

Certified Travel Associate (CTA) Program

CTA Study Guide

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Welcome to your CTA program. We are excited for you and the commitment you've made to your career. From writing better communications to planning better itineraries, the CTA program is designed to help you with all the critical skills you need to succeed in your everyday tasks.

Before you begin, we suggest that you read this Study Guide to help you plan. The Travel Institute is committed to your successful completion of the CTA program. We have a staff of educational advisors available to answer questions on any aspect of the course. Call 800-542-4282 or email info@thetravelinstitute.com

So let's get started.

CTA Curriculum Overview

The CTA Program is divided into two categories: Professional Skills and Practical Skills. People who enroll in the CTA program receive access to the following courses:

Professional Skills	Practical Skills
1. Business Ethics	1. How to Prevent Credit Card Fraud
2. Business Writing Skills	2. Planning Itineraries
3. Customer-Focused Selling	3. Selling All-Inclusive Resorts
4. Customer Service	4. Selling Escorted Vacations
5. The Art of Listening and Communicating	5. Selling Special Interest Travel
6. Teamwork	6. Touring the World
7. Time Management	7. Travel Insurance
8. Understanding Customer Needs	

Course Design

The CTA courses conform to the same design template and share the following common elements.

Table of Contents: a comprehensive list of all course contents and heads.

Overview: a brief introduction to the subject matter and a synopsis of relevance for today's travel professionals.

Learning Outcomes: a list of expected learning outcomes you will achieve after successful completion of the course.

Reader's Guide: a list of icons used through the course to draw your attention to special activities and exercises and to help you understand how concepts presented relate to you in the workplace.

Pre-Quiz: an objective quiz to help you assess your current understanding of the subject matter.

Course Material: course content organized in smaller units of information to clearly illustrate the importance of the subject and how it relates to the travel industry.

Quick Check: bulleted checkpoints at the end of each unit to remind you of what you have learned so far.

Summary: a concise recap of all course concepts presented at the end of the unit material.

Application Activities: individual, travel-related exercises that allow you to practice what you have learned in the course.

Post-Quiz: taking the Post-Quiz when you have completed the readings and activities to help you measure how much you have learned.

Test Preparation Hints: tips for how to study and prepare for the CTA test.

A Note to Facilitators: guidelines for group facilitators and instructors on how to present the material in a group setting and suggestions for how to enhance the materials with additional materials on activities.

Glossary: definitions for the key words used in the course. Note: Key words are bold italic throughout the course. All glossary terms are not necessarily key words.

Answer Key: answers to the Pre-Quiz and Post-Quiz and sample responses for the Application Activities and other exercises.

For Further Study: a brief list of additional resources and references you can consult to enhance your understanding of the concepts.

Supplemental Reading: published articles, usually from travel industry trade magazines that demonstrate one or more of the concepts in action.

Study Options

The CTA program can be studied independently online or in print or with a study group.

Independent Study

Independent study is a great option for busy travel professionals to create their own study pace through accessibility of the materials online or in print, by following each course's easy-to-follow navigation and engaging exercises.

Virtual Online Workshops

You may decide that earning your CTA will be more productive and insightful if you were learning with a group of travel professionals. The Travel Institute offers Virtual CTA Online Workshops designed to help you learn the most important and applicable concepts of each topic. For more information on the Virtual Online Workshops, visit www.thetravelinstitute.com or email info@thetravelinstitute.com.

Length of Study

The length of time it will take you to complete the CTA program will depend on your discipline and chosen method of study. Whether studying independently or with a Workshop, you should be able to complete the entire CTA program in four to six months. We expect candidates to cover approximately one course per week for an estimated two to three hours each, but your study schedule will vary according to your needs.

Creating Good Study Habits

You will need to carve out time to study in a disciplined way, whether you are studying in a group or on your own. You may have questions about when to study and how, especially if you have been out of school for awhile and have not taken other courses. To help you formulate your study plans, here are some suggestions.

When Should I Study?

Find a regular time and day of the week when you can concentrate on the material at hand without a distraction. Find a quiet time and place.

What Should I Study?

The course is not about memorizing facts and figures, but rather about understanding fundamental concepts and applying them to the travel industry. You may notice that some ideas and concepts are repeated or referred to a number of times in the material. Careful attention to these points will help your understanding and use of the skills presented in the program. Key words and concepts are listed in the “Note to Facilitators” section of each course.

You will not necessarily be asked to define the terms listed in the Glossary of each course. However, you should have a basic understanding of what these terms mean, as well as a sound grasp of the key words highlighted throughout the course. This will enhance your ability to grasp the key concepts.

Focus on how the issues covered in the course apply to the travel industry, especially in your own everyday work environment. You should read and be able to discuss all of the material presented in the course. If you are studying in a group, take notes during your meetings and review them as another way to help internalize the content. You might work with a partner in a buddy system.

The CTA Test

It is understandable for adult learners who have been away from school for awhile to have a certain amount of test anxiety. The follow suggestions may help you overcome your anxiety.

First, be assured that The Travel Institute wants everyone who has studied hard and learned the course materials to pass the test. The emphasis is not on rote memorization of obscure facts but on demonstrating an understanding of the key concepts and an ability to apply them to the travel industry. The testing process is not based on a curve, in which some will pass and some will fail. Each candidate’s test is evaluated on its own merit.

Second, key words and concepts are highlighted throughout the course material and are included in “A Note to Facilitators” in each course. Examine these as you review for the test, as well as the notes you made in the margins when you first read through the materials. Also read the “Test Preparation Hints” at the end of each course.

Finally, you (or your study group) can decide when you feel comfortable enough with the

material to take the test. This flexibility allows you plenty of time for review and for soliciting advice or feedback from coworkers (or study group members), if necessary. You should try to schedule the test as soon after training as possible.

Requesting the CTA Test

Approximately one month before your scheduled test, you or your proctor should complete the CTA Test Request Form found online by visiting our website at www.thetravelinstitute.com/testing. The proctor will receive the test within two weeks of the test date, along with instructions on how to administer it. You have a choice to test online or by traditional paper and pencil. In either case, you will need to select a proctor.

Selecting a Proctor

All CTA tests are closed book. Instead of going to a testing center, The Travel Institute allows each student enrolled in the CTA program to find a proctor.

A proctor must be:

- 21 years of age
- Not related to the student
- Not preparing to take the CTA exam in the future
- A professional within their own industry (For example: a lawyer, a teacher/professor, an accountant, a librarian, a registered nurse, small business owner, etc.)

A proctor ensures that each student completes the test within the allotted time in a secure testing environment without the assistance of any printed or online materials.

Designated proctors receive the test package for either the online or printed test within three days before the agreed-upon test date.

CTA Test Design

The test is designed to measure your ability to understand and apply concepts and skills that are fundamental to working in the travel industry. The CTA test is administered and evaluated by The Travel Institute, is not open book and must be completed within two hours and thirty minutes.

CTA Test Format

- 50 objective (multiple choice and true/false) questions.
- 5 short essays questions

Objective Questions

The objective portion of the test is based on the key concepts of each module and to measure your knowledge of each concept. Review the CTA test prep section of each module for tips on how to study.

Essay Questions

Each essay question is designed to give you the opportunity to apply the concepts learned in the courses to real-live scenarios. The questions should be answered using short-essay responses of 200 to 300 words (two to three paragraphs).

Scoring

Candidates must earn a grade of 70 percent or higher to pass the test.

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| A | 90-100 percent |
| B | 80-89 percent |
| C | 70-79 percent |
| F | 69 percent or lower |

Retesting

If you do not achieve a passing grade (at least 70 percent), you may retest for an additional fee. Contact The Travel Institute to reschedule.

Certification Form

After you receive written notification from The Travel Institute of your passing score on the CTA test and after you achieve 12 months of cumulative travel industry work experience (with a minimum standard of 1,000 hours annually), complete the CTA Certification Form. Make sure you sign this form and have it notarized.

After you receive your certificate, you then can proudly display your new CTA designation. Use your new designation to identify your professional status to your customers and your peers. Include the letters “CTA” after your name on business cards, on name tags at industry events, after your signature in your business correspondence and so on.

