

# AFPP Exam Blueprint Topics

*(Note: Not all topics will be included on the exam, these are possible topic areas)*

<b>FUNDAMENTALS OF FASTER PAYMENTS</b>
<b>Knowledge of the types, applications, and impact of faster payments rails (e.g., individual and organizational benefits, economic benefits, financial inclusion)</b>
Describe the types, features, and applications of U.S. faster payments network rails (e.g., ACH, TCH RTP Network, FRB FedNow, debit card networks)
Identify uses cases (e.g., payroll, disbursements, bill pay, claims) that are a good fit for faster payments types (e.g., P2P, B2C, C2B, B2B, G2C, C2G, B2G, A2A)
Describe the impact and benefits of faster payments for stakeholders (e.g., speed of settlement, availability of funds, predictability, efficiency, security, enriched payment data, 24/7/365, additional functional capabilities such as request for payment and request for information)
Distinguish between instant/immediate and same-day payments
Describe end-user funds availability timing and corresponding interbank settlement methods for each faster payment rail
Explain the relevance of irrevocability of final funds for each faster payment rail
Identify the factors that impact the adoption and application of faster payments solutions (e.g., customer base, vendor relationships, existing technology, current and future products and services, ubiquity, interoperability, corporate culture/goals, reporting and financial institution reconciliation)
Distinguish between payer authorization requirements by rail
Explain the purpose and benefits of confirmation of payee
Explain the usage of message types (i.e., value or non-value)
Explain how faster payments impact end-user cash flow management
Explain how faster payments impact financial institution liquidity management
Describe the points of financial institution liquidity management in correspondent/respondent relationships
<b>Knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, and requirements of faster payments stakeholders (e.g., network operators, financial institutions, correspondents, bankers banks, corporate credit unions, third parties, value added services, merchants, consumers, regulators, core processors)</b>
Identify the roles and responsibilities of faster payments stakeholders
Describe the eligibility requirements of faster payments stakeholders based on network (e.g., ACH, FedNow, RTP, Card Networks)
Describe the relationships between faster payments stakeholders
<b>Knowledge of the attributes of faster payments solutions/mechanisms based on platform (e.g., push vs. pull, messaging, dollar limits, SLAs)</b>
Differentiate between faster payments rails that allow credit push only versus credit push and debit pull
List the types of messaging capabilities for each faster payments rail
Differentiate between the dollar limits for each faster payments rail
Describe the network service level agreements applicable to faster payments
<b>Knowledge of the types and functions of participation</b>
Describe the different types of participation by rail
Distinguish the message types required to be supported depending on the manner in which the financial institution participates in the network (e.g., receive only must certify for receiving PACS.008)

<b>FASTER PAYMENTS OPERATIONS AND PROCESS FLOWS</b>
<b>Knowledge of financial institutions' procedures for payment processing via faster payments rails (e.g., initiation, authentication, message sending and validation, pre-funding, acceptance/rejection, notifications, status reporting, request for payment, request for information, reporting)</b>
Identify the requirements by rail for financial institutions prior to receiving/originating transactions
Identify the steps involved in faster payments transactions by network rail
Describe the processes required for message validation (e.g., digital signature validation, schema validation)
<b>Knowledge of the settlement types, applications, and processes (e.g., real time gross, deferred net, real-time environment [24/7/365])</b>
Identify faster payments rails settlement types/methods (e.g., Real-Time Gross, deferred)
Describe how faster payments settlement types/methods impact payments stakeholders and systems
Identify faster payments rails' requirements for end-user funds availability
Describe the impact of faster payments settlement types on reconciliation of Fed/Joint accounts
Differentiate between accounting cycles by rail
<b>Knowledge of the factors that impact message acceptance and rejection (e.g., incorrect account numbers, closed accounts)</b>
Explain how status responses from receiving financial institutions increase payment completion rates
Identify the points of failure in the payment flow (e.g., at the sending financial institution, network operator, receiving financial institution)
List the factors that cause a faster payment to fail
Identify methods or techniques for mitigating message rejections and failures
Identify the responsibilities of sending financial institutions when receiving message rejections and failures
<b>Knowledge of the exception handling processes for faster payment rails (e.g., accept without posting, request for return)</b>
Identify the ways payments/messages lead to the build-out of exception processes
Identify tools offered by faster payments rails to enable exception processing in a reasonable amount of time (e.g., messages, alerts, notifications)
Identify methods faster payments rails use to aggregate exceptions data and identify patterns
Identify methods faster payments rails use to reduce exception processing
Explain when and why receiving financial institutions allow accept without posting responses
Identify the allowable time frames for resolving accept without posting responses
Compare the procedures for implementing requests for returns across faster payments rails
Explain when and why financial institutions allow requests for returns and reversals
Identify the allowable time frames for processing requests for returns
Identify the methods faster payments rails use to create, record, and retain information needed for post-transaction exception evaluation (e.g., payment tracing, incident tracking)
<b>Knowledge of the types and purposes of back-office systems and functions for processing payments (e.g., OFAC screening, fraud control, AML compliance, deposit systems)</b>
Describe how faster payments rails impact OFAC screening processes
Describe how faster payments rails impact AML compliance processes
Describe how faster payments rails impact fraud detection processes

Describe how faster payments rails impact deposit systems
Describe the reporting requirements necessary to process faster payments
Identify types of back-office systems' controls for processing faster payments
Identify back-office systems needed to meet audit (or reconciliation) requirements
<b>Knowledge of the interoperability considerations regarding foreign and domestic payment systems (e.g., mandatory data elements, party/account identifiers, regulatory considerations, timing of settlement and end-user funds availability, currency exchange)</b>
Explain interoperability differences across faster payments rails
Identify faster payments rails that allow cross-border payments
Identify the data fields, format, and standards required for interoperability of foreign and domestic payments systems
Identify barriers and solutions to cross-border interoperability of faster payments rails
Identify risk factors related to cross-border payments (e.g., terrorism financing, currency fluctuations, infrastructure stability)
<b>Knowledge of the types of user transparency and remittance information provided by faster payments rails stakeholders</b>
Identify the types and functions of status messages
Identify the remittance information provided by faster payments rails
Describe the remittance information disclosure requirements for faster payments rails
<b>Knowledge of the payment network process flows by participation level (e.g., send, receive, settlement, request for payment)</b>
Differentiate payment process flows by rail
Distinguish between clearing and settlement processes by rail
<b>Knowledge of the availability, permissible maintenance windows, and outage notifications by rail</b>
Define the availability expectations for accessing faster payments rails
Identify system maintenance and outage notification requirements
Describe straight through processing expectations of faster payment rails and implications of transaction rejects (e.g. transaction timeouts)
<b>Knowledge of the procedures for reporting fraudulent and/or suspicious activity related to faster payments</b>
Identify which faster payments rails require reporting to stakeholders for fraud
Identify methods and messages used for reporting fraud (e.g., Cam56 for RTP/FedNow, return codes)
Identify the different fraud classifications with available messages
Identify faster payments rails' requirements and options for reporting suspicious activity
<b>FASTER PAYMENTS RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Knowledge of the types of risks present in faster payments (e.g., operational, cross-channel, compliance, fraud, liquidity, technology, credit)</b>
Describe the operational risks present in faster payments
Describe the cross-channel risks present in faster payments
Describe the compliance risks present in faster payments
Describe the fraud risks present in faster payments
Describe the liquidity risks present in faster payments
Describe the technology risks present in faster payments
Describe the credit risks present in faster payments

<b>Knowledge of the types and application of internal controls (user access controls) related to faster payments (e.g., account types, account limits, fraud prevention, negative lists, access controls, segregation of duties, reconciliation of input to output, management review)</b>
Identify commercially reasonable methods and techniques used to detect fraud (e.g., trend analysis, machine learning, predictive and behavioral modeling, anomalous transaction detection, enhanced due diligence, confirmation of payee)
Describe the application of fraud detection and mitigation techniques for different types of fraud
Identify types and applications of internal controls used to mitigate risk related to faster payments
Identify barriers to the implementation of internal controls for faster payments
Identify limitations of internal controls for mitigating types of faster payments risks
Describe how service disruptions impact faster payments system integrity
Identify risk assessment methodologies applicable to faster payments
Explain the use of process flows in risk assessment for faster payments
Identify the reasons for implementing prefunding requirements
<b>Knowledge of the customer onboarding programs, policies, and procedures (e.g., customer identification program (CIP), know your customer (KYC) due diligence program)</b>
Explain why customer onboarding programs are important for managing risk related to faster payments
List the elements of a customer identification program (CIP)
Describe the responsibilities of parties involved in a customer identification program (CIP)
Identify additional requirements for faster payment customers that use Request for Payment functionality
<b>Knowledge of the types and applications of authentication channels and methods for transactions performed via faster payments solutions (e.g., initiator identification, sender authentication/authorization, multifactor authentication, biometrics, behavioral)</b>
Identify the types of authentication methods used for faster payments transactions
List the parties involved in faster payments transactions who need to be authenticated
Compare the features and functions of authentication types by faster payments rail
<b>TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENABLING FASTER PAYMENTS</b>
<b>Knowledge of the types and purposes of technology components of faster payments rails (e.g., APIs, QR codes, directories, tokenization, network connectivity, authentication)</b>
List the critical technology components of faster payments rails
Describe the purpose and function of an application programming interface (API) in the context of faster payments
Explain the concept of directory as it relates to faster payments
Identify methods for protecting data in transit and at rest (e.g., tokenization, encryption)
Identify methods for connecting with faster payments platforms (e.g., direct, via third parties)
Identify the purposes, functions, and benefits of directories used to support faster payments
Compare the use of directories for faster payments with other industries (e.g., email and mobile phone networks)
Explain the need for governance around directories that support faster payments
Describe security considerations related to the use of directories (e.g., data, data mining, access)

<b>Knowledge of the purpose and application of messaging standards for faster payments platforms (e.g., Nacha, ISO 20022, ISO 8583)</b>
Define ISO 20022 and its application to faster payments
Define ISO 8583 and its use for push to card
Identify the messaging standards used with faster payments rails
Identify the value and non-value messages within each faster payment rail
<b>Knowledge of the ISO 20022 message categories and usage (e.g., credit transfers, return of funds, request for payment)</b>
Explain the purpose of the two key components of ISO 20022 (i.e., message structure, data dictionary)
Differentiate between value, non-value, system, and reporting message types
Identify the messages financial institutions must accept to participate in instant payment rails
<b>Knowledge of the faster payments value-added and overlay services (e.g., directory services, QR codes, validations, fraud detection, commerce, third parties, pay-by-bank, P2P, digital wallet, payment orchestration)</b>
Identify types of value-added and overlay services for faster payments
List examples and characteristics of value-added and overlay services
Describe how value-added and overlay services support faster payments rails
<b>GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK</b>
<b>Knowledge of the rules and guidance applicable to faster payments rails (e.g., Nacha Operating Rules, RTP rules, FedNow rules, debit networks operating rules, FFIEC handbooks, Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard)</b>
Identify rule sets that govern faster payments rails
Compare and contrast the Real-Time Payments and FedNow rules
Identify which faster payments stakeholders have responsibility for PCI/DSS rule compliance
Explain the relevance of FFIEC guidance to faster payments
Explain the requirements set forth by each rule set applicable to faster payments
<b>Knowledge of the laws and regulations applicable to faster payments rails (e.g., Regulations E, J, CC, DD; UCC 4A; UDAAP; USA Patriot Act, CIP, KYC; Bank Secrecy Act/Anti-Money Laundering [BSA/AML]; Office of Foreign Assets Control [OFAC] requirements, data privacy laws)</b>
The interaction between private sector rules and other banking regulations
Identify the payment rails governed by laws and regulations applicable to faster payments
Identify the party responsible for governance of laws and regulations applicable to faster payments
Differentiate between consumer and non-consumer regulations
Compare and contrast private rule sets and federal regulation
Describe the objectives of the data privacy laws
Describe the obligations of faster payments stakeholders (by payment rail) under data privacy laws
Explain the application of the Bank Secrecy Act and Anti-Money Laundering regulations to faster payments
Explain the hierarchy of rules and regulations by payment rail
<b>Knowledge of the error resolution protections, rights, and liabilities of participants</b>
Explain the liability of a payer for a misdirected payment
Differentiate the applicability of error resolution protections under Regulation E and UCC4A
Explain the liabilities and error resolution responsibilities of the sending and receiving financial institutions

Define an error on a faster payment
<b>Knowledge of the role of client/customer agreements and disclosures with respect to faster payments products and services</b>
Identify the required agreements for each payment rail
Identify the required disclosures for each payment rail
Describe the roles of agreements among faster payments stakeholders
Describe the roles of disclosures among faster payments stakeholders
Compare warranties and indemnities by rail and rule set