

How to prepare for CA Foundation

Chartered Accountancy Foundation Course Examination. Run by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Board of Studies and Examination Department.

When

Three times a year, in January, May and September (ICAI FAQ on the New Scheme).

The exam

Four papers of 100 marks each. Papers 1 and 2 are written (subjective) answers in 3 hours with 15 minutes' reading time; Papers 3 and 4 are objective (multiple choice) in 2 hours, with 0.25 marks cut for each wrong answer.

Your plan, step by step

- 1 Decide, and learn what CA involves Class 11, now to March 2027**
Read ICAI's page on the New Scheme and the Foundation FAQ with a parent. CA takes several years and has low pass rates at every level, so choose it because you like accounts, law and numbers, not only for the salary. Take Accountancy, Economics and, if you can, Mathematics seriously at school; they overlap with Papers 1, 3 and 4.
- 2 Register and start with ICAI material Class 11 summer to Class 12, April to December 2027**
You can register after Class 10, but the four-year validity only starts at your first eligible attempt, so registering by mid-2027 is early enough for most students. Register no later than 1 January 2028 for a May 2028 attempt. Once registered, use the free ICAI study material and Live Virtual Classes on the BoS Knowledge Portal. Study Business Laws and Economics alongside school, one chapter a week.
- 3 Boards first Class 12 boards, February to March 2028**
Give the board exams full attention; you must pass Class 12 to move to Intermediate, and your board marks matter for college too. Keep CA work to light revision.
- 4 Full revision and mock tests After boards to May 2028**
Fill the exam form when ICAI opens it (about two months before the exam). Finish the ICAI study material, then do the ICAI Revision Test Papers and both series of Mock Test Papers under time. Practise writing full answers for Accounting and Law; neat working and correct format earn marks.
- 5 If you pass, and if you do not Exam and after**
If you pass, register for Intermediate. If you do not, the next session is about four months away (September, then January), so check which paper pulled you below 40 per cent or the 50 per cent total, fix that, and try again. Many students also start a B.Com or other degree alongside, which keeps a backup open.

What the exam tests

- Paper 1: Accounting, 100 marks, subjective, 3 hours.
- Paper 2: Business Laws, 100 marks, subjective, 3 hours.
- Paper 3: Quantitative Aptitude (Business Mathematics, Logical Reasoning, Statistics), 100 marks, objective, 2 hours.
- Paper 4: Business Economics, 100 marks, objective, 2 hours.

Free and official material

ICAI BoS Knowledge Portal (study material, RTPs, MTPs, lectures) (icai.org/post/bos-knowledge-portal). ICAI's own repository of study material, revision test papers, mock test papers and recorded lectures, paper by paper.

ICAI BoS Live Virtual Classes (boslive.icai.org) (boslive.icai.org). ICAI says its Live Virtual Classes are free for registered Foundation students, with recordings, notes and doubt sessions. The January 2027 batch started on 16 September 2026.

ICAI FAQ on Live Virtual Classes (icai-call-sahayata.icai.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Coaching-Classes.pdf). Confirms the classes are free, explains login with registration number and date of birth, and points to the ICAI CA Tube YouTube channel for past batches.

ICAI Mock Test Papers portal (bosmtp.icai.org). ICAI posts two series of mock papers before each exam, with answer keys within 48 hours; physical mock tests are also held at ICAI branches.

ICAI CA Tube on YouTube (youtube.com/c/IcaiOrgtube). ICAI's own channel with recorded lectures, useful before you register.

Books students use

Commonly used, not endorsed.

ICAI Study Material for CA Foundation (all four papers), Board of Studies, ICAI

CA Foundation Principles and Practice of Accounting, P.C. Tulsian

Business Laws for CA Foundation, M.C. Kuchhal

CA Foundation Business Laws and Correspondence, Munish Bhandari

Quantitative Aptitude for CA Foundation, Dr S.C. Gupta

Business Economics for CA Foundation, Dr P.V. Rath

Coaching: do you need it?

Self-study with ICAI's free classes and material: Most students who can follow a timetable. ICAI's Live Virtual Classes, recorded lectures, RTPs and mock papers cover the whole syllabus.

ICAI branch coaching classes: Students near an ICAI branch who want classroom teaching at a low fee. Branches run their own schedules, so ask your nearest branch.

Private online or classroom coaching: Students who want a fixed daily schedule, a particular teacher's style, or more practice in written answers for Accounting and Law.

Red flags

- A promise that you will pass or rank.
- Pressure to buy a combined Foundation plus Intermediate package upfront before you have passed Foundation.
- No refund policy in writing, or video access that expires before your attempt.
- Rank-holder adverts that do not say which course the student took; the CCPA has penalised coaching institutes for this.
- Advice to skip school or join a 'dummy' school to make time for CA classes.

The last months

- Write every Mock Test Paper series in full, in the real time limit: 3 hours for Papers 1 and 2, 2 hours for Papers 3 and 4.
- Aim for well above 40 in every paper; one weak paper fails the whole attempt even if your total is over 200.
- For Accounting, practise full formats (journal, ledger, final accounts) by hand; for Law, write answers as provision, facts, conclusion.
- In Papers 3 and 4, skip questions you cannot narrow down; each wrong answer costs 0.25.

