
¹ The ChFC[®] designation has been a mark of excellence for almost thirty years and currently requires nine college-level courses, the most of any financial planning credential. Average study time to earn the ChFC[®] exceeds 450 hours. Required courses cover extensive education and application training in financial planning, income taxation, investments, and estate and retirement planning. Additional electives are chosen from such topics as macroeconomics, financial decisions for retirement, and executive compensation. ChFC[®] designees must meet experience requirements and adhere to continuing education and ethical standards. The credential is awarded by The American College, a non-profit educator with an 84-year heritage and the highest level of academic accreditation.

² For 84 years the CLU[®] has been the respected risk management credential for advisors. Designees have completed eight or more college-level courses representing an average study time of 400 hours. Topics for required courses include insurance and financial planning, life insurance law, estate planning, and planning for business owners and professionals. Elective courses include such advanced topics as income taxes, group benefits, retirement planning, and health insurance. CLU[®] designees must meet experience and continuing education requirements and must adhere to a high ethical standard. The mark is awarded by The American College, a non-profit educator with the top level of academic accreditation.

³ The MSFS is an accredited master's degree awarded by The American College, a non-profit educational institution with an 84-year heritage. The MSFS graduate program provides advisors with in-depth education to help them analyze, plan, and implement integrated strategies in financial planning. This academic degree includes 10 required graduate courses and two electives in advanced financial planning topics.

⁴ The CFA Charterholder designation is issued by the CFA Institute. In order to receive this designation, a candidate must have either: 1) an undergraduate degree and 4 years of professional experience involving investment decision-making, or 2) 4 years qualified work experience (full time, but not necessarily investment related). Each candidate must complete a self-study program of 250 hours of study for each of the 3 levels. Once a candidate passes each of the three 6-hour exams and meets the appropriate experience requirements the CFA charterholder designation may be used. There are no continuing education requirements.

⁵ The ACCREDITED ASSET MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTSM or AAMS[®] are individuals who hold the AAMS[®] designation have completed a course of study encompassing investments, insurance, tax, retirement, and estate planning issues. Additionally, individuals must pass an end-of-course examination that tests their ability to synthesize complex concepts and apply theoretical concepts to real-life situations. All designees have agreed to adhere to Standards of Professional Conduct and are subject to a disciplinary process. Designees renew their designation every two-years by completing 16 hours of continuing education, reaffirming adherence to the Standards of Professional Conduct and complying with self-disclosure requirements.

⁶ The CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™, CFP® and federally registered CFP (with flame design) marks (collectively, the “CFP® marks”) are professional certification marks granted in the United States by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (“CFP Board”).

The CFP® certification is a voluntary certification; no federal or state law or regulation requires financial planners to hold CFP® certification. It is recognized in the United States and a number of other countries for its (1) high standard of professional education; (2) stringent code of conduct and standards of practice; and (3) ethical requirements that govern professional engagements with clients. Currently, more than 62,000 individuals have obtained CFP® certification in the United States.

To attain the right to use the CFP® marks, an individual must satisfactorily fulfill the following requirements:

- Education – Complete an advanced college-level course of study addressing the financial planning subject areas that CFP Board’s studies have determined as necessary for the competent and professional delivery of financial planning services, and attain a Bachelor’s Degree from a regionally accredited United States college or university (or its equivalent from a foreign university). CFP Board’s financial planning subject areas include insurance planning and risk management, employee benefits planning, investment planning, income tax planning, retirement planning, and estate planning;
- Examination – Pass the comprehensive CFP® Certification Examination. The examination, administered in 10 hours over a two-day period, includes case studies and client scenarios designed to test one’s ability to correctly diagnose financial planning issues and apply one’s knowledge of financial planning to real world circumstances;
- Experience – Complete at least three years of full-time financial planning-related experience (or the equivalent, measured as 2,000 hours per year); and
- Ethics – Agree to be bound by CFP Board’s *Standards of Professional Conduct*, a set of documents outlining the ethical and practice standards for CFP® professionals.

Individuals who become certified must complete the following ongoing education and ethics requirements in order to maintain the right to continue to use the CFP® marks:

- Continuing Education – Complete 30 hours of continuing education hours every two years, including two hours on the *Code of Ethics* and other parts of the *Standards of Professional Conduct*, to maintain competence and keep up with developments in the financial planning field; and
- Ethics – Renew an agreement to be bound by the *Standards of Professional Conduct*. The *Standards* prominently require that CFP® professionals provide financial planning services at a fiduciary standard of care. This means CFP® professionals must provide financial planning services in the best interests of their clients.

CFP® professionals who fail to comply with the above standards and requirements may be subject to CFP Board's enforcement process, which could result in suspension or permanent revocation of their CFP® certification.