

The Infinite Actuary Joint Exam 1/P Online Seminar

General Tips and Frequently Asked Questions

Recommendations for getting the most out of the seminar:

1. Take advantage of the pause button.

Math is best learned by doing rather than watching. In a traditional math class, I regularly present problems and then pause the lecture to let students work on the problems before talking about the solutions. For the online seminar, I recommend doing the same thing. When I start a new example in the lecture, pause the video and try to solve the problem yourself. You may not be able to because the examples are often showing you new ideas, but if you think about each example before I talk about it, you will get more out of each lecture. Likewise, working the “first pass” problems after doing each lesson will help you get the most out of each lesson and speed up your learning.

2. Consider looking at the video solution of practice problems even if you solved them correctly.

Most problems have multiple solutions, so even if you got the problem right the solution may still have some different ideas than what you used. This is particularly important with problems that require complex computations, as often I might use a shortcut that you should know. You can usually tell from looking at the typed solutions whether or not my solution is the same as yours, so you can save time by figuring out which ones you have to watch that way.

3. Don't turn to the solutions too quickly.

You will remember how to do problems much better if you are able to solve them yourself, and so while you don't want to get bogged down and spend 30 minutes on one problem, you don't want to give up and turn to the solutions too easily. Also, many problems from a section will be closely related to each other. If you are stuck on a group like that, then you first look at the solution to just one of them and then see if that helps you solve the others.

4. Don't be discouraged by the difficulty of the practice problems.

The practice problems consist of old exam problems and original problems that are mostly of exam difficulty. The pass mark on the exam is currently around 70%, but historically was usually closer to 60%. The point is that on your first pass through the material, you are not supposed to be getting anything close to all of the problems correct, as they are hard and you are still learning. Some people find this demoralizing, as they are used to getting all the problems correct in older courses, but data suggests that you learn faster with somewhat harder questions.

5. Calculators, exam rules, and all that.

I recommend the TI-30XS MultiView calculator. It is inexpensive (about \$24) and has the best data and stat modes of the allowed calculators. Whichever calculator you choose, you should use it exclusively for a few weeks before the exam to get used to all of its features. For more questions about the exam, look at the rules at <https://www.soa.org/education/exam-reg/exam-day-info/edu-cbt-add-rules/> or see the 1/P section at <http://www.soa.org/education/exam-reg/edu-exam-p-detail.aspx> (which includes both a copy of the exam distribution tables and the current exam syllabus). You will have 3 hours and there will be 30 questions, all of which are effectively equally weighted (some questions are “pilot questions” and don't count towards your score, but from a strategy point of view you should ignore that).

Other frequently asked questions:

Where can I find video solutions to the practice problems?

See the solutions tab on the lessons page for all of the video solutions.

How can I fast forward/rewind the videos?

Once the video is buffered, you can just move the slider at the bottom to jump forward/backwards to wherever you want.

Is there any way to talk to other students?

Yes – that is a big part of why we set up our own internal forums. On each lesson and practice problem, there is a dialog icon you can click to take you to a discussion of that lesson or problem, and from those links you can also browse the forums more generally.

Where can I go with my questions?

The best way to ask questions on the material is to post on our internal forums (see previous questions). There are two big advantages of that: one is that someone else may have already asked your question, so you can find the answer immediately, and the other is that your fellow students can benefit from your questions.

If you need an extension or have other account related questions, then you should e-mail customerservice@theinfiniteactuary.com

What formulas do I need to memorize?

I don't focus much on what you should and shouldn't memorize during the bulk of the seminar because I view pure rote memorization as something that you want to do relatively late in the game. If you want to get a jump on memorization, you can take a look at the formula sheets in the review section.

If I don't pass the exam, do I need to re-purchase the seminar?

For the long answer, see http://www.theinfiniteactuary.com/files/TIA_Extension_Policy.pdf.

The short answer is that we are currently giving one free extension for six months, and charging 50% for further sittings. If you need such an extension, contact customer service and they will assist you. The extensions last for 6 months from the date when started, so you are better off waiting until near the end of your initial subscription before taking an extension.