EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES (SOA)

INTRODUCTORY STUDY NOTE

NOVEMBER 2026/MARCH 2027/JULY 2027

RET 101 RETIREMENT PLAN DESIGN

DATES (Time scheduled with Prometric Test Center)
Thursday, November 19, 2026
Thursday, March 18, 2027
Thursday, July 29, 2027

1. The examination will consist of three hours of written-answer questions worth 50 points.

2. Candidates may approach the fellowship courses in any order; there is no longer a recommended order to take the curriculum. Each candidate will select their four courses based on their unique circumstances and career aspirations and will additionally determine their appropriate sequence based on factors including readiness to sit for an exam, exam administration schedules, or study time available. The candidate must complete one course sequence (a 100-level/200-level pairing within the same practice area) as part of their four numbered courses.

   Generally, 200-level courses assume some level of familiarity with the 100-level course in the same practice area; beyond that, the course strategy guide will identify specific areas where knowledge from other courses is assumed.

3. The Syllabus materials may include textbooks, online readings, videos, module content, a course strategy guide and the study notes listed in the Appendix. The Appendix also may contain additional important information regarding this exam. A complete listing of the Syllabus and Learning Objectives is located in the course homepage on the SOA website.

4. Several book distributors carry some or all of the textbooks for the Society of Actuaries courses.

5. Any changes to the syllabus after it is posted will be published on the course homepage of the SOA website. Any additions or edits to supplemental course study materials will also be identified and published on the course homepage.

6. Past exams, solutions, and case studies are available on the SOA website.

7. A course strategy guide is provided on the course homepage and is intended to help candidates prepare for the exam. The guide explains the purpose of the course and provides a suggested approach to studying for the exam. While this guide can be a valuable aid in preparation, the material in it will not be tested.

8. The candidate is expected to be very familiar with the Learning Objectives. These Learning Objectives are the first ingredient in developing the syllabus and also guide the examination

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committee when writing questions. The Learning Objectives set out the cognitive level needed to pass this exam. You will notice that the candidates are expected to "analyze," "explain," "calculate," "describe," "apply," etc. While studying the syllabus material, candidates may want to refer back to the Learning Objectives to remain focused on the goals of the exam.

One helpful resource for candidates is the Guide to SOA Written Exams, which provides additional guidance on cognitive levels and common verbs used, among other information.

9. The examination questions for this exam will be based on the required readings for this course. If a conflict exists (in definitions, terminology, etc.) between the readings for this course and the readings for other courses, the questions should be answered on the basis of the readings for this course.

10. Candidates may ONLY use these battery or solar-powered Texas Instruments models: BA-35, BA II Plus*, BAII Plus Professional*, TI-30Xa, TI-30X II* (IIS solar or IIB battery), and TI-30X MultiView* (XS solar or XB battery). Candidates may use more than one of the approved calculators during the examination.

    Calculator instructions may not be brought into the exam room. During the exam, the calculator must be removed from its carrying case so the supervisor can confirm that it is an approved model. Candidates using a calculator other than the approved models will have their exams disqualified.

    Candidates can purchase calculators directly from: Texas Instruments, Attn: Order Entry, PO Box 650311, Mail Station 3962, Dallas, TX 75265, phone 800/842-2737

    The memory of the **BA II Plus, BA II Plus Professional, TI-30X II and **TI-30X MultiView** calculators will need to be cleared by the examination supervisor upon the candidate's entrance to the examination room.*

11. A list of various seminars/workshops and study manuals appears on the SOA website. These seminars/workshops and study manuals do not reflect any official interpretation, opinion, or endorsement of the Society of Actuaries or its Education Committee.

    Please note that the Education Committee expects candidates to read the material cited in the *Syllabus* and to use other material as a complement to the primary sources rather than a substitution for them.

12. The Society of Actuaries provides study notes to persons preparing for this examination. They are intended to acquaint candidates with some of the theoretical and practical considerations involved in the various subjects. While varying opinions are presented where appropriate, limits on the length of the material and other considerations sometimes prevent the inclusion of all possible opinions. These study notes do not, however, represent any official opinion, interpretation or endorsement of the Society of Actuaries. The Society is grateful to the authors for their contributions in preparing study notes.

    The American Academy of Actuaries, the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, the Conference of

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Consulting Actuaries, and the Society of Actuaries jointly sponsor various examinations administered by the Society of Actuaries.

APPENDIX

Study notes for this course are listed below. Study notes listed with an asterisk (*) will also be included in the Revision set of study notes.

Code	Title	Former Code
RET101-100-25	Framework for Future Defined Contribution Design	
RET101-101-25	Integration with Social Security	DA-110-13
RET101-102-25	Defined Contribution Plan Success Factors	DA-164-17
RET101-103-25	Phased Retirement – An Important Part of the Evolving Retirement Scene	DA-165-17
RET101-104-25	The Hybrid Handbook: Not All Hybrids are Created Equal	DA-189-22
RET101-106-25	Multi-Employer Plans	
RET101-107-26*	Introduction and Overview of Retirement Plan Investments	
RET101-108-25	CAPSA, Guideline No. 6, Pension Plan Prudent Investment Practices Guideline	
RET101-109-25	Designing the Future of Target-Date Funds	
RET101-110-25	Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Europe, 2018	
RET101-111-25	Risk Management and Public Plan Retirement Systems - Appendices B and C only	DA-114-13
RET101-112-25	Private Pensions: Alternative Approaches Could Address Retirement Risks Faced by Workers but Pose Tradeoffs, pp.1-35	DA-115-13
RET101-113-25	Chapter 12 of *Reimagining Pensions: The Next 40 Years:* The Promise of Defined Ambition Plans: Lessons for the United States	DA-172-18
RET101-114-25	How Accurately does 70% Final Employment Earnings Replacement Measure Retirement Income (In)Adequacy? Introducing the Living Standards Replacement Rate (LSRR)	DA-173-18
RET101-115-25	An Improved Application of the Variable Annuity	DA-174-18
RET101-116-25	The Case for Collective DC	DA-193-24
RET101-117-25	Implementing Early Retirement Incentive Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide	DA-154-15
RET101-118-25	Pension Issues in Mergers and Acquisitions	DA-161-16
RET101-119-25	Chapters 1 (pp. 4-11) and Ch. 5 of *Pension Policy: The Search for Better Solutions*	DA-132-13
RET101-120-25	Design Matters: Plan Distribution Options	DA-191-22
RET101-121-25	The Big Chill	
RET101-122-25	Innovations in the Canadian Retirement Landscape–CAAT Pension Plan	

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Code	Title	Former Code
RET101-123-26*	CAPSA Guideline No. 3: Guideline for Capital Accumulation Plans	
RET101-124-26*	The Future of DC Plans: Key Trends for 2025 and Beyond	

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