



Five key reasons to choose the CQF

Explore five key reasons why the Certificate in Quantitative Finance (CQF) is the largest professional quant qualification in the world and why thousands of professionals have chosen the program to learn essential quant skills.

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1 Syllabus and structure

The CQF was founded by Dr. Paul Wilmott in 2003 to fill the gap between academia and industry. He understood that professionals want an excellent educational experience without having to return to full-time education. The CQF is a 6-month, part-time program delivered live online globally. Most delegates continue to hold a full-time job and maintain their ability to earn while completing the program. Within six months they gain a comprehensive quantitative finance skill set that will help accelerate their careers.

The CQF is made up of six modules, followed by two advanced electives of the delegate's choosing. The syllabus is updated quarterly in consultation with faculty, an advisory board, and senior alumni practitioners, to ensure that the content is focused on cutting-edge techniques that are being used in financial markets today. For example, as machine learning and data science have become more prominent, the CQF has expanded to include modules on these techniques, including supervised, unsupervised, and reinforcement learning, deep learning, neural nets, natural language processing, and algo trading.

In addition, employers are often looking for programming skills, so the CQF has evolved to provide a deeper background in this area via a series of live online Python labs, in which delegates work on building models that have been covered in lectures. These newer components have been very popular and alumni report that immersion in these fields has proven to be valuable in both their short-term job searches and their long-term careers.

“At the beginning of the CQF program, I did not even know what a neural network was, and by the time we reached the final project, I was able to design one myself. It was really satisfying to see my own model running and giving an output – further building a useful foundation for future work.”

Mudit Gupta, Senior Associate, PWC IAC



2 Faculty and support

Access to industry experts is one of the hallmarks of the CQF. Each module is taught by real-world practitioners who are creating, refining, and critiquing the use of these models and methods in industry. Faculty members include Dr. Paul Wilmott, Dr. Espen Gaarder Haug, Dr. Peter Jaeckel, Dr. Claus Huber, Dr. Marc Henrard, Dr. Sébastien Lleo, Dr. Jon Gregory, Dr. Yves Hilpisch, Thijs van den Berg, Professor Stephen Taylor, and others.

The CQF faculty are also deeply engaged in the program support. While some students have a solid foundation in one or more areas of the curriculum, the learning curve is steep at points for everyone, and one-to-one faculty support as well as additional program support is available for each stage of the program.

“ One of the things I liked the most about the CQF was the chance to learn from practitioners and pioneers. The way the CQF faculty explained things made them seem so easy. ”

Leo Cerina, Market Risk Associate, J.P. Morgan

CQF faculty are available via email, phone, and video conference. They also run weekly, online workshops and labs that cover key concepts and specific technical skills, such as select mathematical methods and programming in Python. Delegates also have access to a private discussion forum and are encouraged to form dedicated study groups with other CQF delegates around the world. Many delegates build relationships with their CQF peers and go on to use these connections throughout their careers.



3 Industry focus and learning methodology

Time is of the essence in finance and many firms favor job applicants who can demonstrate the skills and understanding to hit the ground running. The CQF curriculum is centred on teaching the theory and the practical implementation of quant finance techniques. The program methodology is firmly rooted in a rigorous process of 1) learning, 2) implementation, and 3) application and review.

Key concepts and tools are presented early in the program, with repeated review within each module. Emphasis is placed on both understanding the theory and gaining experience with direct implementation of each model. This approach ensures that CQF delegates develop 'desk-ready' skills by the end of the program. Delegates also complete practical modular exams to reinforce what they have learned, culminating in an in-depth project of their choosing to ensure they can demonstrate their skills in real-world scenarios. Many alumni report that following the completion of their final project, they were able to apply relevant techniques to similar problems with confidence, an achievement that set them apart in job interviews or for promotions.

“ The faculty provided great insights and the assignments were practical; you could apply what you had learned in real-market situations later... I completed my final course project on the Black-Litterman model and portfolio management, which was directly applicable to my career. ”

Jean-Paul Jaegers, Head of Asset Allocation,
Barclays Wealth and Investment



4 Study time and flexibility

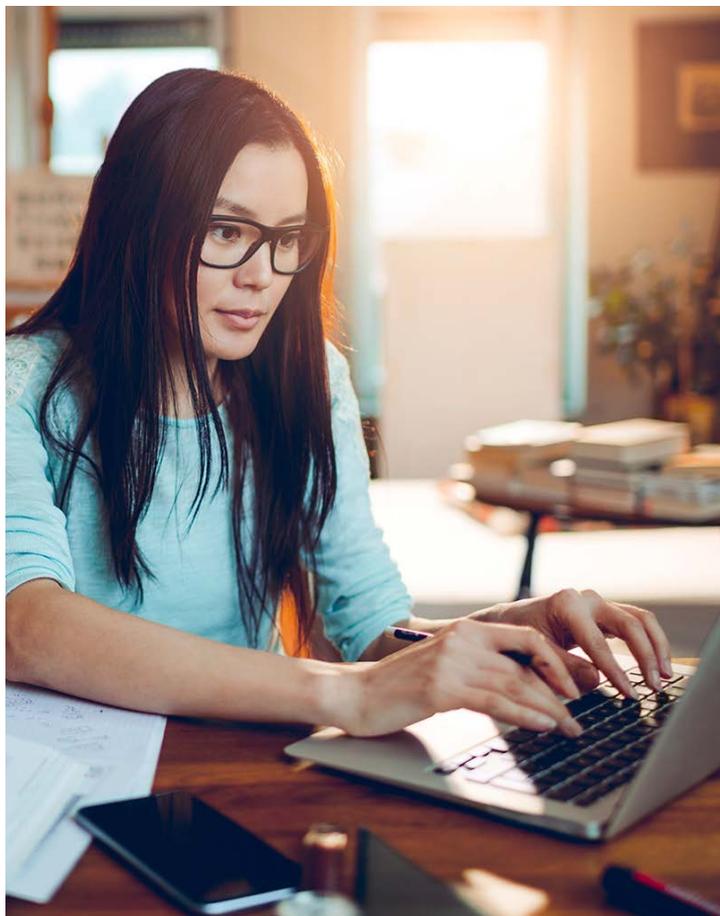
Flexibility is a key component of the CQF; all lectures are delivered live online and uploaded within 24 hours to the CQF portal, exam extensions are available throughout, and delegates can defer the program over six cohorts (three full years) at no extra cost. The program is also part-time to enable delegates to maintain a full-time career alongside their studies.

These options ensure that nothing on the logistical front will prevent delegates from earning the qualification. Many CQF alumni underscore the importance of the flexible nature of the program.

“ It was clearly a very practical approach to learning, it was part-time, complementary to my work schedule, and could be completed in six months. I was already very accustomed to working and studying at the same time, so this was simply a continuation of my normal life. ”

Leticia Mortoza, Senior Quant, Swedbank

CQF delegates can also specialize towards their individual career goals. As part of module six, delegates select two advanced electives from an extensive list of choices to explore topics that are most relevant to them. The final practical project is also based on the electives and gives delegates an opportunity to apply their new skills to a real-world scenario.



5 Continued professional development and the CQF network

As part of the commitment to lifelong learning, CQF alumni have permanent access to a vast and ever-growing library of additional lectures as well as all the materials from the latest CQF cohort. As new techniques emerge in quantitative finance, practitioners are invited to give alumni lectures on hot topics, which are delivered live online and uploaded to the library. This ensures that delegates are kept up to date on the latest industry practices throughout their career.

“ I frequently use the lifelong learning library and often refer back to books by Paul Wilmott and others to brush up on various concepts. The CQF is staying current with what is happening in all areas of quant finance, which is a great advantage in a changing world. ”

Mukund Javeri, AVP, Deutsche Bank

Delegates are also invited to join the CQF Institute, the awarding body for the CQF and a global membership organization dedicated to building and educating the quant community. The Institute hosts global and regional events, including talks, workshops, and conferences throughout the year. These events give delegates and alumni the opportunity to foster new relationships and discover the latest quant finance innovations as part of a global quant community.



Conclusion

The CQF is an outstanding choice for those who are seeking to enter into or continue a career in quantitative finance, with the assurance of a solid, hands-on educational experience. The success of the CQF is intertwined with the success of its graduates—from the development of relevant and adaptable skills, to peer networking and industry connections, to lifelong learning, the CQF encourages its delegates and alumni to stay connected and benefit from the growing quant community around the program.

“ The CQF requires a lot of discipline and if you have an intense job, it will push you quite hard. But if you have a passion for learning, and especially for the math behind the models in finance, you will truly benefit from the experience. ”

Max Bocchini, Head of Insurance and Capital Markets Sectors, Capgemini Invent



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