

CFI CANDIDATE HANDBOOK 2026



Comprehensive
Certification For
Career Minded
Interviewers.



CERTIFIED FORENSIC INTERVIEWER (CFI) DESIGNATION

Congratulations on taking the next step in your professional development by pursuing the Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) designation.

Investigative interviewing is one of the most important skills used in public safety, corporate security, human resources, compliance, insurance, financial investigations, and many other professions. Every interview has the potential to uncover critical information, resolve uncertainty, protect individuals, and support informed decision-making. The quality of an interview often depends not only on the questions that are asked, but on the interviewer's ability to establish rapport, think critically, listen actively, and conduct the conversation ethically.

The Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) certification was developed to recognize professionals who demonstrate a thorough understanding of evidence-based investigative interviewing principles and the ability to apply those principles in a variety of investigative settings. The certification reflects a commitment to professionalism, ethical conduct, and continuous learning.

Whether you are an experienced investigator or are expanding your professional knowledge, the CFI program provides a common foundation built upon research, internationally recognized interviewing principles, and practical application.

Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook serves as your official guide to the Certified Forensic Interviewer certification process.

Inside you will find information regarding:

- Eligibility requirements
- Professional standards and ethical expectations
- Examination policies and procedures
- Examination content outline
- Preparing for the examination
- Registration and testing requirements
- Certification maintenance and renewal
- Frequently asked questions

Candidates are encouraged to read this handbook before beginning the certification process and to refer to it throughout their preparation.

THE CFI COMMITMENT

Earning the CFI designation represents more than successfully completing an examination. It signifies a commitment to conducting interviews with integrity, professionalism, and respect for every individual encountered throughout the investigative process.

Certified Forensic Interviewers strive to:

- Seek truthful and reliable information through ethical interviewing practices.
- Maintain professionalism in every interaction.
- Respect the dignity and rights of all interviewees.
- Base decisions on facts, evidence, and sound investigative reasoning.
- Continue developing their interviewing knowledge and professional skills throughout their careers.

The principles contained within the CFI Code of Ethics and Standards & Principles of Practice establish the professional expectations for every Certified Forensic Interviewer.



Using This Handbook

This handbook is organized to guide you through each stage of the certification process—from determining your eligibility through maintaining your certification after successfully passing the examination.

The handbook includes information about:

- Candidate eligibility requirements
- The Certified Forensic Interviewer Code of Ethics
- Standards & Principles of Practice
- Examination content domains
- Registration procedures
- Examination policies
- Examination results
- Recertification requirements
- Continuing education
- Reference materials used in developing the CFI curriculum

Candidates should use this handbook together with the CFI Online Prep Course, workbook, and other learning resources provided throughout the certification process.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERVIEWERS

The International Association of Interviewers (IAI) is the world's leading professional association dedicated exclusively to investigative interviewing. Established to advance the profession through education, certification, research, and collaboration, the IAI serves professionals across both the public and private sectors who seek to improve their interviewing knowledge, skills, and ethical practice.

Investigative interviews are conducted every day by professionals in law enforcement, corporate security, human resources, compliance, insurance, healthcare, government agencies, financial institutions, and many other industries. Regardless of discipline, successful interviews rely on many of the same core principles—preparation, professionalism, ethical conduct, critical thinking, active listening, rapport, and objective information gathering.

The IAI was created to support these professionals by providing access to evidence-based education, internationally recognized certification programs, professional networking opportunities, and continuing education resources that encourage lifelong learning and professional excellence.

Our Mission

The International Association of Interviewers fosters a global community of research-centered, ethically minded investigative interviewers by providing access to educational resources, professional networking, and career development opportunities.

Our Vision

The IAI envisions a profession where investigative interviews are conducted ethically, professionally, and consistently using evidence-based practices that respect the dignity of every individual while supporting the pursuit of truth and justice.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of INTERVIEWERS
EDUCATE ■ NETWORK ■ ADVANCE

OUR CORE VALUES

EVERYTHING THE IAI DOES IS GUIDED BY THREE CORE PRINCIPLES.

Educate

Education is the foundation of professional interviewing.

The IAI is committed to providing members and certification candidates with current, research-based education that reflects the evolving science of investigative interviewing. Through certification programs, conferences, webinars, publications, online learning, and chapter education, the association promotes continual professional growth and lifelong learning.

Professional interviewers recognize that learning never ends. As research advances and interviewing practices evolve, continuing education ensures professionals remain informed and prepared to conduct interviews using the most current ethical and effective approaches.

Network

Professional relationships strengthen professional practice.

The IAI provides opportunities for members from around the world to exchange ideas, discuss emerging challenges, and learn from one another's experiences. Whether through local chapter meetings, national conferences, virtual events, online discussions, or collaborative projects, networking encourages innovation and promotes consistency within the profession.

The collective knowledge of the investigative interviewing community contributes to stronger investigations and better outcomes for organizations and the individuals they serve.

Advance

The profession continues to evolve through research, collaboration, and professional leadership.

The IAI supports the advancement of investigative interviewing by encouraging ethical standards, promoting evidence-based methodologies, recognizing professional achievement, and developing certification programs that reflect current best practices.

Through these efforts, the association helps ensure investigative interviewing continues to evolve as a respected professional discipline grounded in science, ethics, and practical application.

ABOUT THE CERTIFIED FORENSIC INTERVIEWER (CFI)

The Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) designation is an internationally recognized professional certification that validates an individual's understanding of ethical, evidence-based investigative interviewing principles and their ability to apply those principles in professional practice.

The CFI program was developed for professionals whose responsibilities include conducting investigative interviews to gather reliable information, assess credibility, and support informed decision-making. Rather than focusing on a single interviewing model or technique, the certification emphasizes the foundational principles that apply across a wide variety of investigative settings.

Whether interviewing a victim, witness, employee, customer, suspect, or other source of information, Certified Forensic Interviewers are expected to approach every interaction with professionalism, objectivity, and respect while seeking truthful, reliable information through ethical interviewing practices.

The Purpose of Certification

Professional certification demonstrates more than attendance at a training course—it validates that an individual has demonstrated knowledge within an established body of practice.

The CFI certification was created to establish a consistent professional standard for investigative interviewing by recognizing individuals who have demonstrated competence in the principles taught throughout the CFI curriculum.

Certification benefits:

- Individual professionals seeking career growth and professional recognition.
- Employers looking for a consistent benchmark of interviewing knowledge.
- Organizations committed to ethical investigations and evidence-based interviewing practices.
- The investigative interviewing profession by promoting higher standards of education and professionalism.

Earning the CFI designation demonstrates a commitment to professional excellence, ethical conduct, and lifelong learning.

The CFI Body of Knowledge

The CFI examination is based on a defined body of knowledge organized into eight content domains. Together, these domains provide a comprehensive framework for ethical investigative interviewing and serve as the foundation for both the Online Prep Course and the certification examination.

The eight domains are:

- Global Considerations
- Rapport and Empathy
- Environmental Considerations
- Interviewer Considerations
- Interviewing Vulnerable People
- Interview Method Overview
- Understanding and Managing Interviewee Resistance
- Memorializing the Interview

Each domain builds upon the previous one, progressing from foundational principles to practical application and professional documentation. Candidates should complete the Online Prep Course in sequence to gain the greatest benefit from the curriculum.

Candidate Eligibility Requirements Eligibility for Certification

The Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) designation is intended for professionals whose responsibilities include conducting investigative interviews as part of their official duties. To ensure the certification reflects a consistent level of professional experience and education, all applicants must meet the eligibility requirements established by the International Association of Interviewers (IAI) before taking the certification examination.

Eligibility requirements are designed to ensure candidates possess both the academic foundation and practical experience necessary to understand and apply the concepts presented throughout the CFI curriculum.

Meeting the minimum eligibility requirements does not automatically result in certification. Candidates must also successfully complete the CFI certification process, including the certification examination.

What Qualifies as Investigative Interviewing Experience?

Investigative interviewing responsibilities may vary by profession. Examples of qualifying experience include conducting interviews as part of:

Criminal investigations
Internal workplace investigations
Human resources investigations
Corporate security investigations
Insurance claims investigations
Financial crime investigations
Fraud investigations
Compliance investigations
Regulatory investigations
Loss prevention investigations
Healthcare investigations
Military investigations
Government investigations

Experience may include interviewing victims, witnesses, employees, customers, suspects, complainants, or other individuals involved in investigative matters.

If you are unsure whether your experience meets the eligibility requirements, we encourage you to contact the IAI Team before registering for the examination.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Applicants must meet one of the following education and professional experience combinations:

Bachelor's degree or higher

Two (2) years of professional investigative interviewing experience

Associate degree

Three (3) years of professional investigative interviewing experience

High school diploma or GED

Four (4) years of professional investigative interviewing experience

Full-time faculty member at an accredited educational institution teaching interview and interrogation techniques Qualifies based on professional teaching responsibilities

Professional experience should involve conducting investigative interviews or managing investigations in either public or private sector organizations.



Professional Conduct Requirements

Certified Forensic Interviewers are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. Because certification represents public trust and professional accountability, all applicants must meet the ethical standards established by the International Association of Interviewers.

Applicants must:

- Conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.
- Provide truthful and complete information throughout the application process.
- Agree to comply with the CFI Code of Ethics and Standards & Principles of Practice.
- Successfully complete all required certification requirements.

Any falsification, omission, or misrepresentation of information submitted during the application process may result in denial of certification or revocation of an existing certification.



Background Review

As part of the certification process, applicants may be required to successfully complete a background review.

Individuals may be ineligible for certification if they have:

- Been convicted of a felony.
- Been convicted of a crime involving dishonesty, fraud, theft, embezzlement, or moral turpitude.
- Been terminated from employment for acts involving dishonesty or fraudulent conduct.
- Knowingly provided false or misleading information during the certification process.

Application Verification

Applicants are responsible for ensuring all information submitted during the certification process is accurate and complete.

The IAI may request documentation to verify:

Educational qualifications
Professional experience
Employment history
Professional references
Other information necessary to determine eligibility

Failure to provide requested documentation may delay or prevent certification.



The Certification Process

The CFI certification process consists of three primary steps:

Step 1 – Complete the CFI Online Prep Course

The Online Prep Course provides the educational foundation for certification. The course is organized into eight learning modules that build progressively from foundational concepts to practical application. It will take roughly 35 hours to complete.

The course includes:

- Interactive online learning modules
- Knowledge checks throughout each module
- A workbook for note-taking and reference
- Practical examples and real-world scenarios
- A comprehensive practice examination

Candidates are encouraged to complete each module in sequence to gain the greatest benefit from the curriculum.

Step 2 – Prepare for the Examination

The certification examination is designed to evaluate your understanding of investigative interviewing concepts—not your ability to memorize specific questions or definitions.

Successful candidates typically:

- Complete every module before scheduling the examination.
- Take notes while progressing through the course.
- Review the workbook and reference materials.
- Revisit topics they find challenging.
- Complete the practice examination before attempting the certification exam.
- Take the CFI Prep Workshop (optional)

The goal is to understand the principles well enough to apply them in realistic investigative situations.

Step 3 – Successfully Complete the Certification Examination

After completing the Online Prep Course, candidates take the AI proctored certification examination.

The examination consists of multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate your understanding of the CFI Body of Knowledge. Questions emphasize critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the application of interviewing principles rather than simple recall of facts.

Additional information about the examination format, scoring, scheduling, and testing procedures is provided later in this handbook.

THE CFI CODE OF ETHICS

CERTIFIED FORENSIC INTERVIEWERS SHALL:

Conduct Interviews Honestly and Ethically

Perform all investigative interviewing responsibilities with honesty, integrity, professionalism, and impartiality.

Interviewers should seek truthful and reliable information without coercion, deception that violates applicable laws or policies, discrimination, or unethical conduct.

Respect the Rights and Dignity of Others

Treat every individual with fairness, professionalism, and respect regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic.

Every person deserves to be treated with dignity throughout the investigative process.

Maintain Objectivity

Remain impartial throughout every investigation.

Certified Forensic Interviewers should follow the evidence wherever it leads, avoid preconceived conclusions, and remain open to information that both supports and contradicts investigative assumptions.

Objectivity is essential to maintaining credibility and public trust.

Protect Confidential Information

Safeguard confidential, proprietary, and sensitive information obtained through professional responsibilities.

Information should only be disclosed when authorized or legally required.

Certified professionals should exercise appropriate care when handling investigative records, interview documentation, and digital information.

Maintain Professional Competence

Recognize the importance of continual learning.

Certified professionals are expected to maintain and improve their interviewing knowledge through continuing education, professional development, and awareness of current research and evidence-based practices.

Avoid Conflicts of Interest

Avoid situations in which personal interests, relationships, financial considerations, or outside influences could compromise—or appear to compromise—professional judgment.

When conflicts exist, they should be disclosed and managed in accordance with organizational policies.

THE CFI CODE OF ETHICS

CERTIFIED FORENSIC INTERVIEWERS SHALL:

Represent the Certification Honestly

Use the Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) designation accurately and responsibly.

Certified professionals shall not misrepresent their credentials, exaggerate their qualifications, or imply expertise beyond the scope of the certification.

Support the Profession

Promote ethical interviewing practices, encourage professional development, and contribute positively to the advancement of investigative interviewing.

Certified professionals should demonstrate leadership through professionalism, mentoring, and a commitment to evidence-based practice.

What This Means in Practice

Ethics are demonstrated through everyday decisions —not only during formal investigations.

Examples of ethical professional conduct include:

- Remaining neutral during interviews.
- Documenting interviews accurately and objectively.
- Respecting differing viewpoints while seeking truthful information.
- Avoiding leading questions intended to confirm assumptions.
- Maintaining confidentiality throughout the investigative process.
- Treating every interview participant with professionalism and respect.
- Recognizing personal bias and actively working to minimize its influence.
- Following organizational policies and applicable laws.

Ethical interviewing is not simply about following rules —it is about building trust, protecting the integrity of the investigative process, and ensuring decisions are based on reliable information.

Violations of the Code of Ethics

Maintaining the integrity of the CFI designation requires accountability.

Alleged violations of the Code of Ethics may be reviewed by the International Association of Interviewers in accordance with established certification policies and procedures.

Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, actions may include:

- Request for additional information
- Formal review
- Corrective action
- Suspension of certification
- Revocation of certification



EXAM INFORMATION

CFI Exam

2026



New Online Exam Platform – No Waiting Required!

Take the exam immediately after registering – no wait time or manual processing! 140 multiple choice questions and you have 3 hours to complete.



[Click here](#) to register and take the exam.

Select The ProctorFree System Compatibility Test. It is to verify compatibility only – it is not a CFI practice exam. Select and purchase the Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI Evolved) (\$495). If you have a coupon code, you will enter it here.



You must use a desktop or laptop (no tablets or phones). A reliable internet connection, webcam, and audio are required. Please disconnect from any work VPNs.



The exam is AI-proctored. You'll be asked to download a proctoring application (ProctorFree), which may require admin access to your computer. Please check with your IT department if you are using a work-issued device.

Final exam results will be emailed to you within 1–2 business days after completion.

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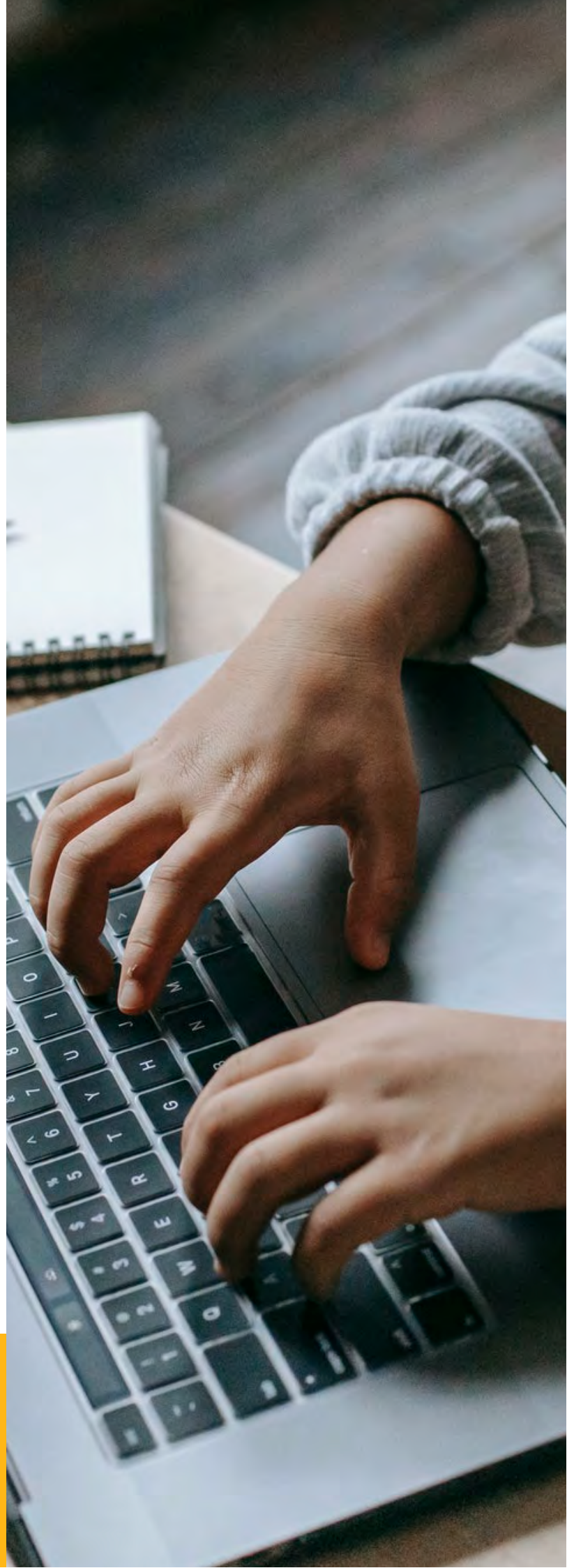
EXAM INFORMATION

- No documents or notes of any kind may be in the space
- You will have to show a government issued ID.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination .
- Eating, drinking or smoking will not be permitted while taking the exam.

Misconduct

If you engage in any of the following conduct during the examination you may be dismissed, your scores will not be reported and examination fees will not be refunded . Examples of misconduct are when you:

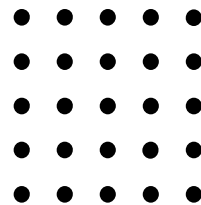
- create a disturbance, are abusive, or otherwise uncooperative.
- display and/or use electronic communications equipment such as cell phones.
- swearing or yelling at the online chat.
- give or receive help or are suspected of doing so.
- leave the exam during the administration.
- attempt to record examination questions or make notes.
- attempt to take the examination for someone else.
- are observed with notes, books or other aids.



Staying Certified

Each CFI needs 24 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every three years to re-certify. You can pay the \$150 renewal fee online. You will receive an invoice 2 months prior to your date and can pay directly through that email or in your profile. Select My Profile from the Quicklinks, and then hover over the My Profile tab and select invoice from the dropdown menu. You will also enter your CEUs online. Select YourCEUs under the Quicklinks to fill out the information. Some ways to earn CEUs are listed below.
www.certifiedinterviewer.com

CEU Type	Credits	Limits
Published Article	4	
Published Text Book	20	
Blog	2	
Book Review	2	
Conference Attendance (NRE, ASET, RILA, RLPSA, IACP, IAFCI, ASIS, ACFE)	6	18
Attendance at Elite Training Days	12	
Seminars or Webinars	1 per hour	
Certification Prep Courses (CFE, LPC, LPQ)	24	
CFI Online Prep Course	24	
Instructor at a conference or meeting	2 per hour	12
Instructor at a college or university	2 per hour	12
Active Member of an IAI Committee	4 per year	



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