

CFIA DIRECT · EMPLOYER APPROVAL PACK

Summary for approval

The CFIA certifies judgment about AI in the investment process: evaluating AI outputs, governing AI systems, managing the data beneath them, and carrying fiduciary accountability for decisions AI has influenced. It is written for portfolio managers, analysts, traders, risk officers, CIOs and wealth managers, and assumes knowledge of markets rather than of machine learning.

PROGRAM	CFIA Direct Complete, self-paced online preparation
PROVIDER	TrendUp LLC, an ICFDT Approved Prep Provider
CREDENTIAL	Chartered Financial Intelligence Architect (CFIA), issued by the International Council for Derivative Trading (ICFDT)
COST	\$995, one invoice. Also available as 3 monthly payments of \$335
INCLUDED	Full preparation program, the official CFIA textbook, and ICFDT examination registration. Nothing further to pay
TIME COMMITMENT	About 50 to 60 hours of study, typically over 8 to 12 weeks alongside full-time work
FORMAT	Online and self-paced. Seven modules, five CFIA frameworks, 200 practice questions, timed mock exams
EXAMINATION	200 multiple-choice questions over four hours, taken online. No deadline to sit it
PREREQUISITES	None. No coding required
GUARANTEE	If the candidate completes the program and does not pass on the first attempt, a full refund or a free retake

What the firm gets

- An employee who can assess AI-generated research and recommendations before they reach a decision, and document how they were used.
- Working knowledge of model risk, explainability, vendor due diligence and the regulatory expectations now applied to AI in investment management.
- A recognized designation, with one fixed cost and no separate exam fee arriving later.

APPROVAL

Employee

Manager

Cost center or budget line

Signature and date

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Program overview and syllabus

The program follows the ICFDT Body of Knowledge for the CFIA. Each module carries the weight shown in the examination. Candidates study at their own pace and track readiness against the exam blueprint.

MODULE 1 12% OF EXAM · 6-8 HOURS

The AI-Native Investment Firm

How firms evolve from AI-curious to AI-native, and what distinguishes real integration from surface-level adoption.

- 1.1 Introduction: The Transformation Is Already Underway
- 1.2 Defining the AI-Native Investment Firm
- 1.3 The CFIA AI Maturity Framework
- 1.4 Organizational Design for AI Integration
- 1.5 Human-AI Teaming in Investment Management
- 1.6 The Investment Process in the Age of AI

MODULE 2 13% OF EXAM · 6-8 HOURS

Foundation Models & AI Systems

How LLMs and agents work at a strategic level: design patterns, RAG, failure modes, and the vendor landscape, without a line of code.

- 2.1 How Modern AI Systems Work: A Strategic Overview
- 2.2 AI Design Patterns for Investment Applications
- 2.3 AI Failure Modes in Investment Contexts
- 2.4 The AI Technology Landscape and Vendor Ecosystem

MODULE 3 16% OF EXAM · 8-10 HOURS

Investment Data Infrastructure

The information architecture under everything else: market data, research platforms, knowledge systems, and signal integrity. The pillar most programs skip.

- 3.0 The Third Pillar: Why Data Infrastructure Determines AI
- 3.1 Market Data Infrastructure
- 3.2 Research Data Platforms
- 3.3 Knowledge Systems for Investment Intelligence
- 3.4 Data Governance and Provenance
- 3.5 Data Quality and Signal Integrity

MODULE 4 18% OF EXAM · 9-11 HOURS

AI for Alpha Generation & Research

AI-assisted fundamental research, quantitative signal generation, portfolio construction, and execution, with the guardrails that keep signals real.

- 4.1 AI-Assisted Fundamental Research
- 4.2 Quantitative Signal Generation and Factor Research
- 4.3 AI in Portfolio Construction
- 4.4 AI in Trading and Execution

MODULE 5 20% OF EXAM · 10-12 HOURS

Risk, Compliance & AI Governance

The largest-weighted module: model risk, explainability, the regulatory landscape, and the governance architecture that ties them together.

- 5.1 Model Risk Management in the AI Era
- 5.2 Explainability, Transparency, and Audit
- 5.3 The Regulatory Landscape for AI in Financial Services
- 5.4 AI Governance Frameworks
- 5.5 Cybersecurity and Data Privacy in AI Systems

MODULE 6 11% OF EXAM · 5-7 HOURS

Vendor Strategy & Build/Buy Architecture

Build, buy, or partner. Vendor due diligence, TCO, contracts, and integration architecture for investment platforms.

- 6.1 The Build / Buy / Partner Decision Framework
- 6.2 AI Vendor Evaluation and Due Diligence
- 6.3 Integration Architecture for Investment Platforms

MODULE 7 10% OF EXAM · 5-7 HOURS

AI Leadership, Ethics & Fiduciary Duty

Business-case construction, AI strategy, ethics frameworks, and fiduciary accountability for AI-assisted investment decisions.

- 7.1 Building the AI Business Case
- 7.2 AI Strategy for Investment Leadership
- 7.3 The Ethics of AI in Investment Management
- 7.4 Fiduciary Duty in the Age of AI

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Learning objectives by module

On completing CFIA Direct, the candidate will be able to:

1 The AI-Native Investment Firm

- Classify a firm on the AI Maturity Framework and identify the gaps at its stage.
- Distinguish AI-native from AI-enabled and AI-aware organizations.
- Describe how AI reshapes team structure, reporting lines, and governance.
- Name the primary risks of misaligned maturity: over-reliance, under-governance, capability illusion.

2 Foundation Models & AI Systems

- Explain how foundation models generalize beyond their training distribution, unlike rule-based systems.
- Match investment problems to design patterns: RAG, fine-tuning, prompting, agents.
- Identify AI failure modes from an output: hallucination, distributional shift, overconfidence.
- Select governance controls for agentic deployments.

3 Investment Data Infrastructure

- Map a firm's data stack and locate its weakest layer.
- Apply the Data Provenance Chain to certify a dataset as investment-grade.
- Explain point-in-time correctness and why lookahead bias invalidates a backtest.
- Evaluate data licensing for machine consumption, not just human use.

4 AI for Alpha Generation & Research

- Apply the Signal Integrity Framework's five tests before deploying a signal.
- Detect multiple-testing bias and overfitting in a signal-development story.
- State who owns the investment thesis when AI assists the research.
- Require interpretability for any AI-generated portfolio recommendation.

5 Risk, Compliance & AI Governance

- Distinguish historical and current model-risk guidance and apply proportionate internal AI controls.
- Assemble a complete six-component audit trail and spot the missing element.
- Apply the Governance Trident and identify which pillar a firm lacks.
- Assess an AI governance practice against a named regulatory framework (e.g. EU AI Act).

6 Vendor Strategy & Build/Buy Architecture

- Apply the strategic-differentiation test with TCO to a build/buy/partner decision.
- Run AI vendor due diligence beyond feature checklists.
- Design contract terms for model updates, data rights, and exit.
- Architect integration via API gateways and shadow deployment.

7 AI Leadership, Ethics & Fiduciary Duty

- Apply FATE (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Explainability) to a use case.
- Identify sources of algorithmic bias and evaluate mitigations.
- Build a business case with honest out-of-sample validation and full TCO.
- Locate fiduciary accountability in an AI-assisted decision chain.

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Payment, provider and guarantee

How payment works

EMPLOYEE PAYS	Enroll at trendupnow.org/cfia-direct and pay by card. A receipt and an invoice PDF are issued automatically at payment for reimbursement.
FIRM PAYS	Email programs@trendupnow.org with the firm's billing details and we will issue an invoice made out to the firm. Access is set up once it is paid.
INSTALLMENTS	3 monthly payments of \$335. Access starts after the first payment; exam registration is issued with the third.
ACCESS	Login details arrive by email within 24 hours of payment.

The provider and the credential

CREDENTIAL BODY	The International Council for Derivative Trading (ICFDT) awards the CFIA designation, sets the curriculum and runs the examination. Details at icfdt.com/cfia .
PREP PROVIDER	TrendUp LLC is an ICFDT Approved Prep Provider for the CFIA. CFIA Direct is TrendUp's preparation program, and enrollment includes the ICFDT exam registration.

Money-back guarantee

If the candidate completes the program and does not pass on the first attempt, the candidate chooses a full refund or a free retake. To qualify, before the first attempt the candidate must:

- mark every lesson in all seven modules complete,
- attempt all 200 practice questions, and
- score 70% or higher on at least one full 200-question mock exam.

The platform tracks all three and produces a completion record. The first attempt must be within 12 months of enrolling, and claims are made within 30 days of the result.

Questions

Email programs@trendupnow.org. Program details and enrollment: trendupnow.org/cfia-direct.