Skillshort

Self-Study Preparation Pack

CA FOUNDATION

Paper 3: Quantitative Aptitude

Past Papers – Trend Analysis, Question Patterns & Official Links

Covers objective-pattern attempts May 2025 – May 2026 (100 MCQs) · Official ICAI download links

Paper structure | Chapter counts | Question patterns | Speed tips | Official links

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This subject pack has 6 parts

1 Chapter-wise notes
2 Important topics & weightage
3 Past papers: trends & links
4 Mock tests + solutions
5 Chapter practice questions
6 Last-week plan & strategy

Prepared by Skillshort for self-study. Original explanations and questions; not an official ICAI/ICMAI/ICSI publication. Items marked VERIFY should be checked against the latest official material.

1. How to use ICAI past papers

ICAI owns the copyright in its question papers. This file gives a **trend analysis** and **direct official links**. Solve each official paper in **2 hours on an OMR-style sheet**, score it with negative marking, and log every wrong answer by chapter.

STRATEGY The 3-pass method for an MCQ paper

1. **Pass 1 (after each chapter):** solve only that chapter's MCQs from the four latest papers.
2. **Pass 2 (6–4 weeks before):** one full paper or Skillshort mock every 3 days, timed.
3. **Pass 3 (last 2 weeks):** the two latest papers + ICAI MTPs; re-solve wrong ones after 2 days.

2. Paper structure

Item	Detail
Questions	100 MCQs × 1 mark; all compulsory; four options
Time	2 hours (no reading time)
Negative marking	0.25 per wrong answer VERIFY
Order	Two rounds: Maths → Reasoning → Statistics → Maths → Reasoning → Statistics
Mix	About 70% computational, 30% theory/one-liners (mainly Chapter 13, 16, 18)

3. Chapter-wise count – January 2026 and May 2026

See file 02, Section 2, for the full table. Highlights: Mathematics of finance 14 + 14; each reasoning chapter 5; statistical description & sampling 9 + 9; central tendency & dispersion 7 + 10; correlation & regression 8 + 5.

4. Question-type patterns

Pattern	Example of what is asked (not reproduced)	How to solve fast
Formula plug-in	FV of annuity for 8 years; EMI; sinking fund for a scooter	Keep $(1 + i)^n$ on calculator memory; use annuity formulas directly
Reverse finance	Years for ₹50,000 to become ₹75,000; rate that triples money	Use logs: $n = \log(A/P) \div \log(1 + i)$; or test options
Option testing	Simultaneous equations, roots, inequality solution sets	Substitute the options – 15 seconds each
Property one-liner	"Which is a property of AM?", "Fisher's index satisfies ..."	Memorise the property lists in file 01
Data-based stats	Mean deviation of a list; quartile coefficient; combined mean	Write numbers in a column; use calculator Σ
Reasoning sets	5–6 people in a row/circle; coded relations; walking directions	Draw immediately; for directions mark N at the top

5. Examiners' observations (from ICAI's summaries and general trends)

COMMON MISTAKE **Where students lose marks**

- Spending too long on 2–3 lengthy finance or calculus questions – skip and return.
- **Guessing blindly** – with 0.25 negative marking, guess only when you can eliminate at least **two options** VERIFY.
- Confusing annuity regular and annuity due; nominal vs effective rate.
- Sign errors in regression and change of scale questions.
- In reasoning, misreading "facing outside" vs "facing centre" in circular seating.

6. Official ICAI links (download here)

Resource	Link
ICAI – Suggested answers (Foundation, all attempts)	https://www.icai.org/post/suggested-answer-foundation-course
BoS Knowledge Portal – Question papers	https://boslive.icai.org/education_content_list.php?c=Foundation&cat=Question%20Papers
BoS – Mock test papers (MTP)	https://bosmtp.icai.org/
Study material – Paper 3	https://www.icai.org/post/sm-foundation-p3-may2026 VERIFY
May 2025 – Paper 3 SA	https://resource.cdn.icai.org/86940bos-acc-sugg-ans-may2025-p3.pdf
Sept 2025 – Paper 3 SA	https://resource.cdn.icai.org/89268bos-aps3012-fnd-p3.pdf
Jan 2026 – Paper 3 SA	https://resource.cdn.icai.org/91197bos-aps4356-sa-fnd-p3.pdf
May 2026 – Paper 3 SA	https://resource.cdn.icai.org/93071bos-aps5734-fnd-may2026-p3.pdf

NOTE **Papers before May 2025 (June 2024 – Jan 2025) followed the same syllabus; their question papers are on the BoS Knowledge Portal. Always confirm the current paper pattern and negative-marking rule in ICAI's announcement for your attempt** VERIFY.