

CU-02

STUDENT HANDBOOK

The weekly rhythm, the grading, the gates, and the house rules.

Curriculum & Assessment · Team Alpha Trading

Alpha Academy Student Handbook

Welcome to Alpha Academy. This handbook is not a lesson — it is the rulebook for how the school itself runs. The modules teach you the market. This document teaches you how to be a student here: how your week is supposed to look, how you are graded, what has to be true before you move up a level, what the house rules are, and exactly what to do when something goes wrong — because at some point, something will.

Read it once before you start, and again at every promotion gate. Most students who fail here do not fail on knowledge — they fail on process: skipped practice, skipped journals, skipped gates. This handbook exists so that never has to be you.

> **NOTE**
> Alpha Academy is education only. Nothing in this school is financial advice, and passing every gate here does not guarantee you will make money — most beginners lose money when they start trading real money. The gates exist to make sure you learn the lessons in the cheapest order possible: on paper first, where mistakes are free.

How This School Works

Alpha Academy is built in layers, and the layers are taken in order:

- **Level 1 (AA-00 → AA-25)** — the whole market from zero: stocks, charts, options, futures, risk, psychology, accounts, and staying safe.
- **The Practice Pack (PP-01 → PP-16)** — workbooks, templates, flashcards, posters, the 30-Trade Paper Challenge, and the Level 1 Final Exam. This is where knowledge turns into reps.
- **Level 2 (AA2-00 → AA2-20)** — how the market works underneath: order flow, volatility, advanced options structures, gamma, systems, taxes, and the case studies of real crashes and manias.
- **Level 3 (AA3-00 → AA3-15)** — three specialist tracks: 0DTE Mastery, Futures Day Trading, and Swing & Position Trading. You choose one arena and go deep.
- **The Worked Examples (EX-01 → EX-06)** — complete trades with every number worked, including the disasters.
- **Round 3** — the layer you are standing in now: the 52-Week Curriculum (your week-by-week map), the exams, the Drill Decks, the Capstone, and this handbook.

The **52-Week Curriculum** is the map that sequences all of it across four terms. This handbook is the rulebook underneath the map: the map says *what* to study each week; this book says *how* studying counts, how it is graded, and when you may move on.

One idea runs through everything below: **you do not advance by finishing pages. You advance by passing gates.** A gate is a short list of things that must be true — an exam passed, a challenge completed, a journal that proves it. The gates are not there to slow you down. They are there so that the first time you meet a hard lesson, you meet it with fake money.

Paper trading means practicing with a pretend account — real prices, real decisions, fake dollars. Almost everything in this school happens on paper first. Treat that as a feature, not a delay: a blown paper account costs you a weekend of honest review. The same lesson with real money costs rent.

The Weekly Rhythm

Every week in this school has four beats, in this order:

- **Study** — read the assigned modules. Slowly. With the glossary open. Reading a module once is exposure; the learning happens when the other three beats force you to use it.
- **Drill** — short, fast reps: glossary flashcards (PP-12) and the Drill Decks. Drills build reflexes — the sizing formula, the breakeven math, the risk rules — until they come out of you without thinking.
- **Practice** — apply it on paper: workbook exercises (PP-01 → PP-05) and paper trades, planned before they are taken and journaled after they close.
- **Review** — once a week, sit down with the Weekly Review page (PP-08) and grade your own week: what you studied, what you practiced, where you broke a rule, and the one fix for next week.

Skip a beat and the week does not count as complete. Study without practice is trivia. Practice without review is just repeating your mistakes on schedule.

Here is a model week of roughly six hours — adapt the clock to your life, but do not drop a beat:

Day	Beat	What you do
Monday	Study	Read this week's first module; write down every term you had to look up
Tuesday	Drill + Practice	20 minutes of flashcards or drills; work the workbook section for Monday's reading
Wednesday	Study	Read the second module; do its Check Yourself out loud before peeking at the answers
Thursday	Drill + Practice	20 minutes of drills; paper trades or workbook problems from Wednesday's reading
Friday	Practice	Paper session; every position planned in the journal before it is opened
Weekend	Review	45 minutes with the Weekly Review page; grade the week, name one fix, file everything in the binder

> **TIP**
> Short on time? Stretch the calendar, not the standard — a curriculum "week" may take you ten days. What you may not do is declare a week done with a beat missing.

How Grading Works

Different tools grade different things. Here is each one, plainly.

Check Yourself — the honesty check

Every module ends with five Check Yourself questions. They are **self-graded and unrecorded** — nobody sees the score but you. Their job is to catch fake learning while it is still cheap. House standard: if you miss more than one of the five, you have not finished the module. Re-read the sections you missed, then ask yourself the questions again tomorrow. Peeking at the answers first and nodding along is the single most common way students lie to themselves in this school. Do not do it.

Workbooks — graded practice

The five workbooks (PP-01 → PP-05) come with fully worked answers. They are graded by **completion and correction**: every exercise attempted, every error found, understood, and corrected in your notes. An exercise you skipped teaches nothing. An error you corrected teaches twice: the right method, and the sight of your own weak spot. Your workbook standard is not a percentage. It is: *nothing left blank, nothing left wrong.*

Drill Decks and flashcards — accuracy over time

Drills are timed, fast reps — a situation, your call, the answer on the back. You log your accuracy in the binder (date, deck, score). The standard is a trend, not a single score: by the end of a term, your first-pass accuracy on that term's decks should be climbing toward clean. A deck you score poorly on is not an embarrassment; it is a map pointing at the module to re-read.

Exams — the 80% line

Exams are different. They are **closed-book, written, and graded against an answer key** — the Level 1 Final Exam (PP-10, key in PP-11), the Level 2 Exam, one exam per Level 3 track, and the Capstone board. The pass mark across the whole school is **80%**. Not 79. The line is the line.

Every exam question you miss comes with a module code to re-study — the key tells you exactly where the answer lives. An exam result is recorded in your binder with the date, the score, and the modules you had to re-study. An exam you have not taken does not exist. An exam you failed and forgot does not exist either — see the remediation section below.

The 30-Trade Paper Challenge — graded on rule-following

The Paper Challenge (PP-09) is thirty paper trades on one setup, and it is the most misunderstood grade in the school: **you are graded on rule-following, not on profit.** Plan written before entry. Size set by the stop, not by a feeling. Exit taken where the plan said. Journal complete. A challenge where you lost paper money but followed every rule **passes**. A challenge where you made paper money by breaking rules, oversizing, and improvising **fails** — because the market just paid you to build a habit that will bill you later, with real money. Luck is not a pass. Process is.

The Capstone — the board

The Capstone (CAP-01, graded against CAP-02) is a simulated trading week: five sessions of worked scenarios, real decision points, positions handed to you mid-story. You write the plan, size the positions, and journal the week as if it were real. It is graded point by point against model answers, and every common wrong answer points back to the module that fixes it. The Capstone is the closest thing this school has to a board exam — and the final gate before real money is discussed at all.

Promotion: The Gates Between Levels

You may read ahead whenever you like — it hurts nothing. But you are not promoted, and the next level's practice work does not start, until the gate behind you is passed.

Gate 1 — before Level 2

- Every Level 1 module read, with Check Yourself passed honestly (no more than one miss, re-read until true).
- All five workbooks complete — nothing blank, nothing left wrong.
- The Level 1 Final Exam passed at 80% or better, result recorded in the binder.
- A written trading plan exists (PP-06) — even a simple one. A student without a plan is not ready for advanced material; they are ready to be confused at a higher level.
- A journal habit exists: your paper trades so far are written down (PP-07), not remembered.

Gate 2 — before a Level 3 track

- Level 2 complete, and the Level 2 Exam passed at 80% or better.
- The 30-Trade Paper Challenge completed and passed on rule-following.
- Weekly Reviews current — at least the last four weeks filed in the binder.
- One track chosen. Not two. Level 3 is where you stop going wide and start going deep; running two tracks at once is how students stay beginners in two arenas instead of becoming dangerous in one.

Gate 3 — before real money

This is the serious one, so it is stated exactly:

- The Capstone passed.
- A clean Paper Challenge on record *in your chosen arena* — rule-following grade, complete journal.
- A written plan that you have demonstrably followed on paper — the binder proves it, your memory does not.
- A starting size so small it feels almost silly, a per-trade risk at or under the school standard of 1% of the account, and a daily loss limit written down before the first real trade.
- Money you can genuinely afford to lose. Not "afford to lose" as a slogan — money whose loss would not change your rent, your bills, or your sleep.

If any line of Gate 3 is not true, real money waits. That is not the school doubting you. That is the school working as designed.

> **RISK**
> No gate in this school makes trading safe, and no certificate here makes you a professional. The gates only prove you have done the work in the right order. The market will still test you — the gates make sure it tests your process, not your unpreparedness.

The Code of the House

Four rules. They apply to every level, every arena, every account — paper or real.

- **Paper first.** Every new arena, structure, and setup is practiced on paper until its gate is passed. No exceptions for confidence. Confidence is not a credential; the binder is.
- **Journal everything.** If a trade is not written down — plan, size, entry, exit, and what you were thinking — it does not count toward any gate, any challenge, or any claim you make about your own record. Unjournaled wins are stories. Unjournaled losses are leaks.
- **No borrowed conviction.** Never take a trade because someone else is in it — not a friend, not a chat room, not a video. If you cannot state the entry, the stop, and the target in your own words, in your own plan, you do not have a trade. You have a ticket to someone else's.
- **Risk rules are not optional.** The 1% per-trade standard, the daily stop, position size set by the stop, no adding to a loser to "get back to even." These do not bend on a strong feeling, a hot streak, or a "once in a while" exception. The day the risk rules become optional is the day the account starts dying — the only question is the date it finishes.

Underneath all four sits one sentence: **process over outcome.** A good process with a losing week is a student on the way. A broken process with a winning week is a debt coming due.

When It Goes Wrong: Failing and Blowing Up

It will go wrong. The only students who never fail an exam or blow up a paper account are the ones who never actually try. What matters is what happens next — and here, that is a procedure, not a mood.

If you fail an exam (below 80%)

1. **Do not retake it the same day.** A same-day retake tests your memory of the answer key, not your understanding.
2. **Work the key.** Every missed question names the module that teaches it. Re-study those modules — actually re-study, with the workbook sections that match.
3. **Wait at least a few days**, then retake. Record both attempts in the binder. The fail stays in your records on purpose: it is the page that shows where you were weak and fixed it.
4. **Fail twice?** Stop retaking. Go back and repeat the full term block the exam covers — readings, workbooks, drills — then test again. Two fails is the material telling you the foundation has a hole in it. Patching scores is pointless; patch the foundation.
5. There is no shame column in the binder. There is only a record column. Fill it honestly.

If you blow up a paper account

A paper account is "blown" when it hits the challenge drawdown limit or the losses came from breaking the rules repeatedly. (A **drawdown** is how far the account has fallen from its highest point.) Here is the reset:

1. **Stop trading it.** Today. A blown account that keeps trading is just practicing the blow-up.
2. **Do the autopsy, in writing.** Go through the journal and label every loss honestly: *planned loss* (the setup failed, rules held — these are fine), *rule break*, *oversizing*, *revenge trade* (trading angry to win it back), or *no plan at all*. Count them. Most blown accounts die of one repeated cause, not twenty different ones.
3. **Name the one fix.** Not five fixes — one. The single rule whose violation did the most damage.
4. **Start the new paper account only after the autopsy exists.** Fresh balance, same arena, the one fix written at the top of the journal. The challenge restarts at trade 1 — no carrying over the good trades from the wreck.

5. **Real money stays locked** until a clean challenge is on record. No exceptions, no "it was only paper, I'm actually fine." The paper account is where you prove that claim, or disprove it for free.

Read those steps again and notice what they are not: they are not punishment, and nobody here is disappointed in you. Every trader who lasts has a version of this story. The ones who last did the autopsy instead of just feeling bad, and the reset instead of just feeling determined. Be kind to yourself and firm with the procedure — in that order, both completely.

Your Records: The Binder

Every student keeps a **binder** — a physical binder, a folder on your computer, whatever format you will actually maintain. Format does not matter. Completeness is the entire game. Your binder holds:

- **Your trading plan** (PP-06) — the current version, plus every older version, dated. Plans evolve; the dated stack proves you changed them on weekends, by decision — not mid-trade, by emotion.
- **Your journals** (PP-07) — every paper trade and, one day, every real one. Plan, size, entry, exit, and the honest sentence about what you were thinking.
- **Your exam results** — date, score, and the modules each miss sent you back to. Fails included. Especially fails.
- **Your challenge logs** (PP-09) — all thirty trades, the rule-following grades, and the verdict.
- **Your Weekly Reviews** (PP-08) — the four-beat grade for every week, with the one fix named each time.
- **Your drill log** — date, deck, first-pass accuracy. The trend line of your own fluency.
- **Your autopsies** — every blown account and failed gate, with the one fix each one produced.

The binder is your evidence. When a gate asks "must be true," the binder is how you know — not how you feel, not what you remember: what you can show. Students who keep it can see themselves improving on paper before the account ever shows it. Students who don't are navigating by mood.

> **TIP**
> Five minutes of filing after a session beats an hour of reconstruction on Sunday. The binder is maintained in the moment or it is maintained never.

Common Mistakes Students Make

- **Reading ahead and calling it progress.** Finishing Level 2's reading in a weekend while the Level 1 Exam sits untaken. Pages are not gates.
- **Treating paper like a video game.** Oversizing fake money, skipping the journal "because it isn't real." You are not practicing trading when you do that. You are practicing carelessness — and that transfers to the real account perfectly.
- **Retaking exams until the score behaves.** Memorizing an answer key produces a certificate and an unprepared trader. The remediation path exists because the score is the least important part of failing.
- **Trading two tracks, three setups, and a borrowed idea at once.** Breadth feels productive. Depth is productive.
- **Quitting after the first blow-up.** The blow-up is not the end of the curriculum. Handled by the procedure above, it is one of the most valuable pages in it.

Chapter Summary

- Alpha Academy advances by **gates, not pages** — each level requires proof, recorded in the binder, before the next level's practice begins.
- Every week runs four beats in order: **Study → Drill → Practice → Review**. A week missing a beat does not count.
- Grading matches the tool: Check Yourself is an honesty check, workbooks are graded on completion and correction, drills on accuracy over time, and **exams at a hard 80% pass mark**.
- The 30-Trade Paper Challenge is graded on **rule-following, not profit** — a rule-breaking win fails; a by-the-book loss passes.
- The Capstone is the board: a simulated week, graded point by point, and the final gate before real money.
- The Code of the House never bends: **paper first, journal everything, no borrowed conviction, risk rules are not optional.**
- Failing an exam means re-studying the named modules and retaking after a few days — twice means repeating the block. Blowing a paper account means stop, autopsy in writing, name one fix, restart at trade 1.
- The binder — plan, journals, exam results, challenge logs, weekly reviews, drill log, autopsies — is the student's evidence. If it is not written down, it did not happen.

> **RULE**
> Nobody at Alpha Academy gets promoted for finishing. You get promoted for proving it — on paper, in the journal, through the gate.