

Other brochures available:

- Independent Financial Advice for consumers guide
- Independent Financial Advice for businesses guide
- Financial log book
- Inheritance tax guide
- Mortgage guide
- ISA guide
- Tax efficiency guide
- Pension guide
- Investment guide
- Surviving an economic downturn guide
- Savings when rates are low guide
- Bereavement guide
- Housing market uncertainty guide
- Equity release guide
- Get saving guide

Factsheets available:

- Finding the right life assurance
- Planning for your family
- Long term care
- How IFAs make their money
- Confused about endowments?
- A parent's guide to education fees planning
- Funding for university
- Remortgaging your home
- How to get saving
- Ethical investment – making money with a clear conscience guide
- The basics of offshore and expatriate finances

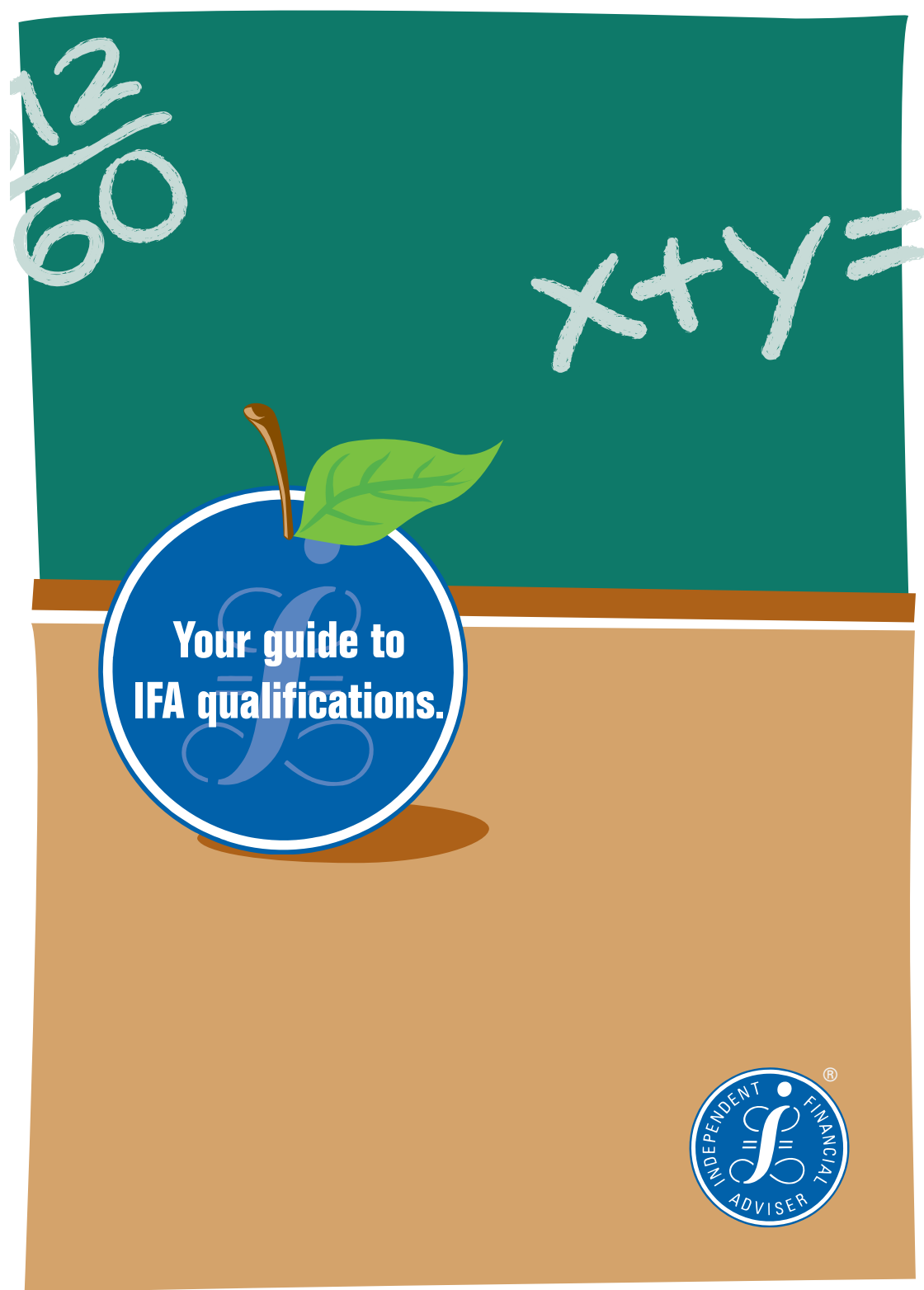
To request one of the above brochures or factsheets, please call our Hotline on **0800 085 3250** or visit us at www.unbiased.co.uk

The above brochures are available in the following alternative formats: large print, braille and audio tape. Please call our Hotline on **0800 085 3250** if you wish to order an alternative format.

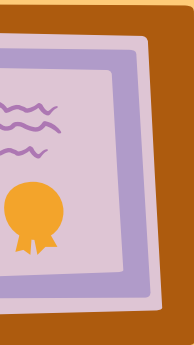
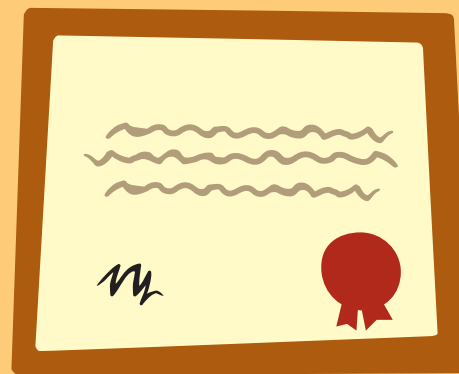
Your IFA's details:

IFA Promotion Ltd.
Head Office, 2nd Floor, 117 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3BX.
Tel: 020 7833 3131 Fax: 020 7833 3239 Web address: www.unbiased.co.uk
Registered Office: IFA Promotion Ltd, 90 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5UB.
Registered in Scotland: No.114606.

The name IFA Promotion® and the Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) logo® are registered trademarks of IFA Promotion Limited.



Contents	
A guide to IFA qualifications	1
Financial advice becomes increasingly necessary	1-2
What is the point of all these qualifications?	3-4
Are qualifications important?	5-6
Why are there so many letters?	7-8
List of advanced IFA qualifications	9-16
Notes & How to find a local IFA	17-18
Other IFA Promotion brochures	Back cover



A guide to IFA qualifications

If ever there was a doubt about the fact that we are ultimately responsible for our financial future, the doubt should have evaporated by now. Barely a day passes without new research showing that we can no longer rely on the state or even, increasingly, on our own employers to provide for us in retirement.

A similar picture emerges in relation to protecting ourselves against unemployment, ill-health or life-threatening diseases, ensuring long-term care if we should become frail, or finding the right mortgage for our needs.

These questions often require, among other things, financial solutions to difficult problems, setting and meeting goals. All that, plus finding the right financial product to help us ensure a better quality of life.

Financial advice becomes increasingly necessary

Hardly surprising, therefore, that the role of independent financial advisers (IFAs), has become increasingly important in recent years. As the number of investment, mortgage, pension and insurance products multiplies and financial

decision-making becomes increasingly complicated, more and more of us are turning to an expert who can guide us through the maze.

Finding a local adviser is relatively easy. IFA Promotion, the organisation which promotes the benefits of truly independent financial advice, holds the details of over 10,000 IFA firms throughout the UK on its database.

IFA Promotion's latest development is another step forward: visitors to www.unbiased.co.uk and callers to IFA

Promotion's hotline are now able to ask whether an IFA possesses certain specialist qualifications. The range of qualifications is extensive.

But what does each of these qualifications actually mean? How do you compare the value of one with that of another?

To help you decide what you should be looking for, there is a list of virtually all the relevant qualifications IFAs are likely to have, and what they mean, in this brochure.

What is the point of all these qualifications?

Let's say you have contacted IFA Promotion and you have been given details of an AFPC-qualified adviser, who also has another Alphabetical list of initials after his name. The chances are you will still have some doubts about the value of all these qualifications.

Here are some of the most likely questions you may want to ask – and some of the answers you should be looking for.

What are these qualifications about?

Nowadays, all financial advisers are required by their regulator, the Financial Services Authority, to pass an exam known as the Financial Planning Certificate (FPC) or an equivalent, before they are allowed to provide financial advice.

The FPC is a basic-level exam. From there it is possible to go further, in much the same way

as someone with 'A' levels can go on to obtain a degree, an MA or MSc, and eventually a PhD or DPhil.

Opinion on the academic standard of the FPC varies between commentators, but most experts would accept that it compares roughly with a challenging GCSE or 'O' level, perhaps an 'A' level.

What qualifications does IFA Promotion hold details of?

IFA Promotion provides details of every major and relevant qualification awarded to IFAs.

If you are using IFA Promotion's online service, links through to each awarding

body's website are provided (on the 'useful links' tab) so that you may also find out more about them and the qualifications they offer.

Does IFA Promotion record the basic FPC qualification you mentioned? And if not, why not?

The FPC or equivalent qualifications are not recorded. This is because it is taken for granted that every adviser on the list already holds the qualification. What the system does tell you is what qualification(s) an adviser has in addition to the FPC.



Are qualifications important?

As we all discover from time to time, having letters after your name is no guarantee of intelligence, professional ability or decent service.

It is also the case that many extremely good and talented IFAs have become so because of their many years' experience in the industry, not because they were forced to obtain a qualification.

However, there is often a correlation between a good adviser and a commitment on their

part to learn as much as possible about a particular subject. Often, this commitment expresses itself in a willingness to test this learning by means of various exams, which allow those who pass to claim various "designatory" letters for themselves.

More and more advisers find that having additional qualifications helps keep them up to speed on personal finance topics. Indeed, many awarding bodies insist that to keep those precious letters after their name, advisers must maintain records of continuous learning, or continuous professional development (CPD).

Having an extra qualification also helps reassure clients that their adviser takes professional knowledge and continuing education seriously.



Why are there so many letters? Isn't it all just too confusing?

It's true that there are lots of letters that many people find confusing.

Part of the problem is that different organisations have been allowed to create exams for various parts of the financial services industry. This means it is sometimes difficult to compare like with like when trying to assess qualifications.

But it's also the case that in recent years, many of the exam bodies have tried to create similar quality levels to each other. In other words, despite the differing letters, certain types of exams are more or less the same standard as each other, in much the same way as a degree from Birmingham is

more or less the same as one from Norwich, Bradford or Southampton.

Are there some exams that are better than others?

Not really. There are some that are more advanced, and we try to indicate where this is the case. It's more a question of which qualifications are relevant to your needs, rather than simply finding someone with the most qualifications.

Am I likely to receive better advice from someone with more qualifications?

It's not guaranteed. Having letters after your name does not automatically lead to great success in any branch of life.







But generally, someone who is prepared to put in the many hours needed to learn about a subject, even pass an exam, is showing a higher level of commitment than others who don't make the effort.

If I find someone with relevant qualifications, what else should I be looking for?








In education terms, you should be looking for someone with an additional commitment to continuing professional development. This means the willingness to spend several hours a month in further learning to learn as much as possible about financial services.





Outside of qualifications, you should be choosing an independent financial adviser on the basis of a range of other factors, such as location, how you get on with the adviser and whether they charge fees or take commission. Full details are contained in IFA Promotion's Independent Financial Advice for Consumers guide available free by visiting www.unbiased.co.uk or calling **0800 085 3250**.

List of advanced IFA qualifications

Name of qualification or exam	Abbreviation	Awarding Body	Extra Information	Generic Advanced Qualifications	Specialist Advanced Qualifications
Investment Qualifications					
SV1 – Savings and investments	SV1	 Chartered Insurance Institute (CII).	AFPC half credit: SV1 enhances the understanding of savings and investments. It includes the economic environment, product features and regulatory framework, taxation and portfolio planning.		✓
Securities Institute Diploma	Diploma	 Securities Institute which was established in 1992. A professional body for those who work in the securities and investment industry in the UK, chiefly stockbrokers.	Candidates must pass 3 exams in a range of investment related topics. After 3 years, members are automatically conferred a fellowship. Exam includes Private Client Investment Advice and Management.		✓
Certificate in Investment Management	CertIM	 Securities Institute.	A qualification for investment professionals engaged in managing investments, advising on and dealing in securities and derivatives.		✓
Investment Management Certificate	IMC	 The United Kingdom Society of Investment Professionals was created in August 2000 from the merger of the Institute of Investment Management and Research, formed in 1955, and the London Society of Investment Professionals, established in 1996.	This is a paper on investment management, including asset allocation, portfolio construction, economics, financial instruments and products, regulation and related topics. The qualification is principally aimed at investment analysts and fund managers, but some financial advisers take the exam to develop their skills in the subjects covered.		✓
Investment Management Asset Allocation Qualification	IMAAQ	 The United Kingdom Society of Investment Professionals.	The IMAAQ syllabus contains a number of units drawn from the full Investment Management Certificate supplemented by an additional module dealing with asset allocation. It was originally aimed at broker fund advisers and contains elements of information that are key to any asset allocation strategy.		✓
Professional Investment Certificate	PIC	 Institute of Financial Services (IFS).	The PIC was designed to set a seal of professionalism for investment advisers. PIC is no longer available for new entrants.		✓

Name of qualification or exam	Abbreviation	Awarding Body	Extra Information	Generic Advanced Qualifications	Specialist Advanced Qualifications
Mortgage Qualifications					
Mortgage Advice Qualification	MAQ	 Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) which dates back to 1873. It is the largest professional and educational body in insurance and financial services in the world.	An exam accredited by the Mortgage Code Compliance Board. Advisers do not need to pass any other exam to obtain MAQ. But in order to provide mortgage advice, FPC and MAQ (or equivalents) must be held.		
Certificate in Mortgage Advice and Practice	CeMAP™	 Institute of Financial Services (IFS).	This qualification has been designed for those who wish to provide mortgage advice. It comprises of 3 papers.		✓
Certificate in Mortgage Advice and Practice	Not applicable	 The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland.	This qualification is for those that provide mortgage advice in Scotland and follow the standards of the Code of Mortgage Lending Practice.		✓
General Qualifications					
Advanced Financial Planning Certificate	AFPC	 Chartered Insurance Institute (CII). The AFPC can also be used in relevant situations as a route towards regulatory compliance. For example, the Financial Services Authority (FSA) specifies that all member firms that carry out pension transfers and opt-out business must have a nominated pension transfers specialist within the firm, and this person must hold an appropriate qualification. Within the AFPC, <i>Pensions (G60)</i> is listed by the FSA as an approved qualification. Again, the FSA has recognised AFPC subject <i>Investment portfolio management (G70)</i> as an approved examination for fund management and also other certain investment advice activities.	Candidates must take and pass 3 AFPC exams, including G10: G10 – Taxation and trusts G20 – Personal investment planning G30 – Business financial planning G60 – Pensions G70 – Investment portfolio management G80 – Long-term care, life and health protection H15 – Supervision and sales management H25 – Holistic financial planning AFPC half credits: K10 – Retirement options K20 – Pension investment options	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

Name of qualification or exam	Abbreviation	Awarding Body	Extra Information	Generic Advanced Qualifications	Specialist Advanced Qualifications
Member, Society of Financial Advisers	MSFA	 The Society of Financial Advisers (SOFA) is the UK's main body for development of professional students in the financial services industry. It is part of the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII).	When AFPC has been gained, professional membership of the Society of Financial Advisers is available. MSFAs are required to adhere to the SOFA code of professional conduct and undertake CPD. It is possible to sit individual exams (see previous page), without applying for full MSFA or other designation. Many advisers take G60, G70, or H15 exams to help them in their professional work. Ask if an adviser has passed individual advanced exams.	✓	
Associate, Society of Financial Advisers	ASFA	 The Society of Financial Advisers.	Requires candidates to sit 6 exam papers (see previous page), or equivalents including compulsory G10. Also requires 3 years' relevant prior experience and 1 year's CPD.	✓	
Fellow, Society of Financial Advisers	FSFA	 The Society of Financial Advisers.	Requires candidates to sit 10 exam papers (see previous page), or equivalents. Also requires 5 years' relevant experience and 3 years' CPD.	✓	
Associate, Life Insurance Association	ALIA (dip)	 Life Insurance Association (LIA) which is the largest professional association for all those who give and support financial advice. Confers own designatory letters to people with equivalent exams.	See www.lia.co.uk for advanced examinations required to use a ALIA (dip) designation.	✓	
Fellow, Life Insurance Association	FLIA (dip)	 Life Insurance Association (LIA).	See www.lia.co.uk for advanced examinations required to use a FLIA (dip) designation.	✓	
Associate, Chartered Insurance Institute	ACII	 Chartered Insurance Institute (CII).	This is an older-style examination with a primary focus on general insurance (homes, cars, but mostly commercial). Also had a life insurance component, but most IFAs now tend to sit AFPC exams instead. Standard is broadly equivalent to ASFA (see below).	✓	
Fellow, Chartered Insurance Institute	FCII	 Chartered Insurance Institute (CII).	As above, but set at a higher level. Standard is broadly equivalent to FSFA (see below).	✓	

Name of qualification or exam	Abbreviation	Awarding Body	Extra Information	Generic Advanced Qualifications	Specialist Advanced Qualifications
Certified Financial Planner	CFP	 Institute of Financial Planning (IFP) which was founded in 1986. Awarding this international license in the UK since 1995. Offers a range of designatory letters (also offered by the Life Insurance Association).	Involves having either AFPC qualification or equivalent from another professional body and 3 years' industry experience, plus successful completion of assessed case study aimed at measuring individual's financial planning abilities and application of technical knowledge. Holders also required to maintain CPD.	✓	
Fellow, Institute of Financial Planning	FIFP	 Institute of Financial Planning (IFP).	In addition to external AFPC-level exams and 5 years' industry experience plus case study, involves two additional sets of 6-hour examinations on both business and personal financial planning.	✓	
BSc (Hons) in Financial Services and Associateship	BSc (Hons), ACIB	 Institute of Financial Services (IFS).	A degree level qualification which is highly respected as it provides an overall understanding of the majority of financial services issues.	✓	
The Associateship Course	ACIBS	 The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland.	This associateship covers examinations in financial services, banking, law, economics, accounting and marketing with 9 other optional topics. The ACIBS allows access to the highest level of banking qualification.	✓	

Notes

For further information on the subject contained in this guide, please contact your IFA.

If you do not already have an IFA, our 'Find an IFA' hotlines and website enable you to confidentially search for a list of IFAs in your local area. You can search for an IFA based on a whole host of criteria (including product, qualifications, gender and payment options) so you can be sure you'll find an IFA that meets your precise requirements.

If you are looking for advice on personal finances call the
IFA Promotion Consumer Hotline on **0800 085 3250**.

If you are looking for financial advice for your business call the
IFA Promotion Corporate Hotline on **0800 085 3251**.

Alternatively, for both services visit our website at www.unbiased.co.uk

