The IFQ is a ground-breaking qualification that covers Islamic finance from both a technical and Sharia’a perspective, providing the first international benchmark in the area of Islamic finance.

The IFQ provides candidates with an understanding of the influence of Sharia’a in a business context, and prepares candidates to hold key positions in the Islamic finance and Takaful (Islamic insurance) industries.

The qualification is appropriate for existing employees, new employees and those seeking a career in Islamic finance.

Over the last ten years, Islamic finance has undergone a rapid transformation. Yet, its further development depends on the success of having a new generation of practitioners who are quite knowledgeable about Islamic finance. I believe the development of the Islamic Finance Qualification by two fine institutions, namely the SII and ESA, is a first step towards achieving that goal.

Dr Ahmad Jachi,
Chairman, Advisory Council for Islamic Finance,
First Vice-Governor, Banque du Liban
Advisory Council for Islamic Finance

The IFQ was initiated by the Central Bank of Lebanon (Banque du Liban) and was jointly created by L’Ecole Supérieure des Affaires (ESA) and the Securities & Investment Institute (SII). They convened on a group of high calibre experts to elaborate the qualifications.

The Islamic Finance Qualification has been developed by the Advisory Council for Islamic Finance (ACIF).

The ACIF Chairman is Dr Ahmad Jachi (Lebanon), First Vice-Governor, Banque du Liban.

The ACIF members are:
Dr Abdul Sattar Abu Ghuddah (Saudi Arabia)
Professor Simon Archer (UK)
Jean-Marc Riegel (Qatar)
Samir Salameh (Lebanon)
Mansoor Shakil (Dubai)

The UK Technical Group for the Islamic Finance Qualification

The members are:
Dawood Ahmedji
Sultan Choudhury
Samer Hijazi
David Kemp
Mansur Mannan
Waheed Qaiser
Paul Sherrin
Hamid Yunis

The Syllabus and Assessment Structure

The IFQ will be a two-hour, 100 multiple-choice question examination. Preparation will largely be through the accompanying workbook and a number of Accredited Training Providers will offer courses.

The IFQ will be offered in both Arabic and English. Candidates sitting the examination in either language will sit an examination of equivalent standard and difficulty.

The examinations are based on the published syllabus. The syllabus is reviewed regularly to reflect changes in the industry. Visit the Islamic finance sections of the SII website to view the latest version.

Summary Syllabus

Element 1: An Introduction to Islam
The principles and concepts which underpin Islam; the placing of banking and finance within Islam; the sources and interpretation of Islamic law; introduction to the role of the Sharia’a Supervisory Board.

Element 2: An introduction to Islamic Banking and Finance
The basis of Islamic banking and finance; the development of the Islamic finance and banking industry; the main components of the Islamic banking industry and its operating structures.

Element 3: Islamic Law of Contracts
Principles of Islamic business including the avoidance of riba and gharar; the concept of Wa’d (promise); the elements of a valid contract; the different types of contract; the purchase and sale of currencies.

Element 4: Financial Techniques Applied by Islamic Banks
The nature of Islamic current accounts; the nature of the major contracts — Mudaraba, Musharaka, Murabaha, Ijara, Salam, Istin’a; the use of letters of credit and guarantees in Islamic finance contracts.

Element 5: Financial Statements for Islamic Banks
The framework of International Financial Reporting Standards; contents of the main financial statements; the need for specific Islamic accounting standards; and the role of AAOIFI and IFRS.

Element 6: Islamic Corporate Governance
The different approaches to corporate governance; additional challenges presented by Islamic banks; the role of the Sharia’a Supervisory Board and corporate governance issues in Takaful.

Element 7: Islamic Asset and Fund Management
The purpose of investment in Islam; prohibited industries; replicating conventional deposit structures using Murabaha and Mudaraba; investment funds using Ijara; the Islamic stock selection process and the role of the Sharia’a Supervisory Board.

Element 8: Islamic Bond Market - Sukuk
The nature of Sukuk compared with conventional bonds; issuing Sukuk; different types of Sukuk; AAOIFI standards for Sukuk and rating Sukuk issues.

Element 9: Islamic Insurance - Takaful
The nature and structure of Takaful compared with conventional insurance; remunerating the insurance operator and Sharia’a governance of Takaful undertakings.

Element 10: Case Studies in Islamic Finance
Case studies in Islamic finance.
The need for an understanding of the fundamentals of Islamic finance is now recognised, not just in the United Kingdom, but universally.

I am pleased to welcome the Islamic Finance Qualification, whose syllabus has been developed by Islamic specialists located globally and by a strong partnership of European and Middle Eastern entities: the Central Bank of Lebanon (Banque du Liban), Ecole Supérieure des Affaires and the Securities & Investment Institute. I applaud the initiative which has generated the new qualification and this associated workbook

Lord George of St Tudy,  
Former Governor of the Bank of England