

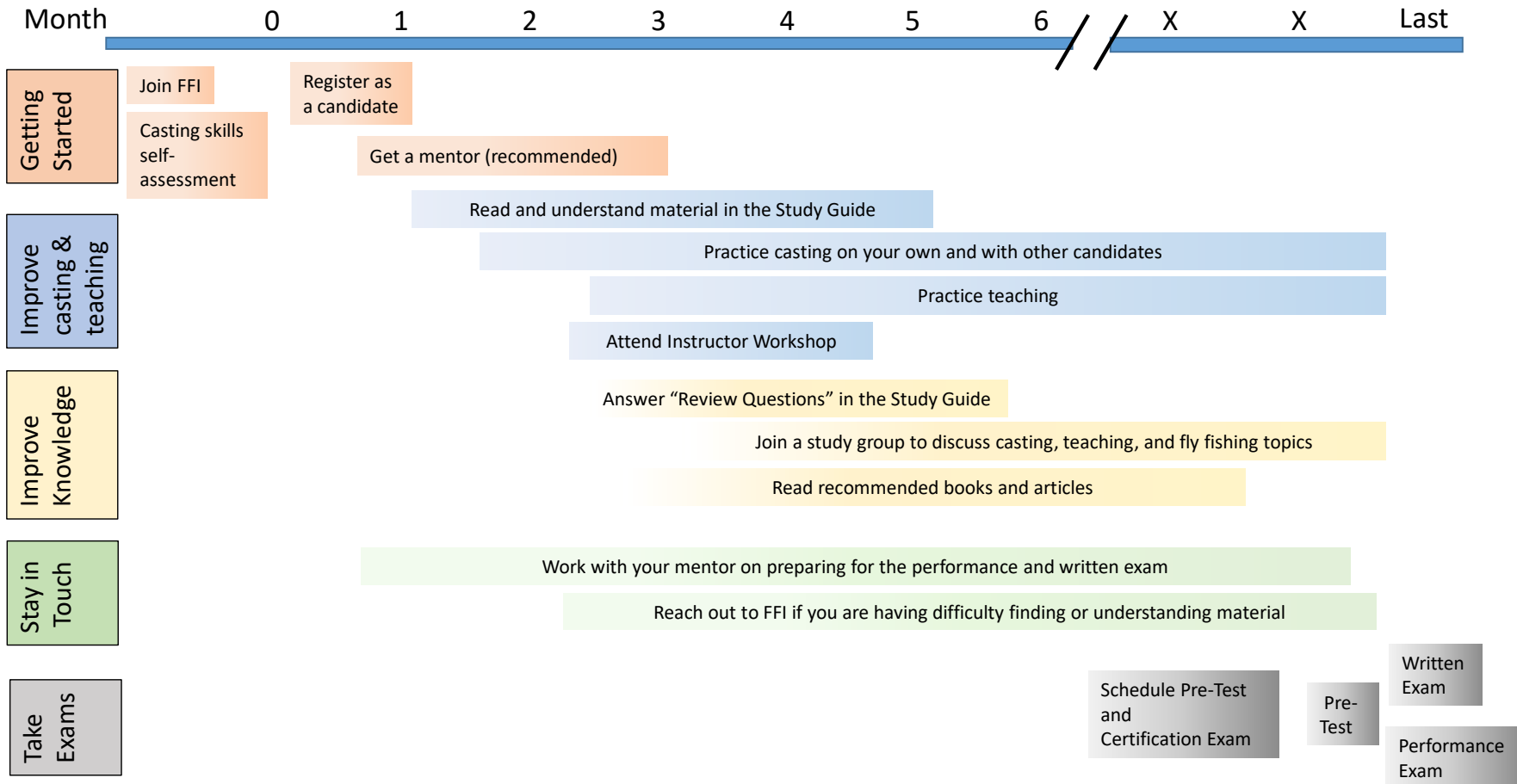
The CI and THCI Certification Roadmap

This roadmap is designed to help keep you on track during your journey to becoming a certified casting instructor. It is broken into three sections (1) Frequently asked questions, (2) a notional timeline, and (3) recommended actions for each of the steps on the timeline.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is required to become a certified instructor?**
 - The desire to become a better caster and the desire to teach fly casting.
 - The willingness to put in significant time and effort to meet the high standards required for certification.
 - Be a member of FFI and register as a candidate.
 - Participate in an Instructor Workshop.
 - Pass a written Knowledge Exam.
 - Pass a Performance Exam (casting and instructing).
- **Why become a certified casting instructor?** You join the ranks of professional casting instructors who serve as ambassadors for FFI and are fully prepared to provide expert instruction to those wanting to improve their fly-casting and fly-fishing skills. In the process you become a more effective instructor and are exposed to other casting enthusiasts and state-of-the-art casting and instruction.
- **How long will it take to become a certified instructor?** Generally, it will take at least a year for you to prepare for and take the certification exam. The exact timeline depends on your existing casting skills and teaching experience, how much time you dedicate to reading, reviewing, and practicing, and how long it takes you to master the necessary teaching and casting skills.
- **How much will it cost?** The cost to get certified will vary with each candidate. Typical costs include:
 - The exam fee (\$350)
 - “Pass” fee (\$30), which covers the paperwork and your badge
 - Annual instructor fee (\$45). This is in addition to your FFI membership fee.
 - Mentor’s fees. Some do not charge, some charge a one-time fee, and a few charge by the hour.
 - New fly lines (\$180). You don’t need to use any specific line, but which ever line you use must meet the exam requirements. The specialty lines we recommend are about \$90 each and you’ll need (at least) one for practice and another one for the test.
 - New equipment and travel are variable.

CI and THCI Certification Timeline



Recommended actions for each step on the timeline (NOTE: you will need to log into your FFI account to access the links.)

Getting Started

- Join FFI
 - If you haven't done so already, go to the FFI [website](#) to join. You need to be a member to access most of the certification material on the website.
- Register as a casting instructor (CI) candidate.
 - Also on the [FFI website](#), you can register as a candidate. If you don't already have a mentor, we strongly recommend you ask to receive information about a mentor when you register.
- Casting skills self-assessment. Before you begin your journey to become a certified single-hand casting instructor (CI) or two-hand casting instructor (THCI), we ask that you do a self-assessment of your casting skills. If you don't have the recommended skills, continue working until you do. Having these skills will make your journey more enjoyable.
 - For those wanting to be a **single-hand casting instructor**, we ask that you be able to perform the Silver Level casting skills listed in the [Casting Skills Development Angler's Guide](#). If you need help with the Silver Level tasks, please see the FFI Fly Casting Skills Development Angler's Guide for a detailed description of the tasks. We also suggest reaching out to an existing certified casting instructor by using our "[Find an Instructor](#)" search engine or contacting your nearest [FFI Council Casting Director](#) for assistance.
 - For those wanting to become a **two-hand (Spey) casting instructor**, please be able to perform the Level-1 casting skills found in the [Single Hand Spey Ladder Skills Sequence and User Guide](#). Although the Level-1 skills are intended for single hand rods, please use them as a diagnostic for your two-hand casting skills. If you need help with your two-handed skills, please reference the [Skills & Drills Library](#) that is found on our Single Hand Spey Fly Casting page. Like with single-hand casting, we suggest reaching out to an existing certified casting instructor by using our "[Find an Instructor](#)" search engine or contacting your nearest [FFI Council Casting Director](#) for assistance.
 - Once you can confidently accomplish the Silver-Level (single hand) casting skills or Level -1 spey skills, you are ready to begin your journey.
- Finding a mentor
 - FFI can point you in the right direction, but it will be up to you to find a mentor.
 - To find a mentor, use the same "[Find an Instructor](#)" search engine to locate one near you, or one you want to work with.
 - If you are not successful at finding a mentor in your state, select an adjoining state and run another search. If you can't find a mentor, we recommend finding

a MCI or THMCI in your state to cast with. If that doesn't work look for a CI or THCI and email casting@flyfishersinternational.org to request assistance with finding a mentor.

- When talking to a prospective mentor you should ask about
 - Cost: Some mentors charge for their time, others do not. Find out ahead of time what you will pay and what the mentor will provide.
 - What type of mentoring can they provide? Do they provide in-person, remote/virtual, or a combination of both? Also ask if they have a group you can join.
 - How long will they work with you. Preparing for the certification exam can take a year or more. Find out how long a potential mentor is willing to work with you.
- Once you have a mentor, please email casting@flyfishersinternational.org to provide FFI the name of your mentor. We track this.

Improving Casting and Teaching skills

- This leg of your journey can take anywhere from 9-24 months depending on how fast you master the needed skills and gain the necessary knowledge. During this phase we recommend:
 - CI candidates - Read and understand the [CI Study Guide](#) and take advantage of the other learning resources found at [CI Exam Preparation](#) and [Resources to Become a Casting Instructor](#).
 - For THCI candidates – Review the material and use the learning resources found at the [THCI Exam Preparation](#) and the [Two-Hand Exam Page](#) (make sure to scroll down).
- Practice casting by yourself and with others. You (and your casting mates) are your first student(s). Use the opportunity to practice evaluating and correcting casting faults, and for practicing the teaching tasks (CI exam - tasks 16-22; THCI exam – Section 2) on the performance exam.
- Start teaching. Find opportunities to teach. Local fishing clubs are always looking for instructors. In the spring of each year, many local fly shops offer fly fishing classes and most are in need of instructors. Work with your mentor to identify other teaching opportunities.
- Watch casting and instructional videos at the [Fly Casting Video Library](#) and the [Fly Casting Instruction page](#).
- Participate in the mandatory Instructor Workshop. This 2-hour workshop contains valuable information to refine and improve how you teach fly casting.
 - We recommend attending this online workshop at about the 3-month point in your journey.

- To register for a workshop, visit the [Casting Examinations and Educational Opportunities page](#) and select a date that works for you.

Improving Knowledge

- This stage of your journey can take anywhere from 6-12 months and is totally dependent on your schedule.
- This is the time to dig into casting mechanics, fly rods, fly lines, leaders, and tippet, and why different configurations and types of equipment are better in certain situations
- We recommend joining a study group, or forming one if you are part of a group mentoring program.
- For both CI and THCI candidates, there is a list of “Review Question” in Appendix D of the CI Study Guide. Develop answers for each question and discuss your answer with other candidates. If you are not part of a study group, find a current CI or THCI who is willing to discuss the questions and your answers.
- Read recommended books and articles found on the CI and THCI Becoming-a-Certified-Instructor pages. The quarterly [Loop Journal](#) is full of great casting and teaching information.
 - For CI candidates, see recommended reading material listed in the back of the CI Study Guide.
 - For THCI candidates, see recommended [THCI reading material](#).

Stay in Touch

- Establish a regular schedule to meet with your mentor to prepare for the performance and written exams.
 - If your mentor is not nearby, find another CI or CI candidate to cast with and review material.
 - Reach out to your nearest [FFI Council](#) to find other casters, like-minded anglers, and upcoming events.
- Reach out to other casting instructors if you are having difficulty with a concept or send an email to casting@flyfishersinternational.org if you have a question about the certification process.

The Exam

- It can take several months to schedule and take a pre-test and the exam, and there are several factors to consider.
 - Bottom line: confer with your mentor before scheduling an exam.
 - Exam fees are not refundable. You need to be sure you will be ready to take the test on the exam date you select.

- Testing events fill up quickly, but committing to an exam means you are paying for that exam—ready or not.
- Identify the most convenient testing location. Most people must travel to their testing location. Some people have realistic access to multiple testing events throughout the year. Others may only have access to one event each year.
- When you are ready to schedule your exam, go to the [Calendar of Events](#) to learn about exam events closest to you. As mentioned above, candidates normally need to travel to exams as they are often held in conjunction with other fly fishing events. Additional exam opportunities may be arranged by contacting the FFI office at casting@flyfishersinternational.org
- Pre-Test
 - A performance pre-test is a simulated exam conducted by one or more Master Casting Instructors who are familiar with how the exam is conducted and the performance standards required to pass.
 - Pre-tests provide an opportunity to experience actual exam situations and to get detailed feedback on your performance and your readiness to take the actual exam.
 - When you and your mentor believe you are ready, we recommend scheduling a pre-test with a validated examiner. If an examiner isn't available, work with your mentor to find another MCI/THMCI to give the test. The pass rate is significantly higher among those who take and pass a pre-test compared to those who do not take or pass a pre-test. If you don't have a mentor, reach out to an MCI or THMCI to take you through the exam. If all else fails, contact casting@flyfishersinternational.org and explain your situation.
 - You can take as many pre-tests as needed.
- The Certification Exams
 - The written exam and performance exam are given at the same exam event.
 - The written exam is the same for CI and THCI candidates and covers casting mechanics, your understanding of fly rods, fly lines, leaders, and tippet, and uses of casts and mends.
 - The performance exam evaluates your casting and teaching skills.
 - The written exam consists of 36 true-false and multiple-choice questions. It covers material provided in the study guide, and the “tips” are identified for a reason. General topic areas covered on the exam include:
 - Casting definitions
 - Casting mechanics
 - Rod tip path and the resulting fly leg shapes
 - How force affects rod tip path
 - Effective Hauling

- Effective teaching skills
 - Style vs technique
 - Teaching methods
 - Fault analysis
- Uses for various casts and mends
- Equipment characteristics and their effect on casting and presentation
- For CI candidates, the expectations for the performance (casting and teaching) part of the exam are covered in the exam itself, the study guide, and the [Tips for Performance and Teaching Tasks](#).
- For THCI candidates, the expectations for the performance (casting and teaching) part of the exam are covered in the exam itself, and the [THCI Prep Cards](#).
- The exams only take a few hours, but plan on spending the day at the exam site.
 - You will be evaluated by two examiners.
 - The written exam (1 hour) and performance exam (2.5 hours) are given at the same event, but not always on the same day. Also, depending on the number of candidates, you may be the second, or even third, exam of the day.
 - The CI exam will most likely be administered on grass but may be administered on water. The roll cast should be administered on water if it is available. The THCI exam will be administered on water.

After the Exam

If you passed your certification test, congratulations! You have a reason to be proud of your accomplishment. Once you've taken some time to celebrate, please complete the following actions.

- Send an email to the Casting Program Coordinator at casting@flyfishersinternational.org with a copy of the signed exam sheet. The coordinator will send you an email with a link where you can pay your "exam pass fee" (\$30) and your prorated instructor dues.
- Participate in Casting Instructor Certification Program (CICP) continuing education opportunities at council, club and international levels, virtually and in person.
- Discuss ways of obtaining students for instruction with other Certified Instructors. Your mentor may be a good place to start."
- Respond to FFI Casting Instructor Development surveys. Your answers help us make improvements to the program.

If you didn't pass your certification exam on this attempt, use this as learning opportunity. Many currently certified casting instructors needed to make improvements before achieving

their certification goals. The following are some suggestions to get you ready for a re-test. You can do this!

- Write yourself a debrief about your exam: what went well, what would you do differently, what surprised you, how would you prepare differently if you could take the test again right now? Use these debrief notes in the next step.
- Develop a plan to specifically target those items identified by your exam team as needing improvement. If you need further clarification from your examiners, just send them an email. Do this sooner rather than later while the test is still fresh in everyone's mind.
- Work with your mentor to implement your plan and to measure your progress towards improvement.
- Remind yourself why you began this journey in the first place. Use those reasons to reinforce your commitment to improve.

Good luck!