



Top 10 CIA® Exam Study Tips

- 1. Know your learning style.** You will learn faster and retain more if you choose a study method that suits your learning style.
 - **Self-Study:** If you're a self-motivated and visual learner, The IIA's CIA Learning System [self-study course](#) is a great choice! Read the printed or electronic study materials, create a color-coded system of highlighting and flagging topics, and take notes. After reading a chapter, complete the online chapter quiz. Be sure to utilize the online flashcards or print them out and carry them with you for a quick refresher.
 - **Instructor-led Courses:** If you're a tactile learner who struggles with motivation, join an instructor-led class. Discussion with your instructor and peers will keep you engaged and allow you to clarify difficult topics. [Find a class near you.](#)
- 2. Understand how much time you need to commit to your studies.** Based on the number of reading pages and online study questions available in The IIA's CIA Learning System, we estimate that you budget at least 40 hours for Part 1 studies, 40 hours for Part 2, and 50 hours for Part 3. Your study time will vary based on your reading speed, experience, and study preferences. For a more detailed plan, The IIA's CIA Learning System offers a SmartStudy™ tool that factors in pre-test scores to determine which topics require intense study.
- 3. Create a study project plan.** Considering your work and personal schedules, identify how much time you have available each week to study. With this in mind, set target dates for your CIA exam and add required study times to your calendar. Take your commitment seriously and stick to your plan. This is an investment in yourself and will benefit you for your entire career.
- 4. Study the topics that need the most work.** If your time is limited, focus your attention on topics that are weighted most heavily on the exam (i.e. "Proficiency" topics in the [CIA exam syllabus](#)) and on topics with which you have the least experience. To identify your weakest topic areas, complete The IIA's CIA Learning System online pre-test and review the topic report. Using these results, create a study plan with the SmartStudy™ tool.
- 5. Reinforce concepts tested at the "Awareness" level.** There are a number of topics in the CIA exam syllabus that are tested at the "Awareness" level, which is a basic understanding of terminology and concepts. [The IIA's CIA Learning System](#) includes online and printable flashcards to help you review key terms and definitions.
- 6. Understand the CIA concepts and how to apply them.** To pass the CIA exam, you must understand how to [apply](#) concepts. Memorization of books is not an effective preparation tactic. After studying and understanding concepts, apply that knowledge with practice test questions. If you get a question wrong, use the rationale provided to go back and understand why you were wrong and the reason for the correct answer. Ensure that you're getting 90% correct on practice quizzes before taking the CIA exam.
- 7. Approach your studies and the exam from a broad perspective.** Your organization, department, or industry may have unique ways of handling certain audit procedures. The CIA exam is a global exam taken from a broad perspective. When studying and taking the exam, try to think of what would be appropriate for any internal auditor as opposed to what you would do in your job.

8. **Budget your time and don't rush.** Be prepared for how quickly you must complete the CIA exam. Plan to have approximately one minute per question. This will give you enough time to go back and review questions you have skipped or want to review. The test timing feature in The IIA's CIA Learning System will help you determine if you are on pace to complete the exam in the time allotted.
9. **Be prepared for the test format.** The exam is administered online by Pearson VUE. The exam software will track your time and allow you to flag questions for review. The CIA Practice Test in The IIA's CIA Learning System includes a CIA exam emulation to help you build confidence with the exam software.
10. **Commit to your studies and do the work.** The CIA exam is not easy. If it were, everyone would pass on the first attempt and there would be little value associated with the certification. However, passing the exam on the first attempt is achievable if you take your studies seriously. Choose a comprehensive training program that teaches the entire global CIA exam syllabus and use all the tools that come with your training program. Study the reading materials, apply what you've learned by completing online test questions, test your knowledge of terms with flashcards, and prepare for the computer-based exam with a CIA practice test.