

The Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA®) University Affiliation Program: Explicit and Implicit Benefits

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Abstract

This study presents the results of a global survey of Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA®) University Affiliated Program (UAP) Principal Contacts. The survey provides insights to the nature of academic-professional collaboration between the CFA Institute and participant Universities in its University Affiliation Program (UAP) for curriculum development and for degree program administration. Additional insights are provided regarding the role of professional qualifications as an enhancement to academic qualifications within the professorate. The results demonstrate that the presence of CFAs on faculty is increasing with the amount of time that a given program has been affiliated with the CFA Institute. An examination of curriculum design and review by UAPs demonstrates that programs value the process of mapping to the CFAs Common Body of Knowledge as a means of improving the topical currency of their curriculum. UAPs tend to value implicit curriculum related benefits over explicit benefits geared towards supporting student performance post-graduation. However, there is also evidence that the presence of CFAs on the faculty increases the use of benefits to support post-graduation performance of students. The data also shows that UAPs greatly value the administrative and promotional benefits provided by the CFA Institute, although additional marketing and outreach may increase the usage rates of some benefits.

Keywords: Curriculum development, curriculum design, audit-based curriculum accountability, CFA University Affiliation Program

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Introduction

The CFA Institute has sponsored university programs since 2007 when thirteen universities were recognized as CFA Partner schools. The demand for academic collaboration with the CFA Institute began to grow and in 2012 the CFA University Recognition Program (URP) was instituted. By the end of 2015 there were over 200 URP programs worldwide. In 2018 the program further evolved into its current form, the CFA University Affiliation Program (UAP). Demand continued to grow and by the end of 2019 over 600 schools in 72 countries had achieved CFA UAP status, making it one of the largest professional-academic partnerships for business colleges.

The CFA University Affiliation Program has influenced college curricula and student professional preparation. It has also provided marketing and administrative benefits to colleges to support the mission of UAPs. This study uses a global survey of Principal Contacts, who serve as the liaison between the CFA Institute and UAPs, to examine the benefits to schools across the curricular, marketing, and administrative domains.

The question of program benefits relates directly to the educational mission of the CFA Institute in that training across a range of finance related topics is critical to the success of CFA charterholders. Kang, *et al.* (2018) observed the efficacy of the CFA Programs, as evidenced by obtaining CFA charterholder status, and found that sell-side analysts with the CFA designation exhibited significant improvement over non-CFAs in the performance of their recommendations. They also documented that CFAs have a significantly better chance of appearing on the All-American Research Team as ranked by *Institutional Investor* magazine.

Obtaining CFA credentials represents a significant investment in human capital, and UAPs exist to provide students with skills and knowledge to succeed in this effort. Pedagogical literature notes two competing theories to explain such an investment in human capital. The human-capital theory (see Mincer, 1974, and Becker, 1975) asserts that people invest in education to improve their knowledge and skills with the expectation of higher performance and marketability in the future. In contrast, signaling theory (see Arrow, 1973, and Stiglitz, 1975) implies that people incur the cost of education to signal their innate ability in a particular discipline. The credentials achieved provide a signal to others (employers, clients, etc.) who cannot otherwise distinguish an individual's skills and abilities.

These theories are tested on CFA charterholders by De Franco and Zhou (2009). They examine performance of sell-side analysts before and after obtaining the CFA designation. The question is whether the CFA program increases the analyst's skills and effectiveness (i.e., human-capital theory) or not (i.e., signaling theory). Their evidence suggests that ability significantly improves after an analyst obtains CFA charterholder status. Consistent with the human-capital theory, this implies becoming a CFA significantly contributes to the development of a financial analyst's professional skills rather than merely being a signal.

By extension, these results support the idea that finance curricula and related student support at universities can benefit from collaboration with the CFA Institute. Participation in the UAP by a university fits into the framework of audit-based curriculum accountability as defined in pedagogical literature. Findlow (2008) notes that audit-based accountability for a curriculum has the potential to increase trans-disciplinary and knowledge application. But she also notes that this can produce academic-managerial tension that can be counter-productive to academics by stifling innovation. Clegg (2005) argues that professional knowledge is best created in an

environment where the various players in a culture (such as academics and professionals) participate in way that explores and nurtures new ideas. McLean and Blackwell (1997) state that this culture can be enabled via a perspective of problematization and risk, where all parties involved (in this case academics and professionals) engage in a process of identifying problems and resolving them by exploring ideas and taking risks to find solutions.

Previous studies examine this dynamic using survey data. Bracker and Shum (2011) survey finance faculty members who were members of the Financial Management Association. Their study found that becoming a CFA charterholder created benefits to faculty in both teaching and research, but also found academic disincentives to pursuing a CFA designation. However, faculty members felt that obtaining the CFA designation was increasingly important for finance students, and this was independent of their own status as a CFA charterholder.

Grieb *et al.* (2017) surveyed finance faculty from all CFA University Recognition Programs. Their results provided evidence that finance curricula had improved over time relative to the CFA Candidate Body of Knowledge (CBOK), and that this was strongly the case for the ethics domain. The survey also documented a willingness to update curricula to meet CBOK standards. Faculty also recognized benefits to the CFA affiliation in terms of program marketing, student scholarships, and student job opportunities.

This study uses survey data from each university's primary CFA contact faculty member, known as a Principal Contact, to examine the benefits of collaboration with the CFA Institute. In building programs that adhere to the human-capital theory of education, universities can use this audit-based accountability model to access benefits provided by a professional organization. The benefits examined span the curricular, administrative, and student support domains. Perceptions of UAP Principal Contacts are used to identify and inform the value of these benefits.

The CFA University Affiliation Program

In 2018 the CFA Institute shifted from a University Recognition Program to a University Affiliation Program. All existing Recognition Programs and Partner Programs were automatically updated to be recognized as Affiliated Programs. The requirements for affiliation with the CFA Institute remained unchanged. Specifically, programs are required to document curricular coverage of a minimum of 70% of the CBOK from all levels of the CFA Program across knowledge domains (including ethics). Other requirements include accreditation by a mainstream accreditation agency recognized within the country of the program, a minimum number of credit hours devoted to CBOK topics (24 semester credits for graduate programs and 15 semester credits for undergraduate programs), and sufficient use of textbooks or custom materials that cover CBOK topics.

In addition to the requirements listed above, continued UAP status involves an Annual Review (AR) of the affiliated degree program to ensure compliance with the requirements in the UAP program agreement. The AR serves to maintain the integrity and high standards of the affiliated program and to determine the university's CFA Program Student Scholarship allotment for the upcoming program cycle.

The major changes for the new University Affiliation Programs were in terms of upgraded benefits provided by the CFA Institute. The first type of benefit is in the form of program promotion. Member universities may use the UAP logo as part of its print and online marketing efforts, and they are also recognized on the CFA Institute website (along with university logos and website links).

The second type of benefits were in the form of CFA Program resources. These are designed to create alignment between university curricula and the CBOK, and to support student

preparation for CFA exams. This includes annual access for the Principle Contact to a complete set of the CFA Program curriculum (all three levels) in eBook format, and to all levels of CFA Program sample exams. In addition, universities also receive a statistical service report for consenting students who take the CFA exams. This report provides information including pass rates and average scores by CFA topic.

The third type of benefit includes access to CFA Institute content such as subscriptions to the Financial Analysts Journal and the CFA Institute Magazine, as well as notices of educational opportunities via conferences, publications, and multimedia.

Finally, there is an increased level of scholarship opportunities. Each UAP gets three CFA Program student scholarships plus additional scholarships for features like having CFAs on the faculty, having more than one degree program, offering an ethics course focused on the CFA Institute Standards of Practice, requiring students to sit for CFA exams, and others.

Survey and Sample Characteristics

The Qualtrics based survey consisted of 33 questions divided into three sections. Section 1 focused on demographic characteristics for each UAP. Section 2 focused on curriculum, and Section 3 focused on administrative and program support tools, including questions relating the benefits provided by the CFA Institute to UAPs. A worldwide database of Principal Contacts for UAPs was provided by the CFA Institute. An initial survey request plus two subsequent follow up requests were sent to the Principal Contacts during the fall 2019 academic semester. The survey responses were blind and confidential.

The database consisted of 625 universities divided into three regions. Schools located in the Americas totaled 296 institutions, with 149 schools located in the Asia/Pacific region

(APAC) and 180 schools located in the Europe, Middle East, and Africa region (EMEA). A total of 243 responses were received for a yield of 38.8%, although the responses on most questions ranged from 200 to 230 for an approximate average net yield of about 34%.

The initial year of affiliation with the CFA Institute ranged from 2012 (the first year of the University Recognition Program) through 2019. The year of initial affiliation is split evenly between the first half of the sample (53%) and the second half (47%). A crosstabulation χ^2 test did not indicate that responses across time were driven by either university size or by region. In addition, new affiliations spanned every year of the sample indicating that demand from schools has been steady across time.

Programs at the UAP schools represented in the sample data were a mix of undergraduate degrees (41.9% of schools), graduate degrees (33.8% of schools), and schools with both graduate and undergraduate programs (24.3%). Crosstabulation tests indicate that the program mix was constant across time and independent of university size. However, a significant regional effect was present due to a strong skew towards master's programs in EMEA, and towards undergraduate programs in the Americas. Traditional on-campus programs are the predominate format and represent about 85% of the sample. The remaining 15% are programs using a mix of in-person and online formats, and these tend to skew slightly towards graduate programs.

Consistent with Grieb, *et al.* (2017), schools are divided into three size categories (Small, Medium, and Large) based on the criteria shown in Table 1. For crosstabulation purposes, university enrollment is the metric used to determine a school's size.

Table 1. Definition of Size across observed demographics.

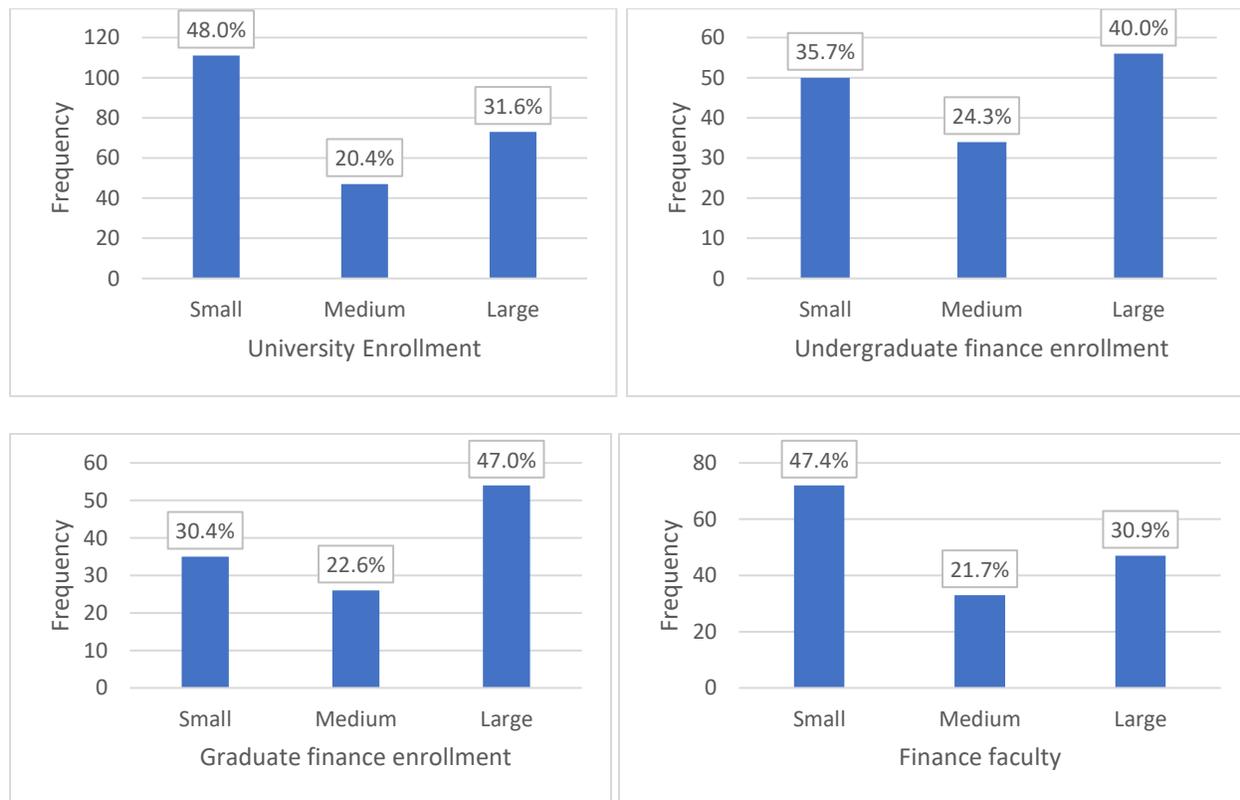
	University Enrollment	Undergrad Finance Enrollment	Graduate Finance Enrollment	Finance Faculty
Small	Less than 10,000	Less than 100	Less than 30	Less than 10
Medium	10,000 – 20,000	100-200	30-60	10-15
Large	More than 20,000	More than 200	More than 60	More than 15

A breakout of the programs by each of the size metrics is provided in Figure 1.

Approximately half of the universities are Small (<10,000 enrollment), while about one-fifth are Medium (10,000-20,000 enrollment), and about one-third of the schools are Large (>20,000).

This represents a slight skew towards Small schools in the sample, but the distribution is even enough to provide a good sample size in each category.

Figure 1. Respondent distribution by university size

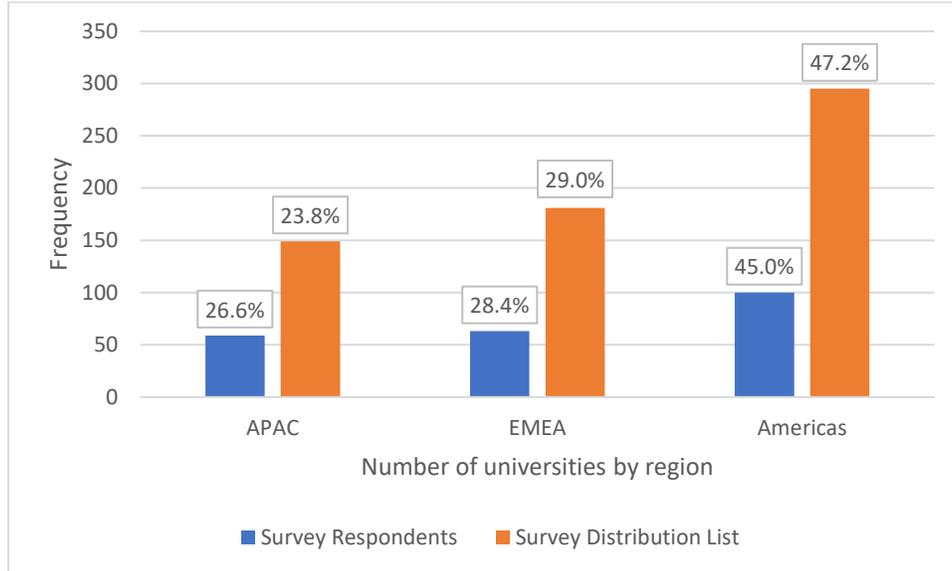


Programs tend to skew towards large enrollments, and this is more so for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs. The size of the finance faculty is more correlated with university enrollments than with finance enrollments. This suggests that finance faculty tend to be adequately staffed from a university-level perspective, but slightly understaffed relative to their program enrollments.

A crosstabulation for university size vs region was strongly significant ($\alpha < 0.001$) and indicates that APAC programs tend to reside at large universities, and EMEA programs tend to reside at small universities. Programs in the Americas are mostly large or small, with fewer programs in the medium size range. Programs in the Americas were more likely to have AACSB as the source of their academic accreditation, while universities in APAC and EMEA were more likely to have Ph.D. programs in addition to their undergraduate and/or master's level UAPs.

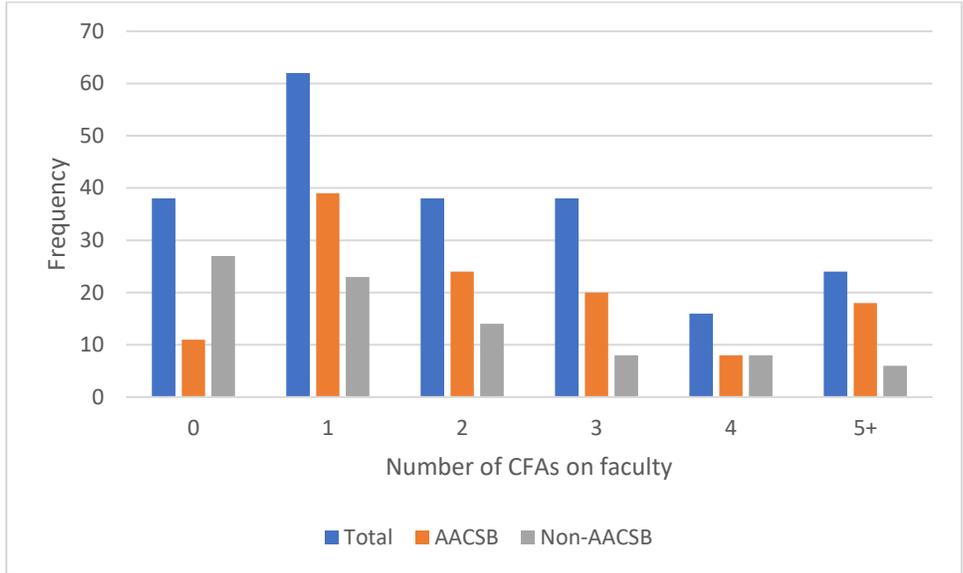
Figure 2 shows the regional breakout for the distribution list and for the responses to the survey. The responses closely track the distribution list, indicating that there is a good sample size for each region and that the cross-sectional sample data by region reflects the global distribution of UAPs. To test the regional breakout characteristics across time we split the sample by year of affiliation, with 2012-2015 representing the pre-split sample and 2016-2019 representing the post-split sample. A χ^2 test for distributional differences was applied and there was no significant difference in regional distribution pre-split vs. post-split, indicating that the regional distribution of universities obtaining CFA Recognition/Affiliation status has been relatively stable across time.

Figure 2. Regional breakout of responses and distribution list



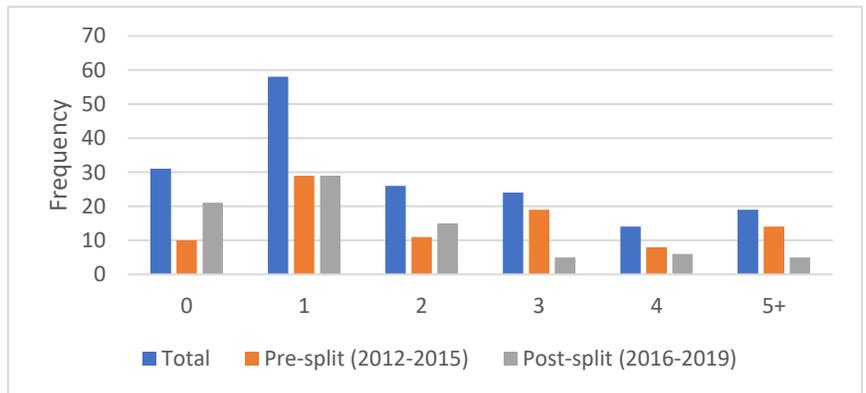
The survey results indicate that a large majority of UAPs have at least one CFA on faculty (81.5% of programs) versus those who do not have a CFA on faculty (18.5% of programs). Figure 3 shows the distribution of total CFAs on faculty by institution and breaks out the total into AACSB and non-AACSB schools. The majority of programs have 1-3 CFAs (62.1%), and about one-fifth of the programs have four or more CFAs (19.4%). The survey also demonstrates that AACSB schools are significantly more likely to have a CFA on faculty ($\alpha = 0.001$). The skew towards AACSB schools having a CFA on faculty exists in nearly every category. In addition, crosstabulation tests for the number of CFAs on faculty were insignificant relative to university size, region, and program type (undergraduate or graduate), indicating that the significance of AACSB accreditation relative to the number of CFAs on faculty is independent of other demographic characteristics.

Figure 3. Distribution of CFAs on faculty by AACSB breakout



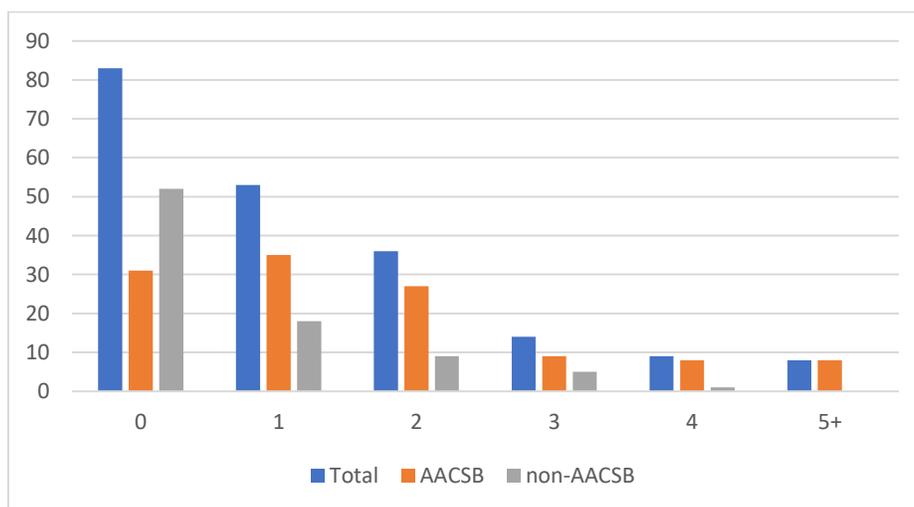
A second breakout of the data reflects the relationship between how long a program has been in affiliation with the CFA Institute and the number of CFAs on faculty. Figure 4 examines the distribution of CFAs on faculty pre-split and post-split. A crosstabulation test indicates that pre-split UAPs are significantly more likely to have a CFA on faculty than post-split UAPs ($\alpha = 0.01$), in other words, the longer a university has been collaborating with the CFA Institute, the more likely they are to have CFAs (and in particular multiple CFAs) on their faculty.

Figure 4. Distribution of CFAs on faculty by year of obtaining CFA affiliation status.



The survey reports that only 59.1% of the respondents have a CFA on faculty who is also Ph.D. qualified, which is significantly lower than the overall rate of CFAs on faculty ($\alpha < 0.001$). Crosstabulation with size was significant ($\alpha = 0.042$), although region was insignificant, which suggests a size effect. Similar to the overall rate of CFAs on faculty, AACSB status was a more significant predictor ($\alpha < 0.001$) of Ph.D./CFAs on faculty, and the difference was uniformly consistent across the categories. Figure 5 shows that non-AACSB schools were more likely to have no Ph.D./CFAs and AACSB schools reported more Ph.D./CFA qualified faculty in each of the remaining categories.

Figure 5. Distribution of Ph.D. qualified CFAs on faculty by AACSB status.

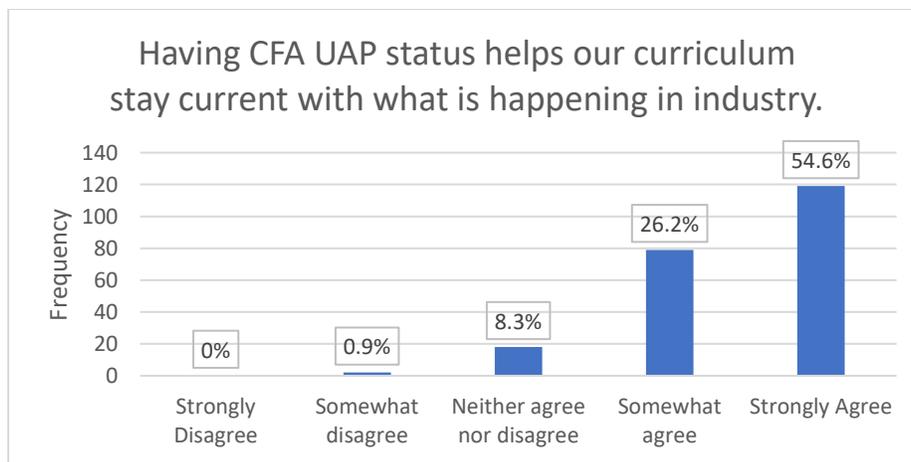


Finally, the survey demonstrated a strong tendency for UAP participation in the CFA Research Challenge. The reported participation rate among respondents was 77.7% which was an increase over the results cited in Grieb *et al.* (2017), who reported a 70% participation rate. It appears that the popularity of the CFA Research Challenge is strong and continues to grow.

Curriculum Review and Topical Currency

The second part of the survey examines curricular issues for the UAPs. Universities must adhere to a curriculum standard that requires them to demonstrate a minimum coverage rate of 70% of the CBOK topics across ten different knowledge domains. UAPs were asked to rate the statement that their CFA University Affiliation status helps their curriculum stay current with what is happening in industry. The results, shown in Figure 6, demonstrate that UAPs value the benefit of this curriculum mapping exercise in terms of topical currency. This result is consistent with the results reported by Grieb, *et al.* (2017) and suggest that ensuring curricular relevance to industry standards is one of the factors driving the continued demand by universities for affiliate status with the CFA Institute.

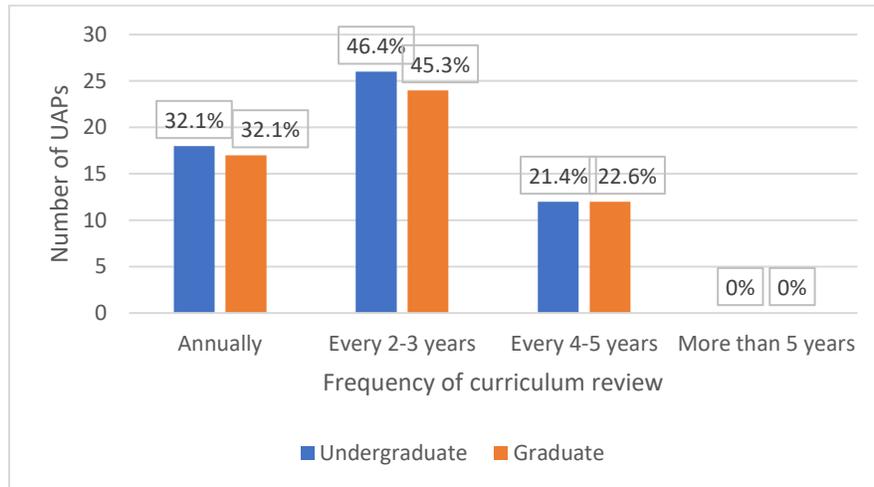
Figure 6. Survey responses to curriculum mapping question.



To further explore this issue, UAPs were asked about their policies on periodic curriculum review. The survey indicated that 75.8% of undergraduate programs and 78.2% of graduate programs conducted periodic reviews of their curriculum. In addition, programs who conduct curriculum reviews tend to do so frequently. Figure 7 demonstrates that the majority of

schools conduct a review at least every three years, and no respondents indicated that they have more than five years between reviews.

Figure 7. Frequency of periodic curriculum reviews.



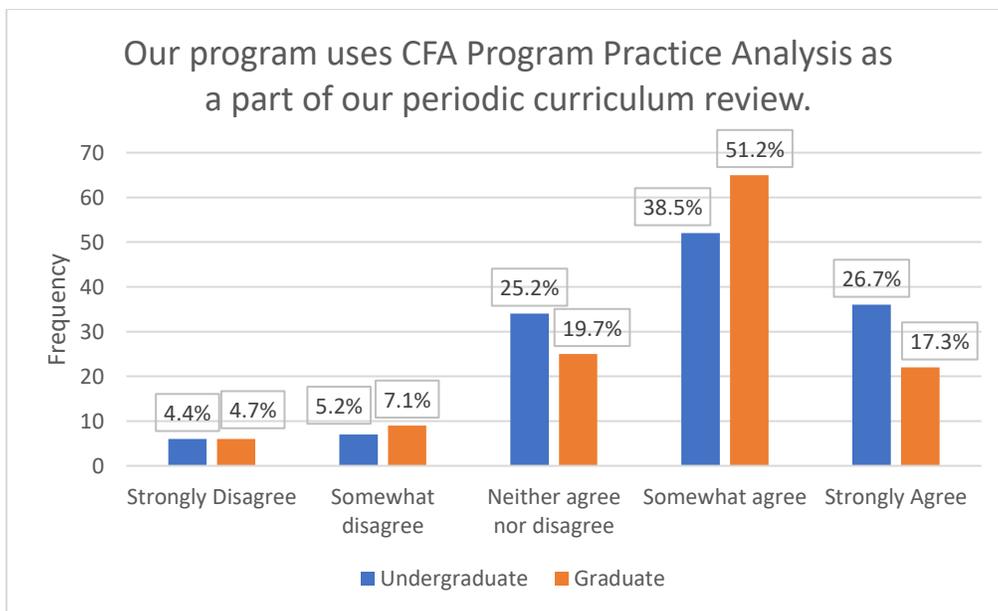
Crosstabulation analysis reveals different patterns of review for undergraduate vs. graduate programs. Undergraduate programs who obtained CFA affiliation status in the second half of the sample period are significantly more likely to conduct a periodic curriculum review, and those who do conduct reviews do so more frequently if they achieved CFA affiliation status in the second half of the sample ($\alpha = 0.003$). This effect is independent of university size or region. In contrast, time of program affiliation is not related to graduate program curriculum review, but a program review is significantly more likely for small or medium universities ($\alpha = 0.015$) and for graduate programs located in the EMEA region ($\alpha = 0.012$).

The CFA Institute uses a practice analysis process to review and evolve the CFA Program content that becomes the framework for the CFA exams (levels 1-3). This process is based on a rolling three-year review of program content and includes direct feedback from investment management professionals, university faculty, and regulators to evolve the CFA Program and assess the CBOK. As part of this process, UAPs are provided access to the CFA

Program Practice Analysis (PPA) and other CFA Institute resources.¹ This benefit is designed to help UAPs identify current industry topics and standards for the purpose of curricular review. Figure 8 shows responses to the survey question regarding the use of the PPA benefit in their periodic curriculum reviews.

A majority of programs indicate that they use the PPA as part of their curriculum review at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. However, the levels of agreement are much lower than those observed for the initial question regarding UAP status and program currency (Figure 6). A crosstabulation analysis indicates a highly significant difference between the responses reported in Figure 8 vs. those reported in Figure 6 ($\alpha < 0.001$). This implies that UAPs find much greater benefit from the process of mapping their curriculum to the CBOK than they attribute to using the PPA as part of their periodic curriculum review.

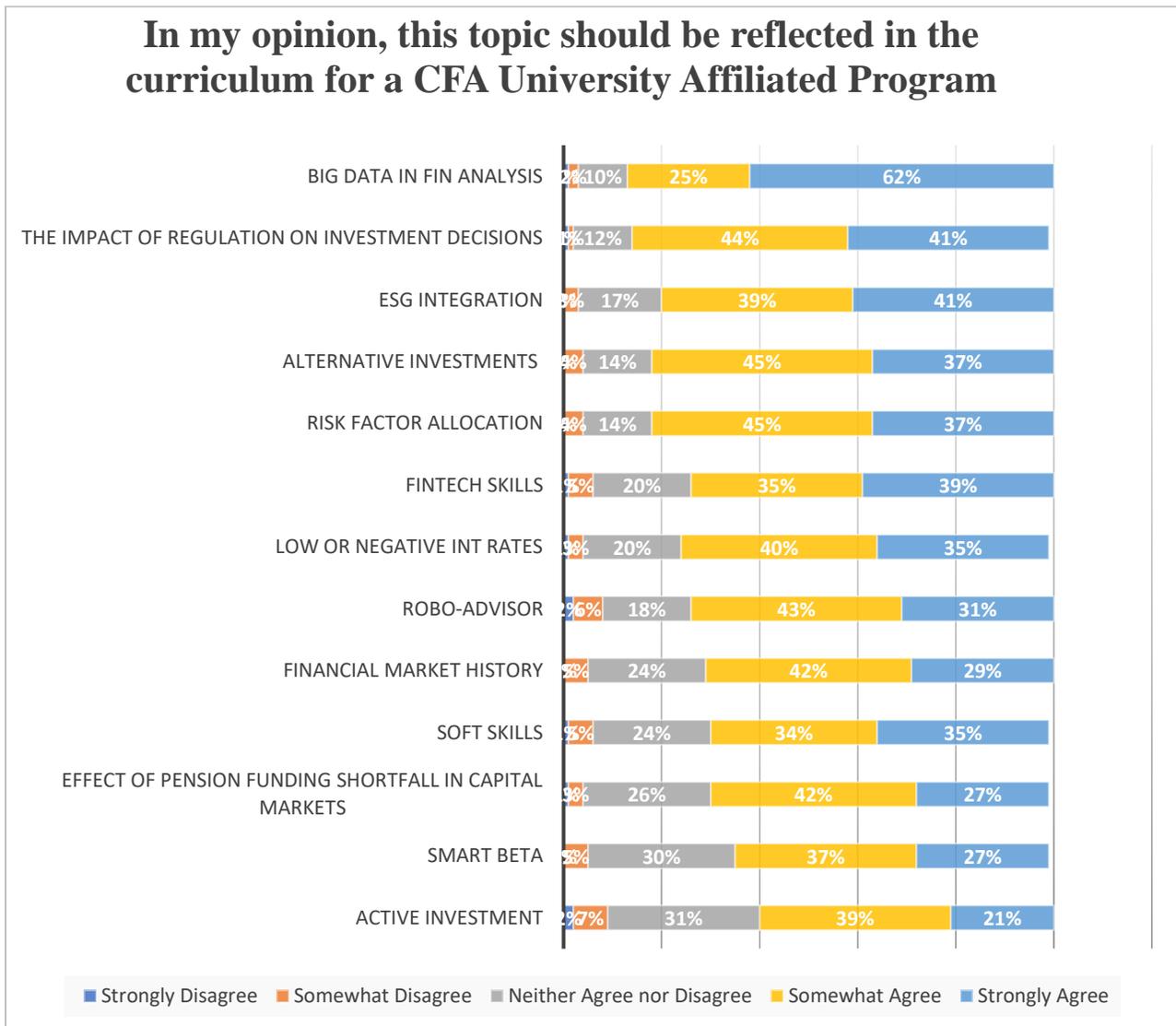
Figure 8. Survey response to CFA Program Practice Analysis usage in Curriculum Review.



¹ Source: <https://www.cfainstitute.org/en/programs/cfa/curriculum/practice-analysis>

As part of the Program Practice Analysis program, the CFA Institute conducted a survey of its members in 2017 to identify current industry trends. They were asked to rate 13 different topics on their potential to have significant impact on the financial services industry over the next three years.² Our survey uses the same 13 topics and asked Principal Contacts to rate them in terms of their merit as part of a UAP curriculum. Figure 9 shows the results.³

Figure 9. Survey response to current topics in industry.



² Source: <https://www.cfainstitute.org/-/media/documents/support/programs/cfa/member-rated-key-industry-trends.ashx>

³ A table showing the results is also provided in an Appendix A.

The timing of our survey is convenient in that it comes approximately three years after the CFA Institute Survey. This allows some degree of insight as to how the predictions by CFA Institute members held up. Other comparisons between the two surveys are instructive, however, it must be noted that the people surveyed are from two different demographics (i.e., industry professionals vs. university academics) and that they were asked slightly different questions. Industry professionals were asked what topics they felt would impact industry while Principal Contacts were asked what topics should be reflected in UAP curricula. While noting these caveats, some comparisons are still instructive.

Figure 9 shows that Principal Contacts rank Big Data as the top current issue meriting inclusion in UAP curricula. Regulation and ESG (environmental and sustainable growth) create a second tier. Also, risk factor allocation, alternative investments, and fintech skills were ranked competitively, but slightly lower than the second tier of topics.

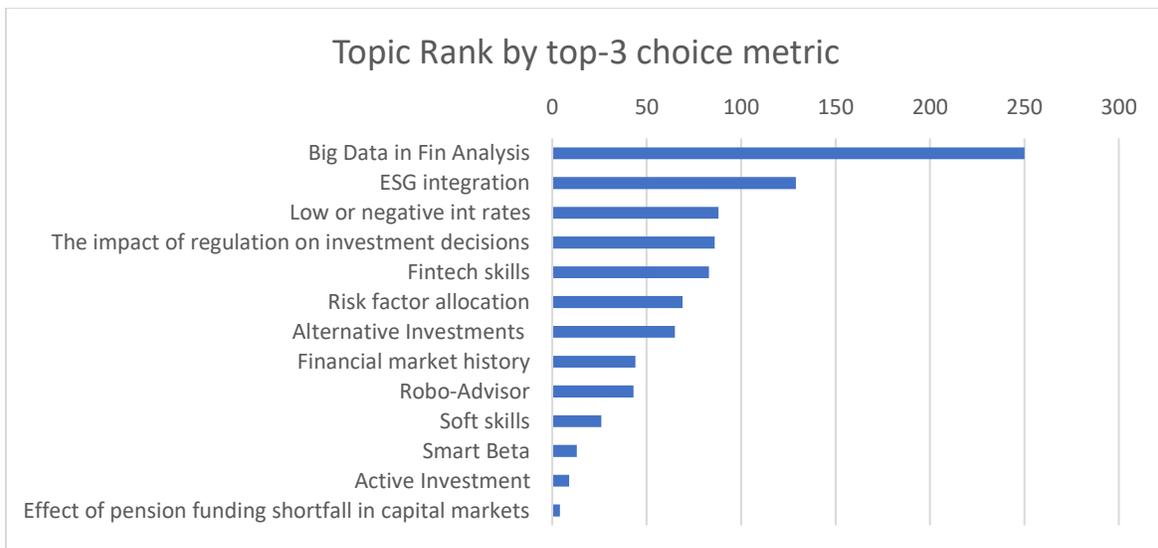
In comparison, the 2017 CFA Institute survey also ranked regulation and Big Data as the top two topics, confirming the ongoing importance of these topics to industry and university curricula. Also noteworthy is that ESG went from a 12th place ranking in the CFA Institute survey to third place in this survey. While “academic bias” might be a cause of this change, it is more likely that this reflects the increased importance that ESG has obtained in recent years. Also of interest is the large drop in the rankings in our survey for pension funding (from 4th to 10th) and low/negative interest rates (from 3rd to 7th). The most likely signal is that changing market conditions have made these topics less impactful in the last three years.

Risk factor analysis moved up considerably (from 7th to 4th) although it is likely that this move is more reflective of academic bias given the importance of topics like this in traditional finance textbooks. Another possible instance of academic bias is the movement of fintech skills

and “soft skills”. Both were ranked together in the bottom half of topics in the CFA Institute survey (8th and 9th, respectively). However, in the current survey, Fintech skills moved into the top half of topics (to 6th place) and soft skills moved down one place (to 10th). This may reflect an academic bias towards quantitative over qualitative material in the curriculum, but it seems more likely that the importance fintech has increased in the last few years.

As a robustness test for this question, UAPs were also asked to rank the top three topics (i.e., most important topic, second most important, third most important). Each topic was given a weighted average score, where a 1st place mention was worth 3 points, 2nd place two points, and 3rd place 1 point. Figure 10 shows the results of those rankings.⁴

Figure 10. Topics ranked by top-3 choice metric.



Ranking scores in this table reflect a weighted average of responses where a 1st place mention is worth 3 points, a 2nd place mention is worth 2 points, and a 3rd place mention is worth 1 point.

The results of this question confirm that Big Data is the most important topic to UAPs, earning a composite score that is almost double the next ranked topic (ESG) and more than four times the score received by regulation (which was ranked 4th). In this metric, ESG is alone in its

⁴ A table showing those results is shown in Appendix B.

2nd place ranking by a wide margin. Low/negative interest rates, regulation, and Fintech skills are closely grouped in the next tier.

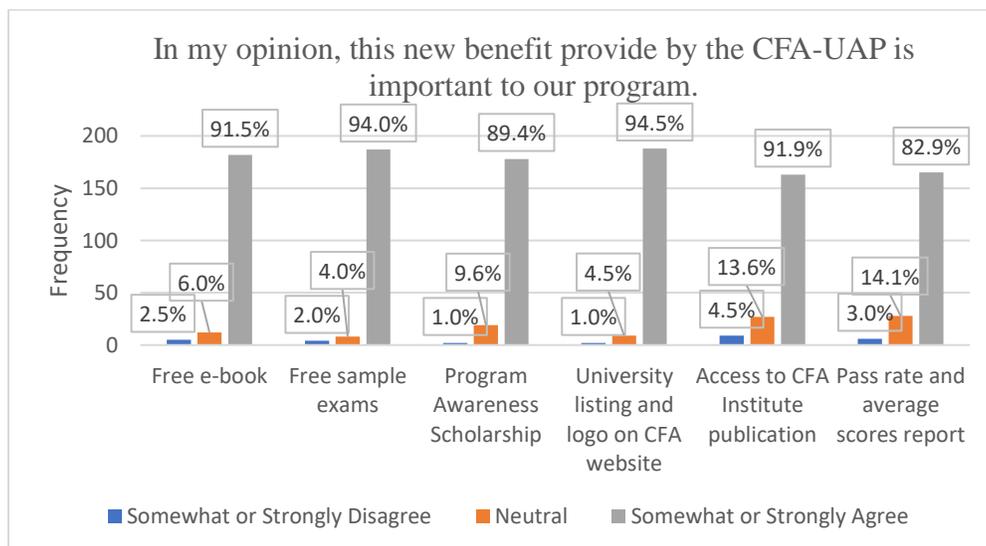
As a follow up question, UAPs were asked to list other topics that were not included on the list that but that should be considered as potential curriculum items. Blockchain and crypto currencies were the topics that received repeated mentions. These topics have evolved in importance over the last three years, and these results suggest that they are topics that should be included in subsequent topic lists concerning industry impact factors and potential curriculum topics.

Administrative and Student Benefits

The third part of the survey examines the administrative and program support tools provided by the CFA Institute, including e-books, sample exams, scholarships, marketing on the CFA website, access to CFA publications, and student management portals. The first question in this section asks UAP Principal Contacts about their perceived importance of each of these benefits.

Figure 11 presents the distribution of responses relative to each of the benefits.

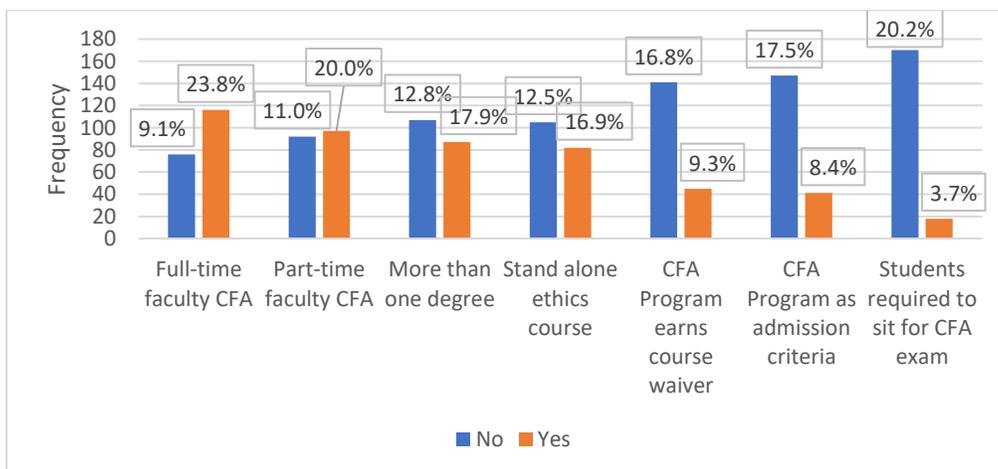
Figure 11. Responses to importance of UAP benefits from CFA Institute.



The results show that each of the benefits are important and considered valuable by the UAPs. Crosstabulation tests indicate that this is equally true for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Additional tests indicate that university size is a significant indicator regarding the importance of Program Awareness Scholarships as a benefit ($\alpha = 0.012$), and this is most valued by medium and large universities (who also tend to receive a higher number of scholarships). Regional effects are only present with respect to EMEA programs attributing higher value to e-books ($\alpha = 0.05$) and having the school logo listed on the CFA website ($\alpha = 0.026\%$). The crosstabulation for program type and region is also significant ($\alpha < 0.001$) indicating a skew in these preferences towards EMEA graduate programs.

Program Awareness Scholarships benefit students by supporting them in their efforts to pass the a CFA exam (level 1, 2, or 3), and they also benefit UAPs as an important promotional item (with the added benefit of additional motivation for students to master the finance curriculum). Every UAP receives a base level of three scholarships. UAPs can earn scholarships for their students via seven different potential program features. The survey asked UAPs if they earned extra scholarships by each of the seven different program characteristics. Figure 12 shows the results of those responses.

Figure 12. Responses to methods for earning extra scholarships



Crosstabulation tests reveal that university size does not significantly affect the particular method for earning scholarships, although it was observed that large universities tend to earn more scholarships in total. Regional effects indicate that EMEA and APAC universities are significantly more likely to earn scholarships by implementing a stand-alone, CFA related ethics course ($\alpha < 0.001$). This effect is driven by a significant degree of skew towards graduate programs with qualifying stand-alone courses ($\alpha = 0.02$). UAPs in the Americas, followed closely by those in APAC, are more likely to achieve extra scholarships by having a full-time faculty member who is a CFA ($\alpha = 0.016$). This is noteworthy because having a full-time CFA on the faculty earns three additional scholarships per year, so there is an added incentive to meet this criterion. This result is driven by a significant skew towards undergraduate programs with a full-time CFA faculty member ($\alpha < 0.001$).

In addition, the different methods for earning scholarships as shown in Figure 12 can be divided into two categories: those directly relating to curriculum and program delivery (i.e., number of CFAs on faculty, multiple degrees, and stand-alone ethics course), and those directly relating to the CFA Program (i.e., providing course credit for students preparing for a CFA exam, requiring students to be CFA candidates as an admissions criteria to the program, and requiring students to sit for a CFA exam). The first category can be thought of as “internal” characteristics in that they relate directly to the student experience as part of their university degree program. The second category can be thought of as “external” characteristics in that they relate to the process of becoming a CFA charterholder (i.e., the CFA Program). It is clear that UAPs place a much greater emphasis on internal than external characteristics. This is consistent with the results found by Grieb, *et al.* (2017). The implication is that UAPs place a high value

on academic-professional collaborations that help them improve and validate their curriculum, and they place less value on validation metrics that are based on student performance outside the actual university curriculum (such as becoming a CFA charterholder).

Next, the survey asked UAPs about the number of scholarships they were granted in the previous year (shown in Figure 13), and how those scholarships were granted to individual students (shown in Figure 14).

Figure 13. Number of CFA scholarships awarded in the last fiscal year.

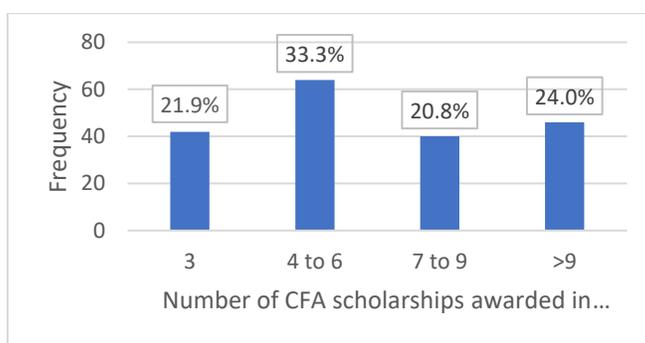
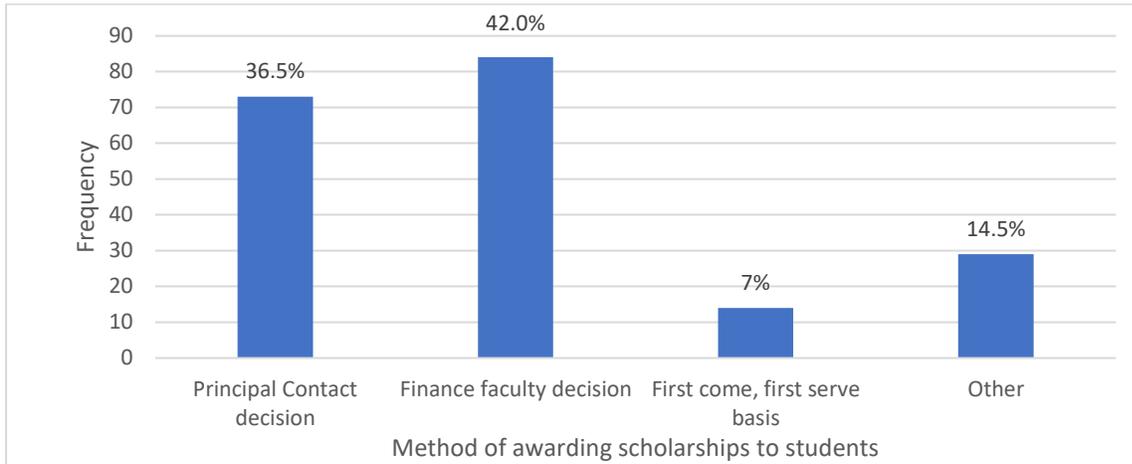


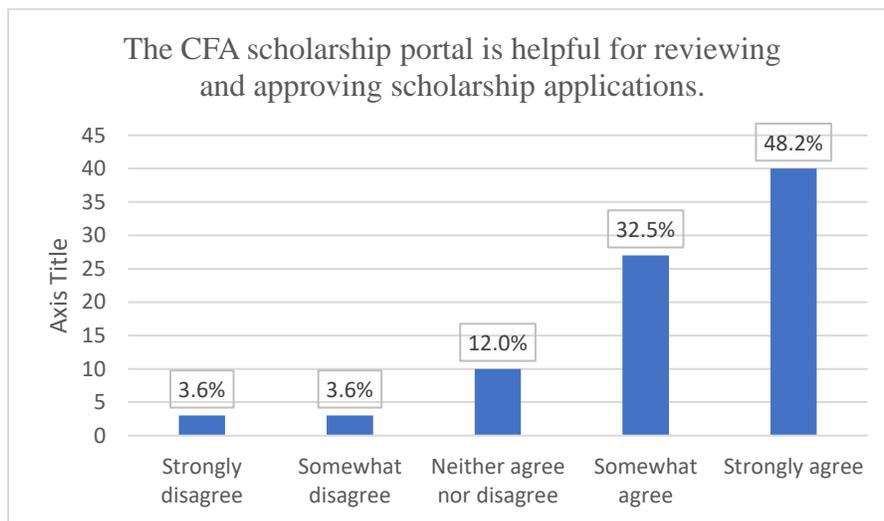
Figure 13 shows that only 21.9% of UAPs did not earn any additional scholarships in the previous fiscal year and that, overall, the number of scholarships earned is a relatively uniform distribution. Crosstabulation tests do not find any significant effect on the number of scholarships from year of CFA affiliation, university size, region, or degree type. Figure 14 indicates that most scholarship award decisions are made by faculty members, either by the finance faculty at large (most frequent at 42% of universities) or by the Principal Contact.

Figure 14. Method of awarding scholarships to students.



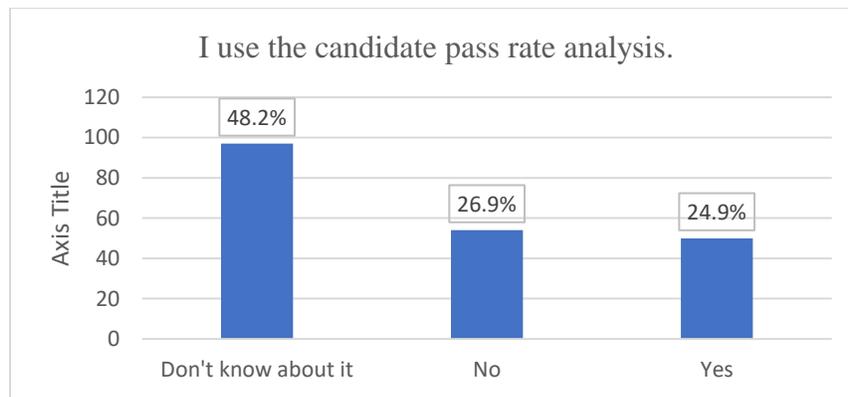
The observation that scholarships are awarded to students by faculty members implies the need for support in managing and evaluating applications from students for the scholarships. The survey asks UAP about the usefulness of the new online scholarship portal that is a benefit offered as part of the switch to the UAP format. The results, shown in Figure 15, indicate that Principal Contacts find this benefit very helpful with 80.7% of respondents indicating that they somewhat agree or strongly agree about the usefulness of this benefit.

Figure 15. Usefulness of online scholarship portal for managing scholarship applications.



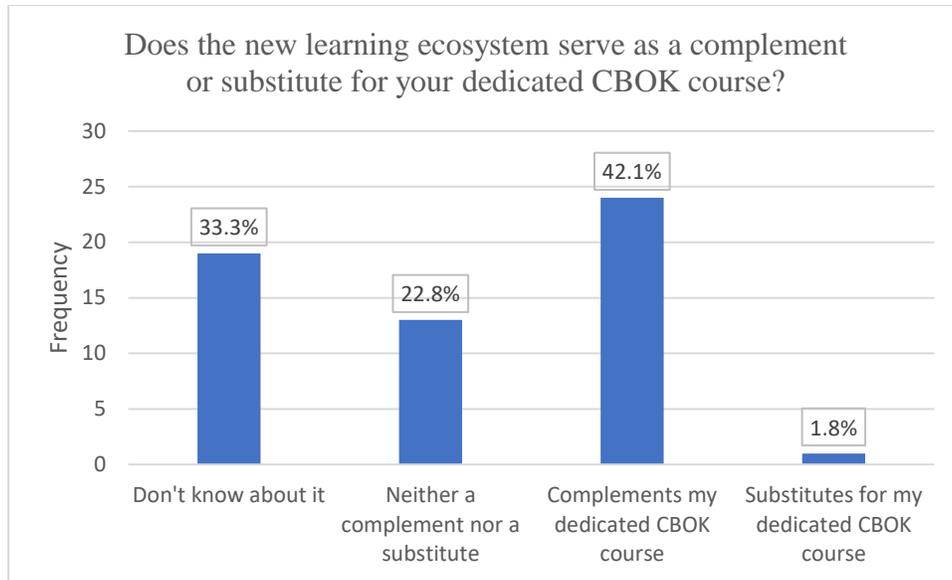
Several additional benefits are provided as part of the new UAP format. One is the candidate pass rate analysis feature, which helps UAPs track results for their students who participate in the CFA Program and go on to take one of the CFA exams. Figure 16 reports that almost half of the respondents were not aware of the benefit. About one-fourth were aware of this benefit but did not use it, and only one-fourth of respondents actually used the pass rate analysis. Crosstabulation testing indicated that those who did use this benefit were significantly more likely to be CFA faculty than not ($\alpha = 0.028$).

Figure 16. Usage of candidate pass rate analysis.



Another new benefit under the UAP format is an online learning ecosystem that is an adaptive study tool available to registered CFA candidates. UAPs can provide their students with access to this product. The format of this ecosystem is similar to a dedicated CBOK topics course within a UAP curriculum. Our survey indicated that 28.9% of respondents had such a dedicated CBOK course. Figure 17 reports whether these UAPs used the learning ecosystem as a complement or substitute for their course.

Figure 17. Responses for online learning ecosystem relative to CBOK dedicated courses.



Similar to the candidate pass rate analysis, a number of respondents did not even know about the benefit. It would appear that efforts to raise awareness about the candidate pass rate analysis tool and the online learning ecosystem might improve usage of those benefits. Very few respondents felt that it served as a pure substitute for their CBOK course, however, over 42% of respondents felt that this was a good complement to their course. Crosstabulation tests did not imply any significant relationships between usage of the ecosystem in CBOK courses and other factors such as university size, region, number of scholarships, or type of program. It is noteworthy that this is a benefit that accrues directly to the curriculum offered by the UAP. The large percentage of schools that use this as a complement (but not a substitute) to their course is consistent with the previous results indicating the preference for benefits that are directly curriculum oriented.

Overall, the results in this part of the survey indicate that the benefits provided by the CFA Institute are valued by the UAPs.

Conclusion

This study presents information solicited from Principal Contacts at all CFA University Affiliated Programs (UAPs) internationally. The survey generated 241 total responses (approximately 30% response rate), and was structured in three parts: program demographics, curriculum review, and CFA Program administration resources.

The survey results show that the presence and the number of CFAs on the faculty is increasing in the amount of time that a program has been affiliated with the CFA Institute. This effect is largely coming from AACSB accredited programs across the globe.

Part 2 of the survey examines how CFA Affiliation affects curriculum design and review at UAPs. Consistent earlier studies (see Grieb, *et al.*, 2017), there continues to be strong evidence that schools believe their curriculum is improved (in quality and currency) by benchmarking against the CFA Common Body of Knowledge (CBOK). However, UAPs are much less likely to use CFA provided resources relating to current practice issues as part of their periodic review of their curriculum. The survey also examined the importance of thirteen current topics as listed by the CFA Institute. Our results are also compared to a 2017 survey of CFA practitioners by the CFA Institute. The results show that Big Data is perceived to be the most important topic currently facing the financial services industry. ESG investing was ranked second in our survey, and it leapt there from a 12th place ranking in the 2017 CFA practitioner survey. Regulation, low/negative interest rates, and fintech also scored as top-tier topics in our survey. In addition, Blockchain and crypto currencies were mentioned multiple times as new topics for consideration in university-based CFA curricula.

Part 3 of the survey examines the administrative and program support tools provided by the CFA, including e-books, sample exams, scholarships, marketing, and student management portals. While the survey shows that all of these support tools are valued and widely used by

UAPs, the results also show that, consistent with the results in Part 2, UAPs find more value in items that are directly related to curriculum and student recruiting than in tools that are external to the program such as practitioner journals and post-graduation CFA exam scores. These results are echoed in the methods that schools use to qualify for student scholarships from the CFA Institute. Program related methods such as CFAs on the faculty or stand-alone ethics courses are more commonly used to qualify for scholarships than external items such as requiring CFA Program enrollment as an admissions criterion or requiring students to sit for a CFA exam.

Other support tools such as the scholarship portal, the candidate pass rate analysis for students, and the online learning ecosystem are not as widely used, but highly valued by those programs that use them. It appears that more marketing and outreach is needed to raise awareness of the benefits of these tools for UAPs. In addition, it appears that having CFAs on faculty significantly increases the use and perceived value of their practitioner related benefits.

One general take-away from this survey is that university programs still prioritize traditional curriculum structures and content, and that the emphasis on more practitioner related content and resources is still evolving. It appears that this evolution is concurrent with the increasing presence of CFAs (both Ph.D. and non-Ph.D. qualified) on the faculty.

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Appendix A

Topic	SDA	SWDA	NAnorDA	SWA	SA	Weighted Score
Big Data in Fin Analysis	1%	2%	10%	25%	62%	4.45
The impact of regulation on investment decisions	1%	1%	12%	44%	41%	4.20
ESG integration	0%	3%	17%	39%	41%	4.18
Alternative Investments	0%	4%	14%	45%	37%	4.15
Risk factor allocation	0%	4%	14%	45%	37%	4.15
Fintech skills	1%	5%	20%	35%	39%	4.06
Low or negative int rates	1%	3%	20%	40%	35%	4.02
Robo-Advisor	2%	6%	18%	43%	31%	3.95
Financial market history	0%	5%	24%	42%	29%	3.95
Soft skills	1%	5%	24%	34%	35%	3.94
Effect of pension funding shortfall in capital markets	1%	3%	26%	42%	27%	3.88
Smart Beta	0%	5%	30%	37%	27%	3.83
Active Investment	2%	7%	31%	39%	21%	3.70

Appendix B

	Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	
	Points	3	2	1	SCORE
Big Data in Fin Analysis		62	25	14	250
ESG integration		21	22	22	129
Low or negative int rates		12	21	10	88
The impact of regulation on investment decisions		14	14	16	86

Fintech skills	10	20	13	83
Risk factor allocation	10	14	11	69
Alternative Investments	6	17	13	65
Financial market history	4	6	20	44
Robo-Advisor	3	11	12	43
Soft skills	4	3	8	26
Smart Beta	1	1	8	13
Active Investment	0	2	5	9
Effect of pension funding shortfall in capital markets	0	0	4	4
