

Launch of new Diploma for the Financial Services Industry

Innovative new Level 2 qualification combines workplace and customer skills with financial product knowledge

Individuals looking to begin a career within the financial services sector are being given a helping hand with the launch of the new **ifs Level 2 Diploma in Introduction to Financial Services**. Developed jointly by **ifs** School of Finance (www.ifslearning.ac.uk) and leading awarding body EDI the new qualification covers not only technical product and service knowledge within the financial sector but also key employability and communication skills relating to the workplace. From financial planning to customer service and IT, the qualification ensures that learners are equipped with all the skills they need to forge a successful career. For those already working within the sector, the qualification provides the perfect opportunity to develop Level 2 skills and knowledge in preparation for professional exams.



Offering both computer and paper based learning; the Diploma can be completed by full time study at colleges or other learning institutions. Its mix of core and optional units enables learners not only to develop thorough knowledge of key areas but also to tailor the qualification to their own strengths and weaknesses. As learners progress through the Diploma, they will achieve the Award in Personal Financial Planning, the Certificate in Personal Financial Planning, the Certificate in Employability Skills, and the Certificate in Customer Services, building up a portfolio of transferable skills and qualifications. They will also have the opportunity to learn key IT skills, from word processing, databases and spreadsheets – an integral part of any financial services role - to presentation software and internet security.

As part of the six core units, candidates are required to study key employability skills, including health, safety and security in the workplace, essential communication and interpersonal skills, how to build positive working relationships and how to respond to challenging situations and conflicts in the workplace. Inclusion of these essential skills in the Introduction to Financial Services Diploma helps learners put their knowledge into context and apply it to both new and existing roles. The customer services unit builds upon this, teaching candidates how to impart their knowledge to colleagues and clients while representing an organisation and covering important issues such as data protection and legislation.

The core financial units enable candidates to gain a valuable insight into the sector, from rights and responsibilities in personal finance to the provider's perspective in financial services. They can then choose to delve deeper into the world of finance through two optional units, with study choices ranging



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from mortgages for consumers to personal borrowing, debt management, tax and benefits, savings and investments and even financial planning for later life.

Rod McKee, Head of Financial Capability at the **ifs** School of Finance, said: “The combination of our financial qualifications with EDI’s employability programmes will provide a very strong platform for anyone wishing to pursue a career in the financial services industry. Employers rightly seek well rounded employees with a range of skills sets and this new Diploma will provide just that.”

Chris Bolton, Head of Education and Development at EDI, commented: “We are delighted to have partnered with the **ifs School of Finance** to help create the new **ifs** Level 2 Diploma in Introduction to Financial Services. Working within the financial services industry involves much more than simply knowing what products are available. From interacting with customers and communicating with colleagues to demonstrating effective personal skills and IT capabilities, every role encompasses a wide range of skills. Completion of the **ifs** Level 2 Diploma in Introduction to Financial Services will enable candidates to be more effective in their role and also have a better understanding of the industry and the skills required to work within it.”



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