

How to Use This Manual

The Sheshunoff *Self-Paced Financial Statement Analysis Training and Certification* manual is designed for individuals who have some accounting knowledge but little or no exposure to credit analysis issues. Although no prior knowledge of banking is necessary, you should not attempt to complete this course until you have mastered basic accounting principles. Familiarity with the process of spreading financial statements is helpful but not a prerequisite for this course.

Self-Paced Financial Statement Analysis is designed to allow you to customize your approach to learning. The book is divided into eight broad sections:

- Introduction to Credit Analysis
- Five C's of Credit
- Financial Statements in General
- The Balance Sheet
- The Income and Equity Statements
- The Cash Flow Statement
- Financial Analysis/Performance Measurement
- Analyzing the Creditworthiness of Individuals

You can read and study the entire book or only those sections that you need to study to enhance your secured lending knowledge. Sections may be completed in any order.

In each section, the text is interrupted periodically by a block of questions. You may be asked to respond to true-false, multiple choice, or open-ended questions. The answers are given at the end of the block of questions, but do not look at them until you have answered the questions by yourself. If you miss a question, go back and review the material until you understand why you were mistaken. Consult your supervisor if you need additional help. Do not continue until you feel confident that you have mastered the given portion of the text.

Because this credit analysis course is self-paced, you should relax and cover the material at whatever speed you find comfortable. Take the time to learn the material well before proceeding.

Be sure to follow these guidelines:

- Use the book during uninterrupted time, at least one hour — preferably two — per study session. Set aside regular periods reserved only for your self-paced study.
- Schedule this time with your supervisor.
- Read the material carefully.
- Take time to consider what you are reading.
- Take notes as necessary. Underline or highlight significant passages in each section. They will be useful to you later as quick reference, especially after you complete the course.
- Meet periodically with your supervisor or another appropriate person to review the material and learn how it applies to your bank's operations.
- Keep your completed *Self-Paced Financial Statement Analysis Training and Certification* manual as your own professional reference work.

After working your way through the chapters, you may take the final exam and, in passing it, receive certification from Sheshunoff showing completion of the financial statement analysis course. Instructions for requesting and completing the final exam are included behind the tab labeled Examination Instructions at the back of your manual.