

LIBF Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisers (DipFA[®])

Qualification Specification



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Please always review the latest document available through the website

Purpose of the qualification

Why study LIBF Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisers (DipFA)?

The LIBF Level 4 Diploma for Financial advisors (DipFA) is an industry benchmark qualification which meets the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) qualification requirement for retail investment advisers. Highly relevant and practical, the programme is tailored to reflect the role of an IFA, providing you with the required knowledge and skills to apply the subject matter effectively in the workplace. The assessments comprise of case-study-based learning designed to replicate the real-life activities that advisers undertake.

Objectives

As a comprehensive course focusing on the UK financial services industry and its role in serving the consumer, the qualification develops specialist knowledge and skills by introducing you to the application of financial services regulation and the responsibilities of a regulated adviser. As part of this, it will provide you with an insight into the application and review of risk and ethics. The qualification will also equip you with the knowledge and skills required to offer financial advice as well as create, implement and maintain financial plans.

The London Institute of Banking & Finance is a leading provider of qualifications recognised by the Financial Conduct Authority as being appropriate for certain regulated functions. However it is your responsibility to be aware of and adhere to any additional regulatory requirements associated with these roles as set out in the FCA Handbook. Please refer to the Financial Conduct Authority for further information.

Key content areas

- This unit introduces knowledge and understanding of financial institutions to enable you to identify the different types of service that they provide.
- The functions and importance of the main components of the monetary and financial system.
- The concept and nature of risk and factors to the advice process for financial advice.
- The FCA's approach to ethical and unethical behaviours and develop understanding of the Code of Ethics.
- The commercial and regulatory environment, products, services and legislation that inform the financial advice process.

- The importance of consumer oriented communication and ethical behaviours through the practical application of accumulated knowledge and skills through the advice process.
- The personal approaches that individuals take towards risk and rewards and the impact of foreseen and unforeseen influences.
- The features of different types of financial services product, and how to make informed choices about these products.
- The validity of data and information as a means of assisting in the financial decision-making process.

Qualification learning outcomes

On completing this qualification you will understand:

Qual LO	Detail	Unit and LO
LO1	UK financial services industry, in its European and global context.	U1 LO1
LO2	How the retail consumer is served by the financial services industry.	U1 LO2
LO3	Regulation, principles, rules and legal concepts of financial services and advice.	U1 LO3, 5, 6
LO4	FCA's responsibilities and approach to regulation.	U1 IO4
LO5	Types of risk and how they relate to institutions and individuals.	U1 LO7
LO6	Skills required when advising clients.	U1 LO8
LO7	FCA's principles based approach to promote ethical behaviour including code of ethics and professional standards.	U1 LO9, 10, 11
LO8	The UK taxation system.	U2 LO1, 2, 3, 4, 19
LO9	The macroeconomic environment and its impact on asset classes.	U2 LO5
LO10	The main characteristics and behaviours of asset classes	U2 LO6
LO11	The main investment theories, products, types of risk on investment performance, investment planning and advice.	U2 LO7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
LO12	The time value of money.	U2 LO8
LO13	Financial protection planning – the need for, trends, sources, limitations of state benefits and life assurance.	U2 LO14, 15,16,17, 18
LO14	Income protection insurance, critical illness insurance, long-term care	U2 LO20,

	insurance, other insurance based protection policies and selecting appropriate financial protection solutions	21, 22, 23, 24
LO15	Political, economic, social and environmental factors that provide the context for pensions planning.	U2 LO25
LO16	Pensions law, regulation, HMRC taxation regime, state and individual pension schemes.	U2 LO26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
LO15	Client information, communication and holistic financial planning.	U2 LO33, 34, 35

Key skills developed

The qualification will encourage you to:

- develop an in depth understanding of the UK financial services industry and regulation;
- formulate and communicate holistic financial advice;
- create, implement and maintain financial plans.
- develop an understanding of current technical language and regulation;
- locate, extract and analyse data from different financial sources; and,
- increase your ability to work and learn independently.

Entry requirements

There are no specified entry requirements. DipFA[®] is equivalent to a first year degree programme.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The London Institute of Banking & Finance recognises prior learning in different forms. Potentially this means that you may not be required to register for every unit. Details of how to apply for recognition of prior learning are available on the website.

Progression and preparation for further study

Upon successful completion of the DipFA and subject to eligibility criteria, you are able to apply for your [Statement of Professional Standing \(SPS\)](#). You may also consider further study with The London Institute of Banking & Finance. You could progress on to the [Level 6 Diploma in Financial Advice \(Adv DipFA[®]\)](#) – an advanced qualification which leads to Chartered status*. Alternatively, the [Award in Pension Transfers \(AwPETR\)](#) enables you to qualify as a pension transfer specialist through

completion of a single unit, achievable in as little as 4 months.

This qualification can also contribute to the [Professional Diploma in Banking & Finance](#).

Apprenticeships

DipFA[®] appears in an apprenticeship standard and is designed to provide a solid foundation in financial services that underpins employment in many fields within the financial sector; this foundation is across a wider range of opportunities than would be found within a single apprenticeship standard. Further details can be found on the [Gov website](#).

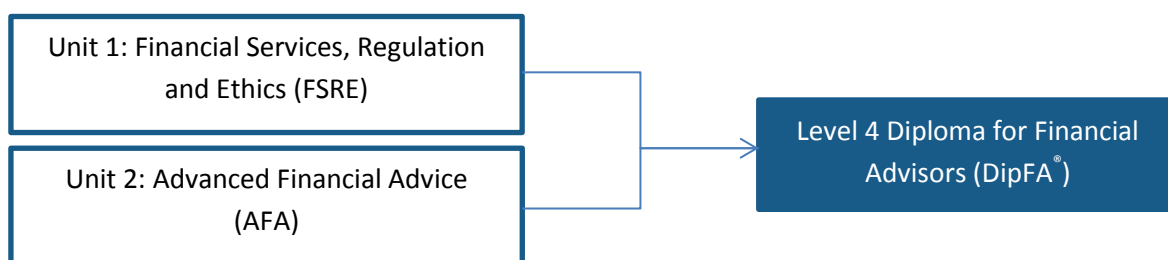
Preparation for employment / professional development

DipFA[®] meets the FCA's examination requirements for financial advisers. It also develops knowledge and understanding of financial services and advice and enhances skills that are valued within that sector and others. You will be in a position to make informed choices, whether to pursue a career within the financial services sector immediately or after further study, or whether to apply the financial skills that you have developed to other careers or study options.

Upon completion our ongoing support includes [membership](#) of the London Institute of Banking & Finance, [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\)](#) services and the issuance of [Statements of Professional Standing \(SPS\)](#).

Structure

Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisors (DipFA[®]) comprises two mandatory units which need to be successfully completed to achieve the qualification:



Total qualification time (TQT)

TQT is a prediction of the total time a student with no prior knowledge might need to complete the course.

TQT consists of two elements: guided learning (GL) and all other hours:

- GL is time spent studying under the immediate guidance or supervision of a teacher.
- All other hours include hours spent unsupervised in research, learning, e-learning, e-assessment, completing coursework, completing homework, exam preparation, and formal assessments.

DipFA is primarily considered a distance-learning, session-based qualification.

Guided learning hours	30 hours
Other hours	370 hours
Total qualification time	400 hours

Learning resources

You will be provided with the following learning resources:

- online access via **MyLIBF** to learning materials and to KnowledgeBank (e-library);
- specimen coursework assignment;
- unit syllabuses;
- access to online tutor forum;
- specimen paper and exemplars;
- chief examiner reports; and,
- study plan.

What to do before the FSRE assessment

On demand examinations are sat electronically at any one of the Pearson VUE test centres. You must be register to sit an examination at a centre of your choosing (subject to demand / availability); this is managed by you. It is recommended that you book your exam 3 weeks in advance of the date you wish to sit. However, subject to availability, an examination can be booked as little as 2 working days in advance. Examinations can be booked via the [Pearson VUE website](#) or by [phone](#).

On registration, you will be automatically allocated to a specific coursework session. Coursework is submitted via the course site; once submitted, all assignments are automatically checked by

TurnitinUK. TurnitinUK is the leading originality checking and plagiarism prevention service in the world. Guidance on the submission process, TurnitinUK and referencing is provided on the course site.

To prepare for all assessment elements, you should make use of all learning resources.

Assessment

Both units are mandatory and assessed. DipFA[®] is assessed using multiple choice and written assessments made up of the following components:

- i. Unit 1 - multiple-choice questions: 100 x 1 mark for each correct answer;
- ii. Unit 2 - coursework consisting of a Main Task and short answer questions; and,
- iii. Unit 2 - pre-release fact find requiring essay response in the examination.

The structure of the assignment ensures that all learning outcomes are subject to external assessment. A total of 350 marks are available across both units.

Qualification grading

The qualification will be graded Pass. To pass you must achieve a minimum mark of 70% for unit 1 and 50% (in both the coursework and examination) for unit 2.

The grade boundaries for unit 1 are as follows:

Grade	Percentage mark
Pass	70–79
Merit	80-89
Distinction	90–100

Feedback is provided for unit 1 via analysis sheets (available on www.MyLIBF.com), to see the relative strength of assessment performance.

For unit 2 a chief examiner’s report is provided for the coursework and for the examination. These highlight general areas of strength and weakness and provide guidance for future students.

Resit attempts

There are no restrictions on the number of times you can resit a unit in which you were unsuccessful, however, you must resit the unit in accordance with the published The London Institute of Banking & Finance policies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Regulation detail

This document describes the regulation detail that is applicable to the qualification.

Qualification title	LIBF Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisors (DipFA®)
Ofqual qualification number	501 / 0114 / 6
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level	4
European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level	5
Qualification type	Occupational Qualification
Guided learning hours	30
Total qualification time	400
Total credits	40
Sector subject area (SSA)	15. Business, Administration, Finance and Law
Sub SSA	15.1 Accounting and Finance
Overall grading type	Pass
Assessment methods	Coursework, e-assessment, multiple-choice examination
Available in	England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Qualification for ages	19+
Operational start date	01 August 2010
Qualification description	Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisors consists of two mandatory units. A total credit value of 40 must be obtained for achievement of the qualification.