



FINANCE QUALIFICATIONS STRUCTURE

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FOREWORD



Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA) is mandated to promote the highest standards in the development of talent in the Financial Services Industry (FSI) by means of recognising and enhancing their competencies and capabilities through institutional, learning programme and individual accreditation to constantly meet the requirements of financial institutions amidst the changing economic and competitive landscape.

The Finance Qualifications Structure (FQS) is an instrument designed by FAA to develop and classify professional qualifications in the FSI based on a set of internationally recognised criteria. It serves as a point of reference for professional qualifications for different stakeholders such as regulators, financial institutions, training providers and FSI employees.

The qualification descriptors inherent in the FQS enable individuals to determine their competency levels, whilst the qualification outcomes assist them to determine the next course of development leading to the award of professional qualifications. Inherent in the FQS is the choice an individual makes with regards to becoming a specialist or generalist within the FSI.

Adopting the outcome- and progressive-based principles, the FQS is supported by the learning outcomes developed for the various finance-related disciplines (Islamic Finance, Conventional Banking, Insurance and Capital Market) within the FAA Learning Standards (FLS). The FQS is a unified structure which integrates and harmonises professional qualifications across economic borders, thus facilitating recognition and enabling FSI employees to practise across jurisdictions.

The FQS enables informed decisions by regulators and financial institutions in terms of investment in appropriate individuals and learning programmes, leading to cost savings. It also enables the training providers to design and develop learning programmes that are measurable against the principles prescribed by the FQS and FLS.

The FQS was developed in consultation with a network of experts from the FSI worldwide. FAA wishes to express its appreciation to the Steering Committee members, Focus Groups as well as FSI members for their invaluable contribution.

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Chief Executive Officer

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ABBREVIATIONS & GLOSSARY

Accredited Learning Programmes

Refer to learning programmes owned and/or coordinated by the RTP which have been granted accreditation (approval, provisional or full accreditation) status by FAA. Generally, FAA Programme Accreditation is a process to recognise that the learning programme provided by an RTP meets the criteria and principles set by FAA and the FSI.

Competencies

Refer to knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills of an FSI employee which are reflected by the QDs and QOs.

Domains

Refer to the seven (7) outcomes inherent in the learning programmes offered to FSI employees.

FAA

Refers to Finance Accreditation Agency. FAA is an international and independent quality assurance and accreditation body supported by the Central Bank of Malaysia and Securities Commission Malaysia. FAA is responsible for the quality assurance and promotion of learning initiatives within the FSI through learning programme, institutional and individual accreditation, as well as the promotion of future learning practices in the FSI.

FLS

Refers to FAA Learning Standards. The FLS is established to ensure consistency of learning content across the FSI according to internationally benchmarked industry requirements. It provides minimum standards for learning programmes across different sectors within the FSI.

FRL

Refers to FAA Recognition of Learning. The FRL is a process of recognising competencies that FSI employees already possess or have gained through formal (e.g. academic qualifications), informal (e.g. experience, on-the-job training) and non-formal (e.g. professional qualifications) interventions for the purpose of professional development.

FSC

Refers to the FAA Steering Committee. It is a committee established to review and provide advice on the FQS. Comprising representatives from qualification agencies, professional bodies, training providers and an expert on recognition of prior learning, the FSC provides strategic direction, professional advice and technical support on the FQS and its application.

FSI

Refers to the Financial Services Industry. Generally, it includes sectors such as Islamic Finance, Capital Market, Conventional Banking and Insurance.

FSI Employees

Generally refer to employees engaged by the FSI. FSI employees may register for and attend learning programmes that are technical, behavioural or developmental in nature and which result in the acquisition of a specific or generic competency or set of competencies.

Learning Programmes

Refer to the curriculum and instruction delivered by an RTP based on the learning outcomes specified in advance with the purpose of allowing learners to acquire appropriate competencies intended by the learning programme. The learning programme could be delivered through professional training, in-house training, conferences, seminars, workshops or any other methods deemed appropriate. The modes of learning include face-to-face learning, e-learning, distance learning and self-learning. These include learning programmes coordinated but not owned by the RTP.

RTP

Refers to a training provider registered with FAA. An RTP refers to an establishment that offers training and learning to FSI employees. The RTP includes professional bodies, institutions of higher learning, corporations and the training departments of financial institutions.

Qualification

Refers to a single or suite of FAA Accredited Learning Programmes offered by an RTP.

QDs

Refer to Qualification Descriptors. QDs are generic statements describing the competencies of FSI employees at different levels of the FQS on a progressive basis.

QOs

Refer to Qualification Outcomes. QOs are generic statements describing the learning outcomes expected of FSI employees at each corresponding qualification level. QOs are developed as a result of a combination of QDs and the seven (7) domains.

Qualification Levels

Refer to the six (6) levels of the FQS on the basis of the QDs and QOs. Level 1 indicates the lowest level, whilst Level 6 depicts the highest level in terms of qualifications for FSI employees.

INTRODUCTION

Definition and Features

The Finance Qualifications Structure (FQS) is a comprehensive structure which consists of six (6) qualification levels. The FQS provides the mechanism that classifies professional qualifications in the Financial Services Industry (FSI) based on Qualification Descriptors (QDs) and Qualification Outcomes (QOs) which are benchmarked against international practices.

Objectives of FQS

1. It provides professional learning pathways which link qualifications systematically, allowing FSI employees to move across qualification levels as required by the job or learning needs.
2. FSI employees are able to chart and progress against the qualification levels through the FAA Recognition of Learning (FRL) mechanism.

Benefits of FQS

1. It is an overarching classification of recognised qualifications.
2. It makes the content of qualifications and their mutual relationships clearer through appropriate levelling.
3. It enhances communication on qualifications between education and training providers as well as the employment market.
4. It consolidates the potential for exchanges between various learning systems.
5. It enables FSI employees to understand and plan their career progression.

Establishment and Development

The FQS is benchmarked against industry competency as well as professional and academic qualification frameworks established by various institutions from regions such as UK-Europe, the Middle-East and North Africa, Asia-Pacific and Australasia. The list of benchmarked institutions is as indicated in **Appendix 1**. The FQS was reviewed by the FQS Steering Committee (FSC) as listed in **Appendix 2**. Representatives from various sectors within the FSI were also consulted in the development of the FQS.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Qualification Descriptors (QDs)

The FQS has six (6) levels. Each level is defined by QDs which comprise generic statements describing the knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills of an FSI employee at a particular qualification level.

The levels describe the complexity and depth of the competencies in the progression of a job role. Table 1 shows the QDs in FQS.

Table 1 - QDs

Qualification Levels	Qualification Descriptors
6	An FSI employee having strategic and advanced knowledge and skills to judge and predict multifaceted information and situations to formulate critical strategies and directions.
5	An FSI employee having critical and specialised knowledge and skills to synergise, drive and implement resources to achieve a highly specialised range of tasks and solutions.
4	An FSI employee having comprehensive knowledge and skills to evaluate, resolve and manage a range of complex tasks.
3	An FSI employee having specific operational and analytical knowledge and skills to analyse and conduct a broad range of routine and non-routine tasks.
2	An FSI employee having a limited range of knowledge, comprehension and skills to conduct a variety of routine and non-routine tasks in a specific area of work.
1	An FSI employee having fundamental knowledge and understanding, and basic skills to carry out simple and routine tasks.

Qualification Outcomes (QOs)

Each of the FQS levels is also characterised by the QOs which are the generic features that represent the learning outcomes of a particular qualification. Table 2 shows the QOs in FQS.

Table 2 - QOs

Qualification Levels	Qualification Outcomes
6	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to synthesise various approaches to make optimal decisions and inculcate positive values within the financial institution. The FSI employee is also expected to champion innovative strategies including intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.
5	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to evaluate various options for decision-making as well as communicate and implement solutions effectively. The FSI employee is also expected to develop intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.
4	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to analyse complex issues and problems to provide viable solutions for decision-making as well as interpret, communicate and execute plans accurately. The FSI employee is also expected to undertake and manage intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.
3	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to execute prescribed solutions for a broad range of issues and problems as well as provide suggestions for decision-making, execute plans and communicate clearly using structured and coherent arguments. The FSI employee is also expected to undertake and support intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.
2	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to execute prescribed solutions in a specific area of work, work in a team and communicate clearly to fulfil the needs of the workplace. The FSI employee is also expected to undertake intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.
1	An FSI employee is expected to possess the knowledge to execute standard procedures under supervision and communicate to fulfil the needs of the workplace. The FSI employee is also expected to exercise basic intrapreneurial activities and be ethical and professional. The FSI employee should be committed to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

The QOs reflect the existing competencies and/or capabilities of FSI employees as defined by the following seven (7) domains:

- a. Knowledge**
The information and understanding of an FSI employee related to the discipline of finance that is gained through education and/or experience.
- b. Application**
The ability of an FSI employee to use knowledge and skills in a professional capacity in the FSI.
- c. Teamwork and Managerial Skills**
The ability of an FSI employee to work together and lead a group of people to achieve a common goal.
- d. Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills**
The ability of an FSI employee to understand issues, identify alternatives and decide on the best available solutions.
- e. Business and Intrapreneurial Skills**
The ability of an FSI employee to improve existing practices or develop innovative ideas that add value to the business.
- f. Ethics and Professionalism**
Values, attitudes and respect for oneself and others in a professional context.
- g. Lifelong Learning**
The initiative to undertake meaningful learning activities on a perpetual basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills for professional improvement of the FSI employee.

APPLICATION OF FQS

The FQS facilitates talent levelling development in the FSI through the following:

1. Structuring and levelling of learning programmes through the FAA Learning Standards (FLS).
2. Recognition of FSI employees' learning through the FAA Recognition of Learning (FRL).

The two components are described below:

FAA Learning Standards (FLS)

The FLS provides the minimum standards for learning programmes in the FSI. The QOs bridge the competencies of FSI employees through the learning outcomes prescribed in the different levels of the FLS which forms the basis by which qualifications are mapped against the FQS. The FLS covers four main sectors in the FSI, namely Islamic Finance, Capital Market, Conventional Banking and Insurance. It consists of eleven (11) components: (1) Learning Levels (2) Learning Outcomes (3) Learning Programme Objectives (4) Body of Knowledge (5) Learning Topics (6) Learning Methodologies (7) Assessment Methods (8) Learning Hours (9) Entry Requirements (10) Relevant Resources and (11) Description of Trainers.

FAA Recognition of Learning (FRL)

The FRL supports the objectives of the FQS to promote more flexible professional learning and development within the FSI. FSI employees are able to seek recognition against a qualification level by providing evidence of relevant current and prior work experience, training and informal learning. The specific aims of the FRL are as follows:

1. To accredit the learning and competencies of FSI employees against the QOs.
2. To enable FSI employees to plan their learning pathways through the realisation of their current learning achievements, leading to the identification of their future personal and professional learning needs.
3. To enable employers of financial institutions to have a better understanding of the competencies of their employees in order to plan relevant training and learning programmes for a productive and capable workforce. The FRL would also allow employers to save time and money by avoiding duplication of learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – List of Benchmarked Institutions

Table 1.1: List of Industry & Professional Qualifications Frameworks

Regions	Frameworks	Organisations
Global	ACCA Competency Framework	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
South East Asia	Financial Industry Competency Standards (FICS)	The Institute of Banking and Finance (IBF), Singapore
	Banking and Finance Industry Competency Framework	Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers (AICB) [formerly known as Institut Bank-Bank Malaysia (IBBM)]
Europe	Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)	Jointly regulated by Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL), UK and Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA), Northern Ireland
	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)	Qualifications and Learning Division, Welsh Government
	The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning	European Commission, Education and Culture
	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Handbook, Dec 2009	SCQF Partnership

Table 1.2: List of Academic Qualifications Frameworks

Regions	Frameworks	Organisations
Europe	The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ), <i>August 2008</i>	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
	The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
	The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS), <i>January 2001</i>	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
	Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications, <i>April 2005</i>	German Rectors' Conference, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany
	A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, <i>February 2005</i>	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Copenhagen
South East Asia	Malaysian Qualifications Framework, <i>2011</i>	Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
	Philippine Qualifications Framework (PGF), <i>December 2012</i>	Technical Education & Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
	National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Thailand	Commission on Higher Education: Higher Education, Thailand
Eastern Asia	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, <i>October 2012</i>	Education Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR Government
Australasia	Australian Qualifications Framework, Second Edition, <i>January 2013</i>	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Council
	The New Zealand Qualifications Framework, <i>April 2011</i>	New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
North America	Ontario Qualifications Framework	Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Appendix 2 - FQS Steering Committee Members

No	Name	Organisation
1.	Amat Taap Manshor (Dr) - Chairman -	Chief Executive Officer Finance Accreditation Agency
2.	Adnan Alias (Dato' Dr)	Chief Executive Officer Islamic Banking and Finance Institute Malaysia
3.	Azman Hisham Che Doi (Mr)	Chief Executive Officer Securities Industry Development Corporation
4.	Cloud Bai-Yun (Dr)	Chief Executive Officer UK National Recognition Information Centre
5.	Colin A Morrison (Mr)	Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Director of Education Chartered Institute of Bankers, Scotland
6.	Fan Yiu-Kwan (Professor Dr)	Former Executive Director The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
7.	John McMorris (Mr)	Director Scottish Qualifications Authority
8.	Khadijah Abdullah (Mdm)	Former Chief Executive Officer Malaysian Insurance Institute
9.	Lyndal Groom (Dr)	Executive Director Australian Qualifications Framework Council
10.	Mazuki Jusoh (Dr)	Director, Professional Standards Development Asian Institute of Finance
11.	Rafe Haneef (Mr)	President Association of Chartered Islamic Finance Professionals
12.	Roslyn Cameron (Dr)	Research Fellow Curtin University
13.	Tariq M. AL-Sindi (Dr)	Director General Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training, Bahrain
14.	Tay Kay Luan (Mr)	Chief Executive Officer Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers [formerly known as Institut Bank-Bank Malaysia (IBBM)]
15.	Zita Mohd Fahmi (Mdm)	Deputy Chief Executive Officer Malaysian Qualifications Agency



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