AFCPE® Registered Education Program Overview:

AFCPE Mission:

To ensure the highest level of knowledge, skill, and integrity of the personal finance profession by certifying, connecting and supporting diverse and capable professionals who serve communities worldwide.

AFCPE Vision:

A future where all people — regardless of income or background — are empowered to achieve lasting financial well-being through the highest standards of financial counseling, coaching, and education.

What is the Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC®) designation?

The AFC designation provides individuals with the knowledge and experience to meet individuals and families where they are, help them build a strong financial foundation, realize their goals, and achieve lasting financial well-being.

Why become an AFC?

- History: AFC designation established January 1, 1993
- Accreditation: The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) has granted accreditation to the AFCPE®'s Accredited Financial Counselor® program for demonstrating compliance with the NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs. Accreditation is for a five-year period, expiring December 31, 2025.

What is an AFCPE Registered Education Program?

Registration as an AFCPE Registered Education Program provides your students with the opportunity to pursue the AFC designation through our University Program pathway. Students who complete the required curriculum within an AFCPE Registered Education Program can use that coursework as a substitute for purchasing educational materials during AFC registration. Additionally, students can receive a discounted rate on the AFC exam.

AFCPE's core values include expanding financial counseling accessibility to all. In that spirit, the AFC education pathway options recognize that individuals enter the financial counseling field from a variety of education and experience backgrounds. To support students in becoming certified, a discounted student exam rate (50% off normal rate) is offered to current university and college students studying full-time at the undergraduate (at least 12 credits), graduate (at least 9 credits), or PhD (at least 3 credits) level. To receive the discounted exam rate, students may upload official or unofficial transcripts as supporting documentation during the AFC registration process. AFCPE will discount the exam price during AFC registration approval, however the exam fee may be paid by the student when they are ready to take the test (anytime within their three-year deadline to complete the AFC certification).

The AFC designation provides students with a valuable credential that can be used in a variety of career paths. Of the 3,200+ AFC professionals, many are working within banking/credit unions, private practice, academia/cooperative extension, non-profit, and the government/military sectors.

To highlight this unique opportunity, our most used Self-Study pathway to the AFC designation is compared with the University pathway below:

Self-Study Pathway	University Program/Distance Learning Pathway
Registration Fee: $50	Registration Fee: $50
Educational Materials: $675-$1,250 (select one below) - AFC Online Study Guide & Books: $675 - AFC Online Study Guide & Webinar Review Session: $675 AFC Online Study Guide & Books and Webinar Review Session: $1,250	Educational materials: $0
Exam Fee: $730 ($365 if full-time student)	Exam Fee: $730 ($365 if full-time student)
Total Cost: $1,090-$2,030	Total Cost: $415-$780

Registration Criteria for AFCPE Registered Education Programs:

- Institutions interested in becoming an AFCPE Registered Education Program may apply by:
  1. Completing the "AFCPE Registered Education Program Application." The application and fee ($200- initial, $100-renewal) may be submitted to sparrish@afcpe.org.
  2. Upon application approval, the "AFCPE Registered Education Program Agreement" will be executed by the university/college and AFCPE.
- All AFCPE Registered Education Programs must be post-secondary institutions accredited by one of the six regional accrediting organizations recognized by the Department of Education, and all coursework should be, at a minimum, at an undergraduate level of study.
- Coursework (6 credit hour minimum requirement) must cover subject areas corresponding to the AFC Core Competencies.
- Required curriculum should be within a program that supports student development in personal finance, debt management, and counseling skills through additional coursework and/or other educational or experiential opportunities.
- The 'Supervising Professor'- a faculty member of the college or university- must be an AFC in good standing or have a graduate level degree in financial planning or counseling, consumer science, business, or other relevant degree.
- AFCPE Registered Education Programs wanting to continue offering their students the opportunity to pursue the AFC designation through the University Program pathway are required to submit a renewal application ($100) to AFCPE every three years and report any substantive changes to programs and curriculum between renewal periods.

Student Requirements:

- Education:
  - Register for AFC certification at www.afcpe.org and document completed coursework from an AFCPE Registered Education Program.

- Exam:
  - Pass AFC exam.

- Experience:
  - Acquire 1,000 hours of relevant financial counseling/education experience.
  - Complete Employment Verification Form.

- Ethics:
  - Sign and agree to abide by the AFC Code of Ethics.
  - Maintain AFC designation by paying annual certification fees and completing required continuing education units (CEUs).

Certification Process:

Register with AFCPE: Students may register for AFC certification through the myAFCPE online system at www.afcpe.org. They will be required to upload a copy of their transcript (official or unofficial) and pay the registration fee. The transcript must clearly show the student's name and passing grades for the required courses. If they have not yet completed the required coursework, they will be 'pre-approved' and would be instructed to resubmit their transcripts with passing grades for the required courses to finalize their AFC registration and become an AFC Candidate.

During final registration approval, students may elect to purchase the AFC Online Study Guide ($100) to help them prepare for the AFC exam. They also have the option to join AFCPE membership. AFCPE membership benefits can be explored here. Those who join membership prior to AFC registration have access to a discount code that will waive the AFC registration fee.

Students have up to one-year post-graduation to take advantage of the University Program pathway to AFC certification, therefore it is highly recommended that students register while they are current, and if possible, full-time status, to receive the discounted exam rate. Students have three years from their final AFC registration approval date to complete the AFC certification requirements.

Schedule the AFC Certification Exam: After a student's registration has been processed and they become an AFC Candidate, the student may schedule a time/date to take the AFC certification exam. To do so, they must return to their myAFCPE account and pay the exam fee. Within 2-3 business days of paying the exam fee, they will receive communication from the testing company (AMP/PSI) with scheduling instructions. The exam date will be subject to date/time availability of the chosen testing site.

Pass the AFC Certification Exam: The AFC certification exam consists of 1 comprehensive exam covering all competencies determined through the most recent AFCPE Job Analysis Study. The computerized exam contains 165 multiple choice questions and has a 3-hour time limit. In the event a student does not pass the exam on the first attempt, they may retake the exam up to four times with a 30-day pause in-between each attempt. Retakes are currently priced at $250 per attempt. Please see the AFC Exam Guide for more information.

Attain the Required Experience: All Candidates must attain 1,000 hours of relevant financial counseling/education experience to attain AFC certification. Experience may be obtained in conjunction with exam preparation or following successful completion of the exam, as long as all requirements are completed within their three-year deadline. Students may also include relevant hours obtained up to 2 years before registering for AFC Certification. Please see the AFC Experience Guide for more information.

AFCPE understands the value of having a good mentor, especially for students and young professionals. Therefore, experience obtained under the supervision of an AFC certified professional is weighted, allowing an accelerated path to reaching the experience requirement. Every hour worked in one-on-one counseling activities under the supervision on an AFC certified professional in good standing will be valued at 1.5 experience hours. For example, 100 hours worked=150 experience hours earned.

Reporting and Completing within Time Constraints: After passing the exam and reporting their experience hours. Candidates must complete the Employment Verification Form and agree to the Code of Ethics through their myAFCPE account. All certification requirements must be complete prior to the three-year deadline.

Students are encouraged to review the AFC Candidate Handbook, which contains valuable information on all aspects of the certification process. Sheena Parrish, AFCPE Special Programs Manager, may be contacted directly with any questions at: sparrish@afcpe.org or 614-368-1132.