage of test takers pass on their 5th attempt?

-----  
Kyle Cassaday  
Associate  
Cassaday and Company Inc.  
McLean VA  
(703)506-8200  
-----

## ▶ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

94. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Kyle, Sara may be able to provide some more detailed info, but here is my two cents worth. Remember, I am not a member of the CFP Board. My comments are below your questions, also below.

- What percentage of questions are going to relate to the CARES act and what will they look like?

I WOULD NOT EXPECT A % BREAKDOWN. JUST WHETHER OR NOT THE CARES ACT WILL BE TESTED. PERSONALLY, I'D BE SURPRISED IF THERE WERE MORE THAN TWO QUESTIONS.

- Last time I took it (September) I was asked a question about 2018 taxes. Is this something that I can expect to see again from other years prior to 2020?

THERE IS A LAG SOMETIMES WITH THE EXAM AND THE TAX LAWS. YOU ARE PROVIDED WITH A TAX SHEET TO ASSIST.

- The CFP gave me two practice exams for free. I bought 2 additional practice exams but the ones I paid for are identical to the ones I got for free. How do I get a refund and additional CFP practice tests?

I DEFAULT TO SARA ON THIS.

- One of the questions on the free practice tests gives the incorrect answer. Who do I talk to

about this?

THE PRACTICE EXAMS ARE MEANT TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE FLOW OF QUESTIONS. THOSE QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN DROPPED FROM PRIOR EXAMS AND THAT IS WHY THEY ARE PROVIDED ON PRACTICE EXAMS.

- This is the last time I am able to take the exam. I have run out of time every single time I've sat for it. I have been denied everytime I have requested extra time. Is there someone I can talk to about this? Are there any extra resources for people who are taking it the final time.

I RECOMMEND YOU WORK ON YOUR EXAM TIMING WITH YOUR PRACTICE EXAMS. SOME EXAM REVIEW PROVIDERS ALLOW YOU TO CONSTRUCT THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN EACH QUIZ. GO FOR 85 PERIODICALLY, WITH A MIX OF ALL TOPICS. THEN TIME YOURSELF. YOU CAN'T ALLOW YOURSELF TO GET WRAPPED AROUND THE AXEL ON A FEW QUESTIONS. IF YOU HAVE SOME SORT OF SPECIAL NEEDS TO TAKING THIS EXAM THAT WOULD NEED TO BE ADDRESSED WITH SARA.

- I dont understand my scores on my last test. I havent understood my scores on any of my tests. Is there anyway I can see the test I took in 2016 since 4 years have passed?

YOU WILL NOT HAVE ACCESS TO PRIOR EXAMS. THE BAR THEY PROVIDE SHOWS HOW STRONGLY YOU DID WITH YOUR ANSWERS RELATED TO THAT TOPIC. THE LOWER YOUR MARK IS ON THE BAR, THE MORE EMPHASIS YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER WITH THAT TOPIC. I RECOMMEND STARTING YOUR PREP WITH THE NEXT EXAM ATTEMPT WITH A FOCUS ON YOUR WEAKER AREAS, BUT MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE A REVIEW OFF ALL THE TOPICS, TO INCLUDE THOSE YOU SCORED HIGHEST IN.

- Can someone explain to me the system used to score the exam?

I DEFAULT TO SARA ON THIS.

- What percentage of test takers pass on their 5th attempt?

THE CFP BOARD DOES NOT PROVIDE PASS STATISTICS BASED ON THE NUMBER OF EXAM ATTEMPTS. HISTORICALLY, THE PASS RATE FOR THOSE REATTEMPTING THE EXAM HOVERS AROUND JUST LESS THAN 50%.

i HOPE THIS HELPS. THIS EXAM IS PASSABLE! BEST WISHES, ROB REA

-----  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

95. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Sharnise Gadsden

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I have had 2 failed attempts and I completed my coursework in 2016. If I want to retake the exam in 2021, where should I start? Do I start re-reading all of the material beginning with book 1? Where should I go to receive updated information related to taxes and healthcare? Do you recommend a vendor to help with prepping you for the exam? In a nut shell, step by step how should I proceed?

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Sharnise Gadsden  
Financial Advisor  
Vanguard  
Malvern PA

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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

96. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

Edited by Sara Maloney 6 seconds ago



@Sharnise Gadsden, Condolences on your struggles so far. I know how daunting this exam can feel, especially when you feel out of the loop. However, every provider I know of does keep up with changes to each exam cycle. Given the gap in time from your coursework to now, I highly recommend using an exam prep provider. All of them do things differently, and all of them produce results, so it's a matter of which one fits you better. I used Dalton twice and Zahn twice, and I found that Dalton was better at reviewing the education topics than Zahn, while Zahn was better at distilling the information as it was needed for the exam. Both have good test banks, but Zahn's worked better for me since I was taking the exam as soon as possible after completing my coursework. Like all things, it starts small. Page 1 of a review book is always good, and you'll want to review every module.

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Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

97. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Sharnise Gadsden-- I passed on my third try. You can do this! I would definitely sign up with an exam prep provider. Dalton didn't work for my style of learning. Danko was much better suited for me. I passed using Danko's study plan. Sign up for a course and follow the program exactly. Before you start your prep course, try and focus on the sections that you struggled with and practice. For example, I really struggled with Tax and Estate Planning. I started reading my old text books and study booklets in these areas to mentally prepare for the prep course. I also struggled with calculations, so I did a bunch of problems to start getting familiar again with the tougher questions. Eat, sleep, breathe the CFP. Commitment is everything. You got this!

-----  
Eric Rodriguez [CFP®]  
CA  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
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(408)647-0518  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

98. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

1

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Sharnise Gadsden! I know what failing 2xs feels like. I would challenge you to find out how you learn best. For me I knew I needed to re-read things, but I also wanted to make sure that reading was not a crutch. What I mean by that is that I can read, it's not hard but application and understanding what I read....different story. I know that I learn better by taking practice questions. I have to select my response and immediately see the answer. I would take my time and really understand why I got something wrong or right. Also provider. They all have different approaches and content. I have used Zahn and Dalton. Also listened to Danko but can say that Dalton was the best for me. I initially didn't think they would be and it's why I went with Zahn but in the end I know Dalton and the question bank is something that helped me.

-----

Sarah Specht  
Investment Advisor Representative  
World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
Cedar Rapids IA  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

99. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Myrle Simone

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi,

November 2020 will be 3rd attempt. Is studying with another exam candidate helpful? Is anyone willing to do this? I have unsuccessfully studied on my own in the past and was looking forward to the live review this month. I believed that hearing someone teach in person and discussing concepts with the other candidates in the live class would have helped me retain the information but due to COVID the live review is now an online review so I'm back to where I started.

-----  
Myrle Simone  
Planner Assistant  
Burt Wealth Advisors  
Falling Waters WV  
(571)223-8876  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

100. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Myrle Simone

I did not use a study buddy, but for many, this may help. It also can help with studying accountability, making sure you follow up with your commitment. This also helps if they had a

different education provider and or a different exam review provider.

-----  
 Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
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 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

101. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

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RECOMMEND



Ishmael Williams

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi Experts. Thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule to assist CFP candidates in successfully sitting for the CFP exam. My name is Ishmael Williams and I am enrolled with Dalton CFP Prep. I have sat for the exam three times and failed all of them. All I want to do with my life is work as a CFP and help people make better decisions and achieve their financial goals. So passing the exam is critical for me. I work at night from 11:00pm to 7:30am. So in studying for the exam, battling fatigue and sleep deprivation make it difficult to study and properly prepare for the exam. After the third attempt, I have questioned my schedule in exam preparation. Additionally, I would like better questions that closely resemble those on the exam.

1. What is a good method to use in identifying the financial planning process step a question maybe referring to?
2. What additional resources, other than those provided by Dalton, would you recommend that I add to my preparation regimen?

- 3. With such a work schedule, what length of time would you suggest that I use to properly prepare for the next exam (my 4th attempt)?
- 4. With such a work schedule, how would you manage the hours in a day to properly study for the CFP exam?
- 5. Do you think it would be better to seek a regular full time day job, then begin preparing for the CFP exam?
- 6. What method - studying the financial planning subjects in a daily rotation or in a weekly rotation - would serve to give me the highest probability of exam success?
- 7. Other than using flash cards, test bank, and knowledge rationales, do you know of a nontraditional way or method that would assist me to increase my retention of knowledge and correct response to test bank questions?

Thank you again for your time.

Ishmael Williams  
CFP Candidate

-----  
 Ishmael Williams  
 Student, The Dalton Review  
 Jacksonville, FL  
 (904) 329-0852  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

102. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Ishmael Williams See my answers to your questions below:

1. Memorize the acronym first letter of each planning phase. Then ask yourself what part of the financial planning process is this pertaining to? That helped me.
2. No, I might switch up your provider though. I used Dalton 2X and failed, I know they work for others, but not for me.
3. Study right when you wake up, not after work. 1-2 hours when you wake up is worth 3-4 hours at night.
4. See above, whenever you wake up study at that point, check that box before you start your day.
5. If possible yes, I think that would help.
6. It really doesn't matter, you have to be an expert in all of the sections.
7. Use road maps, for example when you do estate planning draw out how an ABC trust works or on the tax side how a family could use a FLP or foundation. Danko has some great roadmaps.

Don't rush it, don't burn out. You can do this. All you need is 12 weeks to really buckle down and study. You will pass!

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

103. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Mary Jones

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



What advice would you give someone considering taking the exam for a fourth time? Do you have any tutoring recommendations?

-----

Mary Jones  
Client Manager  
The Vanguard Group  
Charlotte NC  
704-578-1599

-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

104. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Mary Jones, Four is a lucky number, at least for me and this exam. At this point, you know all you need to know in order to pass. It's something you may realize later, but you'll have to trust me on this. If you were like me, you may think that memorizing more will lead to better results. That's not necessarily true. I found that the more I focused on practice questions, the easier they became. In a way, I had to learn how to think like the exam. Even this rewiring can lead

you to correct answers through sound, deductive reasoning even if you don't know if that's the correct answers. Knowing the incorrect answers can be just as helpful, if not more so. This is a long way of suggesting that hammering practice questions is a better use of your time. And don't forget to take care of yourself. Exercise, sleep, a clean diet, and a quiet life without drama all play into peak mental performance.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

105. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Mary Jones

First, I would pick a new test prep provider. I would also audit your study plan. IMO, I would be studying 2-4 hours per day for 10 weeks. I would do everything you didn't do that last 3 attempts. For me, it was memorizing flash cards (hundreds). It was making my weaknesses my strengths. It was keeping myself accountable to my study plan and sacrificing so much. I missed out on so many outings with family, friends, and quality time with my wife and kids. I put myself in a bubble for 10-12 weeks and was laser focused on passing the exam. Also, the test is just as much mental as it is having the knowledge. You need to find sometime of mental edge to help with your confidence. For me, I woke up every morning at 5am to study. Everyday

for 12 weeks I woke up early, make my coffee, and went straight for the books. When I walked into that testing center I had so much confidence and felt like I deserved to pass. I put in 10x more work for the third time then the first two attempts. I studied like my life depended on it.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

106. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Mary Jones

I would NOT recommend rereading the education material. But a very thorough review of the exaam review material is important, plus attending an exam review offering. When you sign up with an exam review provider, they will provide you with the books you need to read. It is important to read those in exacting detail. ideally more than once, time permitting. Do this this BEFORE attending the exam review course. The exam review provider should also provide access to a robust quiz bank. After reading the exam review material your study focus should be on the quizzes. Work those in detail, take notes on which ones you missed and why, then reset the quizzes you scored less then 80% on. Keep repeating until you are in the high 70s.

-----  
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 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

107. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Mary Jones. I recommend you focus on the quiz banks. Make sure you are averaging in the 80's on each quiz. Then take a pretest and shoot for the high 60's or 70. Reread the exam review books for your weakest topics, maybe event get the books for other providers for a different aspect. Best wishes!!

-----  
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 Montclair, VA  
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 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

108. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Candace Turpack

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I need some expert advice to help me determine whether sitting for the exam in November after failing in September is a good idea....

I was 'pretty' motivated to get this done while it was all still fresh in my mind. Determined. I excelled in Estate and Tax and was either boarder line or below average on the others but here was my biggest OPPS.... I misunderstood how the test sections were going to flow (4 sections instead of 2)- and when I am in the mode, I am not paying attention to time. So I took my good old time on 1A and only had 20 minutes to answer 48 questions in 1B. It was a mess... but I finished the exam.

Overall, the exam was not as difficult as Dalton had made it seem- I feel that I have a chance now that I understand the sections. I am scoring on average 60-75% on practice quiz sections and the practice exam. Working on about 100-150 practice questions a day, and hoping to amp that up this week. I've hired a tutor.

BUT... in reading the advice of most ... I am getting a little anxiety! I know everyone is different - but I'd like to hear if anyone else has the same thought of ..'JUST get it done!' I REALLY don't want to continue to study (this study thing has been going on for over a year for me) and potentially risk forgetting some of the concepts I feel I have down. PLEASE share your experience/thoughts/advice...

-----  
Candace Turpack

Relationship Manager III  
PNC Bank  
Meadville PA  
724-813-7482

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

109. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Candace Turpack . Sorry to hear of your unsuccessful exam attempt. I am not a big fan of jumping back into the fray and reattempting the exam so soon. I say give yourself a break. Shoot for March instead. Start studying this month. Work on repeating those quizzes and upping the average. Maybe reread the exam review books for your weaker areas, if not all of them. Maybe even read the exam review books for a different provider for your weaker areas. Some are for sale on this site or ebay. This will take some time, but that is why I recommend a March exam, if not July. I took a 16 month break in between attempts, with a day on stay on study focus the last 10.5 months. But I had the luxury of time that most do not.

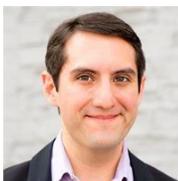
-----  
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[rsrea@hotmail.com](mailto:rsrea@hotmail.com)  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

110. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Candace Turpack

Exam anxiety has plagued me since second grade when I got my first bad spelling grade. I wish I could say that it goes away, but I'm only lying to myself. It takes a lot of confidence to take this exam, let alone more than once. At a minimum, you can celebrate your dedication and the work you put in so far. A few more things. Don't forget to breathe. And I do mean breathe not hyperventilate. Slow, long breaths. Second is power posing, or trying to take up as much authoritative room as possible. Wonder Woman does this well. It sounds silly, but power pose on your most stressful questions. It was a great mood lift when I started doing this. Hope that helps.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

111. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Alan Morgan

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

Edited by Alan Morgan 6 seconds ago

REPLY

RE-OPEN THREAD



I am interested in forming a study group with members here.

What are some helpful tips on organizing a study group?

My email is [Alan@MorganWealthMgmt.com](mailto:Alan@MorganWealthMgmt.com) - I'm glad to connect with anyone interested in taking the March exam.

-----  
Alan Morgan  
Client Wealth Associate  
 Mooresville NC  
(704)840-8480  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

112. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Positive Mindset.

I wore a shirt to my test that read, Nevertheless She Persisted. My phone said "you are stronger than you think" and I also hung a photo of my girls in my bathroom so I knew that passing this test gave me more time with them. I knew my "whys" and made sure that I did not get distracted from them :)

Focus on what you can control.

- How long you can study each day
- How many practice questions you can take
- Your timeline until the test date
- What you read and watch.....FB and social media can be negative at times, give yourself positive things to read!



-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

113. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I agree with Sarah!

-----  
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[rsrea@hotmail.com](mailto:rsrea@hotmail.com)  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

114. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Margaret Petersen

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



What studying techniques would you recommend? I have hired tutors and do all of the suggested tests, videos, forums, put in hours and hours a day. Is there anything you suggest to do specifically that will help?

-----  
Margaret Petersen  
Senior Client Service Associate  
First Republic Bank  
San Francisco CA  
(303)968-6403  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

115. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Margaret Petersen

Use a different test prep provider, switch it up. Study in the morning before you start your day and then at lunch. Don't study at night. Don't burn out by doing so many test questions. The first two exams I probably did 2-3k test questions. I was burn out by the time I got to the exam center. The third time probably only 600-800 questions. Pretend every question is a real life client scenario, how would you advise that client? Every question should be treated like a real client situation. That helped me dramatically.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

► ORIGINAL MESSAGE

116. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD

Edited by Sara Maloney 5 seconds ago



@Margaret Petersen

Hi. I'd say that at this point, trying to keep things fresh and mentally new are very important. A dangerous thing that repetition can do is slowly lull you into rote memorization at the least or overconfidence at its most dangerous. How many times have you seen your practice questions? Ideally, that will be low. Anyone who put in the work to pass their first time sitting for the exam knows enough to pass. It's a question of how well can the knowledge be applied to the exam. To that end, doing as many practice questions from different providers--and reviewing the answers--helped me realize how much of the exam wasn't about memorization as it was application. So if you're taking this again, hammering practice questions can do a lot more good than you may initially think. I found that doing 100 a day was good practice: 50 in the morning while the brain is fresh and 50 in the evening while the brain is tired. This helped simulate some of fatigue and stress that happens during the exam. Have you ever made up your own hypothetical questions, even in your mind? This can be a fun game.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

117. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Morris Wilder

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I am a CPA who has also passed the PFS exam given by the AICPA which covers the same topic areas as the CFP. I used Kaplan's study guides for this past exam session. My comment is that I found the exam to be extremely difficult as compared to the study materials and the practice exams from the CFP board. I feel the exam should be representative of the various materials provided for preparation not an exercise is trying to make questions so difficult and obscure as to make the exam unpassable. I am a seasoned professional that knows what it takes to pass a test, but found this one to be the hardest.

-----  
Morris Wilder  
Owner  
Morris R. Wilder, CPA PLLC  
Rocky Mount NC  
(252) 442-3022  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

118. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Morris Wilder At the risk of upsetting some, I am NOT a big fan of the except policy to taking the CFP education courses, except for maybe a CFA. I have spoken with too many CPA's who did not pass because they just took a review course. I recommend taking the

education course, and perhaps skipping the tax part but even that is a good review. You can do this in nine months. I know, that is NINE MONTHS!!! But, it will help you master the mater. If nothing else, read the material from other exam review providers on the topics you did weakest in. Look at buying another quiz bank from another provider and work that until you are averaging in the 80's. I know this is frustrating, but the exam is passable. I did it at the ripe old age of 64 as a career changer. Best wishes.

-----  
Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA  
Montclair, VA  
(703) 946-1198 (cell)  
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-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

119. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sarah Specht

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Morris Wilder

This exam is tough. There is no way around that. Looking at stats for March 2020 63% of first time takers passed. I work with a bunch of CPAs and was frustrated that they got to take their exam in parts. Although there are subjective questions there are others that require math, formulas, definitions of items where you either know it or you don't. I found Dalton's questions (most of them) to be more helpful for me. I compared some of the CFP board test questions to slow pitch softball. It's good to see how the questions could be asked but don't think it will be

that easy. I scored an 85% and 78% when taking the provided practice exams. Was scoring 65-72% with Dalton.

One thing that I notice as a career changer, I have been in the industry since 2014. It doesn't matter how seasoned of a professional you are. Maybe it would help you know the tax section really well, or investments, or retirement but overall you still have to put in the time to know the concepts.

-----  
 Sarah Specht  
 Investment Advisor Representative  
 World Trend Financial Planning Services Ltd.  
 Cedar Rapids IA  
 (319)364-3041  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

120. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Zakary Karmikel

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I did well on all six courses and did very well on both CFP practices tests. Not sure of the way forward to pass. Am I better off 1) going back and studying all six text books again, 2) getting access to question test banks and just taking questions after questions (Note: All the test banks still have k-type questions which are not used on the test anymore) 3) paying for a review course, 4) buying flash cards or which combination of these ?

-----  
 Zakary Karmikel  
 CEO  
 Executive Asset Advisors LLC  
 Tucson AZ  
 (520)261-1006  
 -----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

121. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Robert Rea

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Hi @Zakary Karmikel . I would NOT reread any education text books. But a rereading of the exam review books may be in order, at least for the topics you scored lower in. Also, you might want to read exam review material from different review providers for the topics you scored weakest in. For me, and we all learn different, I read my exam review books 1X for my first attempt, and twice more for my second attempt. This took time BUT, 1) I passed the exam and 2) i really learned the material. After reviewing the material, focus on the quizzes. The only time you may want to return to the books is if something is difficult. I also used investipedia. When you say "paying for a review course" do you mean another review course? Some try this exam without attending a review course, something I highly do NOT support. Flash cards help when you want to add short review periods, like restroom breaks, on the elevator, commuting, waiting for a meeting, etc... Best wishes.

-----  
 Robert (Rob) Rea, CFP®, MBA

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(703) 946-1198 (cell)  
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➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

122. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Mary Jones

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



How did you know if you were really ready so you didn't go down the path of disappointment again?

---

Mary Jones  
Client Manager  
The Vanguard Group  
Charlotte NC  
704-578-1599

---

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

123. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Mary Jones, The truth is that nobody feels really ready. You could always use another two weeks. It's all about how well you prepared and your mindset going into the exam. A funny thing happened along my journey to passing. First time I failed, I was crushed. Second time I failed, I was bitter and cynical. Third time I failed, I knew I was close, and that was weirdly motivating. I remember wondering to myself during my fourth time when I had 7 questions left: At what point can I miss every remaining question and still pass? Not that I knew I passed because I didn't, but it was a moment of introspective serenity since it wasn't about passing or failing; it was then about my effort and confidence. The fourth time was the first time I ever had that thought; it was when I had the most confidence in my preparation. I would have been disappointed but not crushed if I hadn't passed. To be honest, I would have been afraid and extra nervous going into my fifth time. I do have a friend who passed on her fifth time, so it is possible.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

124. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Mary Jones, I can honestly say I felt ready before my third try because I studied so differently. Literally night and day from the first two attempts. I felt comfortable with all of the sections, I knew there wasn't going to be anything on the exam that was new material. I had the confidence that I could be a financial planner. If you lack confidence and are still struggling a few weeks leading up to the exam then I would post pone so you don't get disappointed. I knew I wasn't ready the 2nd time, but I took it anyway. That was a big mistake. I should've listed to my gut and postponed it.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
WealthBuilders, LLC  
San Jose, Ca  
408-647-0518  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

125. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Kevin Dunford

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



I'm having a hard time staying on a good study schedule. What study tips do they have? Any specific resources I should be using? How much of the CARES act will be tested? Anyway to use scratch paper if testing from home? It's so much easier than trying to write on a computer.

-----  
Kevin Dunford  
Arizona  
Charles Schwab  
Peoria AZ  
(928)243-1490  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

126. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Eric Rodriguez

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Kevin Dunford, Regarding the study schedule it's really the only thing you can control in your day. For me, I'm a big fan of the morning study routine. There so much distraction during the day/night. I wanted to try and get a head of it and get most of my studying out of the way in the morning. For months I would wake up at 5:00 am to my alarm (Nipsey Hussle's -- Grinding all my life), drink coffee, study for 1-3 hours, and then go about with my day. It felt amazing. I have

a wife and two toddlers, so the morning was the only time the house was quiet. I would also put my cell phone away in a drawer. I never studied at night, only in the morning and lunch. 1-2 hours in the morning is worth 3-4 hours at night. I would always take Sunday off. You need to let your mind rest. You need a day to relax. Also, I worked out everyday as well and tried to eat healthy and get a decent amount of sleep. I wanted to be in the best physical and mental shape of my life. You need an edge for this exam. You need confidence, do whatever you need to do to gain this confidence.

-----  
Eric Rodriguez, CFP®  
Founder  
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San Jose, Ca  
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-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

127. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Bryan Ruiz

ACTIONS ▼

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



@Kevin Dunford, I treated my study/prep time like a job. I'd have a set starting time, break time, and restart time. This wasn't a nice-to-have; it was my requirement. I also love routines, so this almost became a habit. My days off were always: Breakfast, study 50 minutes, 10 minute cello practice as a break, study 50 minutes, workout, lunch. It's not always about quantity, either. My cello teacher always said that 10 minutes of intentional practice is better than an hour of playing around. The same applies to this exam. I know we're all busy and time

is a luxury, so use it wisely. As for new stuff, I doubt many questions will be asked. The principles will far outweigh the novelties.

-----  
Bryan Ruiz  
Tennis Warehouse  
Atlanta, GA  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

128. RE: October 15th Ask the Expert: Finding Success After Failing the CFP® Exam

0

RECOMMEND



Sara Maloney

Posted 4 days ago

REPLY RE-OPEN THREAD



Thank you to everyone for participating in this event and a BIG thank you to our experts for their time and expertise!

This thread will remain on the Candidate Forum so you can revisit these questions and answers.

-----  
Sara Maloney  
Community Manager  
CFP Board  
[candidateforum@cfpboard.org](mailto:candidateforum@cfpboard.org)  
-----

➤ ORIGINAL MESSAGE

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