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NEXT STEP

All you need to know about the CFA Program

Chartered financial analyst (CFA) is a professional certification provided to experienced financial investment professionals by the CFA Institute. The CFA program is a graduate level self-study program with three levels. In order to be a CFA, each of these levels need to be passed along with 48 months of relevant professional experience. The exams are annually offered in June, with Level I also being offered in December. On average, one needs 300+ hours to study for each level. You can take level 1 in the final year of university and the remaining two after graduation. You need to pass each level before taking the next. It costs between \$2400 and \$4600 to take all three levels, depending on when you register.

Taking the CFAs is a relatively new concept in Bangladesh. But in the US, people have been taking it for years. I spoke to Abdullah Al-Rezwan, an IBA graduate (BBA), who completed all 3 levels of CFA and is currently doing his MBA from Cornell University. He gave me answers to a lot of common questions people have about CFA. He said, that contrary to popular belief, most Wall Street bankers don't come from a BBA background. In fact, they come from a diverse pool of academic majors, start working in finance and ultimately takes the CFA exams to strengthen their understanding of finance.

In the Bangladeshi context, since many high school graduates choose BBA for their undergrad degree, are taking the CFA exams still useful?

Abdullah said that the answer is yes. Because firstly, even the best business schools in Bangladesh have a sub-par finance curriculum. Thus, even after 4 years of undergrad education, the students graduate with a shallow understanding of finance. The CFA program covers an extensive syllabus including economics, statistics, financial statement analysis, fixed income, equity, derivatives, alternative assets, valuation, portfolio management, ethics, etc. Secondly, the CFA program has excellent value for money. In Bangladesh, CFA exams are infamous for being expensive. However, if you compare them with a standard MBA program, the CFA program offers a very similar syllabus for about 1/40th of the cost. Of course, MBA students can gain additional valuable insights from reputed professors, yet the CFA program offers a highly standardised world class education.

Will passing the CFA exams help you get a job?

Abdullah said that the answer is probably yes. Especially in North America, recruiters are aware that passing those two levels require grueling effort. Thus having that on



your resume signals that you are not just another employee seeking a job, in fact your interest in finance is quite solid. Interview performance is of course a crucial element to determine the recruiter's final decision, but passing those two levels will surely help you get a call for the first round of interview. In Bangladesh, even if you can theoretically get the best finance jobs without CFA, passing L1 and L2 surely makes you stand out.

Will passing all three levels give you a promotion/raise?

Abdullah said the answer is probably no. Many have the ridiculous notion that having a degree leads to promotion. This is false not just for the CFA certification, but for every other degree in the world. You might have passed all 3 levels of CFA and gotten a promotion. But your promotion

will solely be based on your job performance, not because of a degree. Having said that, a CFA charter holder has spent above 900 hours in order to pass all levels. This naturally leads to better field knowledge which often leads them to be good at their jobs. So it is because CFA charter holders tend to be better at their jobs that they earn promotions, not because of the charter itself.

Will passing the CFAs help you get into a foreign master's program?

Abdullah said the answer is probably yes. The foreign admissions committee don't know what to make of your CGPA from a Bangladeshi university with an unfamiliar scoring metric. Thus, they deprioritise your undergrad performance and prioritise scores of standardised tests that they're aware of. Hence passing the CFAs will defi-

nately give you an edge in your master's application.

Ultimately, getting a job or excelling at one completely depend on the individual's intelligence, dedication and perseverance. Thus the questions posed don't have straight yes-no answers, said Abdullah, who believes that every personal circumstance is unique and merits a unique approach. However, he insists that anyone even remotely interested in finance should take the CFA exams. This isn't because CFA guarantees a better job or a better pay or a quicker promotion. He recommends the CFA program to those who enjoy finance and are looking forward to a career in finance.

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



goBDgo wins top award at World Travel Awards

goBDgo Ltd. clinched the title "Best Travel Management Company in Bangladesh" at World Travel Awards 2018. Within 5 years of its operations, goBDgo Limited has established itself as an industry leader through its high quality services and vast product portfolio. In Bangladesh, goBDgo proudly represents well known International brands like Dream Cruise, Norwegian Cruise line, GLOBUS family of Brands, Star Cruises and COSMOS to name a few.

This was the 25th year celebration of World Travel Awards. goBDgo.com was recognised with the prestigious title at the Asia & Australasia Gala

Ceremony on September 3rd, 2018 at InterContinental Grand Stanford, Hong Kong. Established in 1993, WTA recognises and acknowledges eminence in all sectors of the tourism, travel, and the hospitality industry.

"Having this distinguished award definitely solidifies our performance, service excellence and dedication of the team that we have been providing for our guests. This will be a fuel to drive our team to move towards achieving the ultimate goal of service excellence," said Mrs Jebunnesa Chowdhury, Co-founder and Managing Director of goBDgo.com.

TOP 3 CAREER PICKS FOR FINANCE GRADUATES



FINANCIAL ANALYST

This job requires you to do tons of research as well as complex analyses. You will have to simultaneously work with data and numbers to help companies with all of their financial matters.



INVESTMENT BANKER

This high paying job will require you to interpret data and make the necessary calculations to determine whether or not your client is heading in the right direction. Good communication skills is a must as well.



BUDGET ANALYST

Put your analytical and communication skills to the test, and if you feel that you'd be good at allocating and analysing resources, try out for the job of a budget analyst.

Making a DIFFERENCE

Mind your meetings

Matt Mullenweg had once jokingly questioned, "Has anyone ever said, I wish I could go to more meetings today?" Most definitely never, unless the meetings are conducted by the World's Best Boss, Michael Scott, from The Office.

Meetings almost always take a stress-toll on the rest of our work day. In a meeting where co-workers and higher-ups from different departments may be present, it's imperative that you be aware of how you are expected to carry and conduct yourself, as these involve interactions that leave lasting impressions.

Here are four tips on meeting manners to help you make the best impression on your peers and bosses. **Punctuality matters:** Being fashionably late to the senior prom or a birthday party may seem okay if you wish to make a statement, but a business meeting is probably not the ideal place to try a late entrance in.

About that mobile phone: There's nothing as awkward as your phone suddenly blaring out the Pokemon title track while your boss is in the middle of a presentation. So put it on meeting mode and inside your pocket. If it's absolutely necessary to attend to a call or text, then

go outside. If the phone is needed for other purposes like taking notes, you may take permission from the boss to see if that's okay. It's still advisable to use pen and paper for jotting down meeting minutes because looking like you're busy on your phone in the middle of a meeting comes off as very rude.

Introduce yourself and those around you:

Even if just one person present in the meeting room doesn't know you, you need to introduce yourself. If the responsibility of introducing others falls on you, start with the person of the highest rank. **Keeping a written agenda helps:** Having a list or summary of what the meeting has asked from you, or what it's going to be about, helps save time, resource and

energy. Bullet pointed notes can be made, besides keeping copies of required files for everyone who will attend.

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