

QFI – Portfolio Management Exam

Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Important Exam Information:

[Exam Registration](#)

Candidates may register online or with an application.

[Order Study Notes](#)

Study notes are part of the required syllabus and are not available electronically but may be purchased through the online store.

Syllabus Readings

Readings listed in this syllabus may include study notes, online readings and textbooks. Candidates are responsible for all readings in their entirety, including sections such as Appendices, unless it is stated otherwise in the syllabus.

[Introductory Study Note](#)

The Introductory Study Note has a complete listing of all study notes as well as errata and other important information.

Case Study

A case study will not be provided for this examination.

[Past Exams](#)

Past Exams from Fall 2020-present are available on SOA website.

[Updates](#)

Candidates should be sure to check for updates on the Exam Study page periodically for additional corrections or notices to the current syllabus.

[Formula Package](#)

A Formula Package will be provided with the exam. Please see the Introductory Study Note for more information.

[Table](#)

A Cumulative normal distribution table will be provided with the exam.

1. Topic: Fixed Income Investments

Learning Objectives

The candidate will understand the nature and the variety of fixed income investments that can be used in constructing fixed income portfolios.

This section deals with fixed income securities. As the name implies the cash flow is often predictable, however there are various risks that affect cash flows of these instruments. In general, candidates should be able to identify the cash flow pattern and the factors affecting these cash flows for commonly available fixed income investments.

Learning Outcomes

The Candidate will be able to:

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of various fixed income investments considering:
 - cash flow characteristics,
 - markets in which they trade, and
 - underlying risks such as interest rate, credit and event risks

Resources

- *Handbook of Fixed Income Securities*, Fabozzi, F.J., 9th Edition, 2021
 - Ch. 1: Overview of the Types and Features of Fixed Income Securities (background only)
 - Ch. 2: Risks Associated with Investing in Fixed Income Securities (background only)
 - Ch. 7: U.S. Treasury Securities (background only)
 - Ch. 10: Corporate Bonds
 - Ch. 11: Leveraged Loans
 - Ch. 15: Inflation-Linked Bonds
 - Ch. 21: An Overview of Mortgages and the Mortgage Market
 - Ch. 25: Nonagency Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities: Legacy, RMBS 2.0, and Non-QM
 - Ch. 60: Financing Positions in the Bond Market
- *Commercial Real Estate Analysis and Investments*, Miller & Geltner, 3rd Edition, 2014
 - Section VI Introduction (background only)
 - Ch. 16: Mortgage Basics I: An Introduction and Overview
 - Ch. 20: Commercial Mortgage-Backed Securities (excluding appendices)
- *Leveraged Finance*, S. Antczak, D. Lucas, F. Fabozzi, 2009
 - Chapter 2: The High-Yield Bond Market
 - Chapter 4: Collateralized Loan Obligations
- QFIP-159-F23: Private Debt Fund Returns, Persistence, and Market Conditions

2. Topic: Credit Investment Management

Learning Objectives

The candidate will understand the credit risk aspects of individual securities, portfolios, and sectors and be able to apply a variety of credit risk theories and models to the investment management process.

In many sectors financial institutions primarily invest in corporate bonds, commercial mortgages, mortgage-backed securities, and other fixed income securities. The additional yield received above that of similar maturity government bonds comes with the risk of default and loss of principal. This default or credit risk varies by rating, sector, and with macroeconomic and political cycles, and the investment actuary must understand, be able to model, and inform stakeholders about these return and risk dynamics.

Learning Outcomes

The Candidate will be able to:

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of credit analysis
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply both the concepts and techniques used in the measurement of default risk of individual securities
- c) Understand and apply various approaches for managing credit risk in a portfolio setting, including the use of Credit Default Swaps

Resources

- *The Handbook of Credit Risk Management*, Bouteille & Coogan-Pushner, 2nd Edition, 2022
 - Ch. 1: Fundamentals of Credit Risk
 - Ch. 4: Measurement of Credit Risk
 - Ch. 5: Dynamic Credit Exposure
 - Ch. 13: Credit Portfolio Management
 - Ch. 20: Credit Derivatives
- QFIP-157-23: Ch 12 Credit Risk of *Quantitative Enterprise Risk Management*, Hardy & Saunders

3. Topic: Equity and Alternative Investments

Learning Objectives

The candidate will understand the variety and assess the role of equities and alternative assets in investment portfolios.

The candidate will demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing investment characteristics and potential contributions to investment portfolios of the following major asset groups:

- Real Estate
- Public Equity
- Private Equity
- Commodities
- Hedge Funds
- Distressed Debt

Learning Outcomes

The Candidate will be able to:

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of the investment strategies and portfolio roles that are characteristic of various types of equity and alternative investments
- b) Use different types of equity and alternative investments available for an investor's growth allocation in portfolio construction, considering portfolio design, risk management, liquidity management, manager selection, and implementation
- c) Explain the basic active equity selection strategies including value, growth and combination approaches, and compare techniques for characterizing investment style of an asset manager
- d) Recommend and justify an optimal portfolio allocation in a risk-return framework

Resources

- *Managing Investment Portfolios*, Maginn & Tuttle, 3rd Edition, 2007
 - Ch. 7: Equity Portfolio Management, Sections 1, 2, 4 & 9
- *Commercial Real Estate Analysis and Investments*, Geltner & Miller, 3rd Edition, 2014
 - Ch. 12: Advanced Micro-Level Valuation (excluding Appendix 12B)
 - Ch. 14: After-Tax Investment Analysis & Corporate Real Estate (excluding Appendices)
- *Handbook of Alternative Assets*, Mark Anson, 2nd Edition, 2006
 - Ch. 1: What Is an Alternative Asset Class? (excluding last section)
 - Ch. 3: Introduction to Hedge Funds
 - Ch 6: Risk Management Part I: Hedge Funds Return Distribution
 - Ch 7: Risk Management Part II: Additional Hedge Funds risks
 - Ch 12: Introduction to Commodities

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- Ch 16: Introduction to Venture Capital
- Ch 17: Introduction to Leveraged Buyouts
- Ch 20: The Economics of Private Equity
- QFIP-131-19: Addressing Built-in Biases in Real Estate Investment (including Appendix)

4. Topic: Investment Policy and Regulatory Framework

Learning Objectives

The candidate will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of regulatory and accounting frameworks around investment governance.
- Understand how to develop an investment policy including governance for institutional investors within regulatory and accounting constraints.

Learning Outcomes

The Candidate will be able to:

- a) Describe the regulatory and rating agency contexts in which various institutions operate and how those contexts affect portfolio strategy
- b) Explain how investment policies and strategies can manage risk and create value
- c) Identify a fiduciary's obligations and explain how they apply in managing portfolios
- d) Determine how a client's objectives, needs and constraints affect investment strategy and portfolio construction. Considerations and constraints include:
 - Capital and expected return on allocated capital
 - Risk appetite and risk-return trade-off
 - Tax
 - Accounting
 - Regulators
 - Rating agencies
 - Liquidity
- e) Incorporate financial and non-financial risk into an investment policy, including currency, credit, spread, liquidity, interest rate, equity, insurance product, operational, technology, legal, political, reputational, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks
- f) Demonstrate an understanding of issues related to incorporating ESG criteria into the investment process

Resources

- *Managing Investment Portfolios: A Dynamic Process*, Maginn & Tuttle, 3rd Edition, 2007
 - Ch. 1: The Portfolio Management Process and The Investment Policy Statement
 - Ch. 3: Managing Institutional Investor Portfolios
- QFIP-133-19: Environmental, Social, and Governance Criteria: Why Investors Should Care
- QFIP-160-F23: Principles for Responsible Investment

5. Topic: Investment Portfolio Management and Asset Allocation

Learning Objectives

The candidate will understand:

- The design and management of asset portfolios in alignment with investment objectives and strategies, including investments in fixed income, equity and alternative assets.
- The theory and techniques of portfolio asset allocation.

Learning Outcomes

The Candidate will be able to:

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of common techniques to enhance yield and manage liquidity in fixed income portfolios
- b) Construct and manage portfolios of fixed income investments under various strategies, including indexing and target return
- c) Construct and manage portfolios of equity and alternative investments under various strategies, including active, passive and style management
- d) Develop asset allocation strategies in alignment with investment risk and return objectives
- e) Demonstrate an understanding of asset allocation approaches and techniques, including the concept of risk factor investing
- f) Demonstrate an understanding of the role and the importance of strategic and tactical asset allocation in relation to systematic risk
- g) Explain the manager selection process

Resources

- *Managing Investment Portfolios: A Dynamic Process*, Maginn & Tuttle, 3rd Edition, 2007
 - Ch. 5: Asset Allocation, Sections 1-5, 6 (excluding 6.5), 7, 9 & 10
 - Ch. 6: Fixed Income Portfolio Management (excluding section 4)
 - Ch. 7: Equity Portfolio Management, Sections 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8
- QFIP-155-21: Fundamentals of Efficient Factor Investing
- QFIP-162-F23 The Hidden Dangers of Passive Investing

6. Topic: Asset-Liability Management
Learning Objectives
The candidate will understand how to construct and manage investment portfolios relative to a portfolio of liabilities.
Learning Outcomes
The Candidate will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Construct and manage portfolios of fixed income investments relative to the liabilities that they supportb) Develop and critique asset allocation strategies appropriate to underlying liability profiles such as pension plans and long-tail insurance liabilitiesc) Evaluate the difficulties of investing for long-tail liabilities (i.e. beyond 30 years) such as inflation indexed pension plans and secondary guarantee universal life insuranced) Demonstrate an understanding of and apply tools and techniques of measuring and managing interest rate risk in an ALM context, including duration and convexity
Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Managing Investment Portfolios: A Dynamic Process</i>, Maginn & Tuttle, 3rd Edition, 2007<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ch. 5: Asset Allocation, Section 6.5 Asset/Liability Management○ Ch. 6: Fixed-Income Portfolio Management (Section 4 only)• <i>Fixed Income Securities</i>, Veronesi, 2010<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ch. 3 Basics of Interest Rate Risk Management (excluding Appendix)○ Ch. 4 Basic Refinements in Interest Rate Risk Management• QFIP-139-19: Ch. 13 of <i>IAA Risk Book</i>, Asset Liability Management: Techniques and Practices for Insurance Companies, Gilbert• QFIP-141-19: Liability Driven Investment Explained• QFIP-142-19: Ch. 10 Strategic Asset Allocation in the Presence of Uncertain Liabilities of <i>Modern Investment Management: An Equilibrium Approach</i>, Litterman• QFIP-151-20: Ch. 5 Role of Asset Managers in ALM in <i>Fin. Inst.'s of Asset Liability Management of Financial Institutions</i>, Tilman, 2003• QFIP-154-20: The Evolution of Insurer Portfolio Investment Strategies for Long-term Investing• QFIP-158-23: A Guide to Duration, DV01, and Yield Curve Risk Transformations

7. Topic: Performance Measurement and Attribution
Learning Objectives
The candidate will understand the need for and goals of assessing the performance of a portfolio, and the methods and limitations of performance attribution.
Learning Outcomes
The Candidate will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Explain the use of segmented asset portfolios for supporting different investment objectivesb) Apply performance measurement methodologies to various asset portfoliosc) Describe and assess techniques to select or build an asset benchmark for a given investment objectived) Assess and interpret performance attribution metrics for a given asset or portfolio
Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Managing Investment Portfolios: A Dynamic Process</i>, Maginn & Tuttle, 3rd Edition, 2007<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ch. 12: Evaluating Portfolio Performance• QFIP-145-19: Determinants of Portfolio Performance