



## INFORMATION CIRCULAR: ISHARES TRUST

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**TO:** Head Traders, Technical Contacts, Compliance Officers, Heads of ETF Trading, Structured Products Traders

**FROM:** NASDAQ / BX / PHLX Listing Qualifications Department

**DATE:** September 14, 2017

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### EXCHANGE-TRADED FUND

### SYMBOL CUSIP #

iShares 10+ Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF

LLQD 46435G144

iShares 5-10 Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF

MLQD 46435G151

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE FUNDS

The iShares Trust (the “Trust”) is a management investment company registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”), consisting of several investment portfolios. This circular relates only to the Funds listed above (each, a “Fund” and together, the “Funds”). The shares of the Fund are referred to herein as “Shares.” BlackRock Fund Advisors (the “Adviser”) is the investment adviser to the Funds.

#### **iShares 10 Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF**

The iShares 10+ Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF (“LLQD”) seeks to track the investment results of an index composed of U.S. dollar-denominated, investment-grade corporate bonds with remaining maturities greater than ten years.

LLQD seeks to track the investment results of the Markit iBoxx USD Liquid Investment Grade Long Index (the “LLQD Index”). The LLQD Index offers exposure to liquid corporate bonds of the specified maturity range and is rebalanced on a monthly basis. The bonds eligible for inclusion in the LLQD Index consist of U.S. dollar-denominated corporate bonds that: (i) are issued by companies based in developed market countries, as determined by Markit Indices Limited (the “Index Provider” or “Markit”); (ii) have an average rating of investment grade (ratings from Fitch Ratings, Inc., Moody’s Investors Service or S&P Global Ratings are considered; if more than one agency provides a rating, the average rating is attached to the bond); (iii) are from issuers with at least \$1 billion outstanding face value; (iv) have at least \$500 million of outstanding face value; and (v) are fixed-rate coupon bonds. The LLQD Index limits the securities of any one issuer to no more than 3% of the total market capitalization of the LLQD Index. As of June 30, 2017, a significant portion of the LLQD Index is represented by securities of financials companies. The components of the LLQD Index, and the degree to which these components represent certain industries, are likely to change over time. The

Adviser uses a “passive” or indexing approach to try to achieve LLQD’s investment objective. Unlike many investment companies, LLQD does not try to “beat” the index it tracks and does not seek temporary defensive positions when markets decline or appear overvalued.

Indexing may eliminate the chance that LLQD will substantially outperform the LLQD Index but also may reduce some of the risks of active management, such as poor security selection. Indexing seeks to achieve lower costs and better after-tax performance by keeping portfolio turnover low in comparison to actively managed investment companies.

The Adviser uses a representative sampling indexing strategy to manage LLQD. “Representative sampling” is an indexing strategy that involves investing in a representative sample of securities that collectively has an investment profile similar to that of an applicable underlying index. The securities selected are expected to have, in the aggregate, investment characteristics (based on factors such as market capitalization and industry weightings), fundamental characteristics (such as return variability, duration, maturity, credit ratings and yield) and liquidity measures similar to those of an applicable underlying index. LLQD may or may not hold all of the securities in the LLQD Index.

LLQD generally will invest at least 90% of its assets in the component securities of the LLQD Index and may invest up to 10% of its assets in certain futures, options and swap contracts, cash and cash equivalents, including shares of money market funds advised by the Adviser or its affiliates (“BlackRock Cash Funds”), as well as in securities not included in the LLQD Index, but which the Adviser believes will help LLQD track the LLQD Index. From time to time when conditions warrant, however, LLQD may invest at least 80% of its assets in the component securities of the LLQD Index and may invest up to 20% of its assets in certain futures, options and swap contracts, cash and cash equivalents, including shares of BlackRock Cash Funds, as well as in securities not included in the LLQD Index, but which the Adviser believes will help LLQD track the LLQD Index. LLQD seeks to track the investment results of the LLQD Index before fees and expenses of LLQD.

LLQD may lend securities representing up to one-third of the value of LLQD's total assets (including the value of any collateral received).

The LLQD Index is sponsored by Markit, which is independent of LLQD and the Adviser. The Index Provider determines the composition and relative weightings of the securities in the LLQD Index and publishes information regarding the market value of the LLQD Index.

### **iShares 5-10 Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF**

The iShares 5-10 Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF (“MLQD”) seeks to track the investment results of an index composed of U.S. dollar-denominated, investment-grade corporate bonds with remaining maturities between five and ten years.

MLQD seeks to track the investment results of the Markit iBoxx USD Liquid Investment Grade Intermediate Index (the “MLQD Index”). MLQD Index offers exposure to liquid corporate bonds of the specified maturity range and is rebalanced on a monthly basis. The bonds eligible for inclusion in the MLQD Index consist of U.S. dollar-denominated corporate bonds that: (i) are issued by companies based in developed market countries, as determined by Markit Indices Limited (the “Index Provider” or “Markit”); (ii) have an average rating of investment grade (ratings from Fitch Ratings, Inc., Moody’s Investors Service or S&P Global Ratings are considered; if more than one

agency provides a rating, the average rating is attached to the bond); (iii) are from issuers with at least \$1 billion outstanding face value; (iv) have at least \$500 million of outstanding face value; and (v) are fixed-rate coupon bonds. The MLQD Index limits the securities of any one issuer to no more than 3% of the total market capitalization of the MLQD Index. As of June 30, 2017, a significant portion of the MLQD Index is represented by securities of financials companies. The components of the MLQD Index, and the degree to which these components represent certain industries, are likely to change over time. The Adviser uses a “passive” or indexing approach to try to achieve MLQD’s investment objective. Unlike many investment companies, MLQD does not try to “beat” the index it tracks and does not seek temporary defensive positions when markets decline or appear overvalued.

Indexing may eliminate the chance that MLQD will substantially outperform the MLQD Index but also may reduce some of the risks of active management, such as poor security selection. Indexing seeks to achieve lower costs and better after-tax performance by keeping portfolio turnover low in comparison to actively managed investment companies.

The Adviser uses a representative sampling indexing strategy to manage MLQD. “Representative sampling” is an indexing strategy that involves investing in a representative sample of securities that collectively has an investment profile similar to that of an applicable underlying index. The securities selected are expected to have, in the aggregate, investment characteristics (based on factors such as market capitalization and industry weightings), fundamental characteristics (such as return variability, duration, maturity, credit ratings and yield) and liquidity measures similar to those of an applicable underlying index. MLQD may or may not hold all of the securities in the MLQD Index.

MLQD generally will invest at least 90% of its assets in the component securities of the MLQD Index and may invest up to 10% of its assets in certain futures, options and swap contracts, cash and cash equivalents, including shares of money market funds advised by the Adviser or BlackRock Cash Funds, as well as in securities not included in the MLQD Index, but which the Adviser believes will help MLQD track the MLQD Index. From time to time when conditions warrant, however, MLQD may invest at least 80% of its assets in the component securities of the MLQD Index and may invest up to 20% of its assets in certain futures, options and swap contracts, cash and cash equivalents, including shares of BlackRock Cash Funds, as well as in securities not included in the MLQD Index, but which the Adviser believes will help MLQD track the MLQD Index. MLQD seeks to track the investment results of the MLQD Index before fees and expenses of MLQD.

MLQD may lend securities representing up to one-third of the value of MLQD's total assets (including the value of any collateral received).

The MLQD Index is sponsored by Markit, which is independent of MLQD and the Adviser. The Index Provider determines the composition and relative weightings of the securities in the MLQD Index and publishes information regarding the market value of the MLQD Index.

For more information regarding each Fund’s investment strategy, please read the prospectus for the Funds.

As described more fully in the Trust’s prospectus and Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”), the Funds issue and redeem Shares at net asset value (“NAV”) only in large blocks of 50,000 Shares (each block of Shares called a “Creation Unit”). As a practical matter, only broker-dealers or large institutional investors with creation and redemption agreements (called Authorized Participants) can

purchase or redeem these Creation Units. Except when aggregated in Creation Units, the Shares may not be redeemed with the Funds.

Shares are held in book-entry form, which means that no Share certificates are issued. The Depository Trust Company or its nominee is the record owner of all outstanding Shares of the Funds and is recognized as the owner of all Shares for all purposes.

The NAV per Share for each Fund is computed by dividing the value of the net assets of the Fund (i.e., the value of its total assets less total liabilities) by the total number of Shares outstanding. Expenses and fees are accrued daily and taken into account for purposes of determining NAV. The NAV of each Fund is determined each business day after the close of trading (ordinarily 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time or "ET") of the New York Stock Exchange. Any assets or liabilities denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar are converted into U.S. dollars at the current market rates on the date of valuation as quoted by one or more sources.

The registration statement for the Funds describes the various fees and expenses for the Funds' Shares. For a more complete description of the Funds and the underlying indexes, visit the Funds' website at [www.iShares.com](http://www.iShares.com).

#### **PURCHASES AND REDEMPTIONS IN CREATION UNIT SIZE**

NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members and member organizations are hereby informed that procedures for purchases and redemptions of Shares in Creation Unit Size are described in the Trust's prospectus and Statement of Additional Information and that Shares are not individually redeemable but are redeemable only in Creation Unit Size aggregations or multiples thereof.

#### **PRINCIPAL RISKS**

Interested persons are referred to the discussion in the prospectus for the Funds of the principal risks of an investment in the Funds. These include tracking error risk (factors causing a Fund's performance to not match the performance of its underlying index), market trading risk (for example, trading halts, trading above or below net asset value), asset class risk, assets und management risk, authorized participant concentration risk, call risk, concentration risk, credit risk, cyber security risk, extension risk, financials sector risk, geographic risk, income risk, index-related risk, interest rate risk, issuer risk, liquidity risk, management risk, market risk, market trading risk, non-diversification risk, operation risk, passive investment risk, prepayment risk, risk of investing in the United States, securities lending risk, and tracking error risk.

#### **EXCHANGE RULES APPLICABLE TO TRADING IN THE SHARES**

Trading in the Shares on NASDAQ is on a UTP basis and is subject to NASDAQ equity trading rules. Trading of the Shares on BX is on a UTP basis and is subject to BX equity trading rules. Trading of the Shares on PHLX's PSX system is on a UTP basis and is subject to PHLX rules.

#### **TRADING HOURS**

The values of each index underlying the Shares are disseminated to data vendors every 15 seconds. The Shares will trade on NASDAQ between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. ET. The Shares will trade on BX

between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. ET. The Shares will trade on PSX between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. ET. For trading during each market’s pre-market and post-market sessions, market participants should note that additional risks may exist with respect to trading the Funds during these sessions, when the underlying index’s values, intraday indicative value, or similar value may not be disseminated or calculated.

**DISSEMINATION OF FUND DATA**

The Consolidated Tape Association will disseminate real time trade and quote information for the Funds to Tape B.

<b>Fund Name</b>	<b>Listing Market</b>	<b>Trading Symbol</b>	<b>IOPV Symbol</b>	<b>NAV Symbol</b>
iShares 10+ Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF	BATS	LLQD	LLQD.IV	LLQD.NV
iShares 5-10 Year Investment Grade Corporate Bond ETF	BATS	MLQD	MLQD.IV	MLQD.NV

**SUITABILITY**

Trading in the Shares on NASDAQ will be subject to the provisions of NASDAQ Rule 2310. Trading in the Shares on BX will be subject to the provisions of BX Equity Rule 2310. Shares trading on PSX will be subject to the provisions of PHLX Rule 763. Members and member organizations recommending transactions in the Shares to customers should make a determination that the recommendation is suitable for the customer. In addition, members must possess sufficient information to satisfy the “know your customer” obligation that is embedded in both the NASDAQ Conduct Rules and the BX Conduct Rules.

NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members and member organizations should also review NASD Notice to Members 03-71 for guidance on trading these products. The Notice reminds members of their obligations to: (1) conduct adequate due diligence to understand the features of the product; (2) perform a reasonable-basis suitability analysis; (3) perform customer-specific suitability analysis in connection with any recommended transactions; (4) provide a balanced disclosure of both the risks and rewards associated with the particular product, especially when selling to retail investors; (5) implement appropriate internal controls; and (6) train registered persons regarding the features, risk and suitability of these products.

**TRADING HALTS**

NASDAQ will halt trading in the Shares of a Fund in accordance with NASDAQ Rule 4120. BX will halt trading in the Shares of a Fund in accordance with BX Equity Rule 4120. PHLX will halt trading in the Shares of a Fund in accordance with PHLX Rule 3100. The grounds for a halt under these rules include

a halt by the primary market because the intraday indicative value of the Fund, the value of its underlying index, or a similar value are not being disseminated as required, or a halt for other regulatory reasons. In addition, NASDAQ, BX and PHLX will also stop trading the Shares of a Fund if the primary market delists the Fund.

### **DELIVERY OF A PROSPECTUS**

NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members and member organizations should be mindful of applicable prospectus delivery requirements under the federal securities laws with respect to transactions in the Funds.

Prospectuses may be obtained through the Funds' website. The prospectus for the Funds does not contain all of the information set forth in the Funds' registration statement (including the exhibits to the registration statement), parts of which have been omitted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"). For further information about the Funds, please refer to the registration statement.

In the event that the Funds rely upon an order by the SEC exempting the Shares from certain prospectus delivery requirements under Section 24(d) of the 1940 Act and in the future make available a written product description, NASDAQ Rules 5705 and 5740, BX Equity Rules 4420 and 4421, and PHLX Rule 803 require that members and member organizations, respectively, provide to all purchasers of Shares a written description of the terms and characteristics of such securities, in a form prepared by the Trust for the Funds, no later than the time a confirmation of the first transaction in the Shares is delivered to such purchaser. In addition, members and member organizations shall include such a written description with any sales material relating to the Shares that is provided to customers or the public. Any other written materials provided by members or member organizations to customers or the public making specific reference to the Shares as an investment vehicle must include a statement in substantially the following form: "A circular describing the terms and characteristics of the Shares of the Fund has been prepared by the Trust and is available from your broker. It is recommended that you obtain and review such circular before purchasing Shares of the Fund. In addition, upon request you may obtain from your broker a prospectus for Shares of the Fund."

Any NASDAQ, BX or PHLX member or member organization carrying an omnibus account for a non-member broker-dealer is required to inform such non-member that execution of an order to purchase Shares for such omnibus account will be deemed to constitute agreement by the non-member to make such written description available to its customers on the same terms as are directly applicable to NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members or member organizations under this rule.

Upon request of a customer, NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members or member organizations shall provide a copy of the prospectus.

### **EXEMPTIVE, INTERPRETIVE AND NO-ACTION RELIEF UNDER FEDERAL SECURITIES REGULATIONS**

The SEC has issued exemptive, interpretive or no-action relief from certain provisions of rules under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Act") regarding trading in the above mentioned exchange-traded Funds.

## REGULATION M EXEMPTIONS

Generally, Rules 101 and 102 of Regulation M prohibit any “distribution participant” and its “affiliated purchasers” from bidding for, purchasing, or attempting to induce any person to bid for or purchase any security which is the subject of a distribution until after the applicable restricted period, except as specifically permitted in Regulation M. The provisions of the Rules apply to underwriters, prospective underwriters, brokers, dealers, and other persons who have agreed to participate or are participating in a distribution of securities.

The SEC has granted an exemption from Rule 101 under Regulation M to permit persons participating in a distribution of shares of the above-mentioned Funds to engage in secondary market transactions in such shares during their participation in such a distribution. In addition, the SEC has granted relief under Regulation M to permit persons who may be deemed to be participating in the distribution of Shares of the above-mentioned Funds (i) to purchase securities for the purpose of purchasing Creation Unit Aggregations of Fund Shares and (ii) to tender securities for redemption in Creation Unit Aggregations. Further, the SEC has clarified that the tender of Fund Shares to the Funds for redemption does not constitute a bid for or purchase of any of the Funds’ securities during the restricted period of Rule 101. The SEC has also granted an exemption pursuant to paragraph (e) of Rule 102 under Regulation M to allow the redemption of Fund Shares in Creation Unit Aggregations during the continuous offering of Shares.

## CUSTOMER CONFIRMATIONS FOR CREATION OR REDEMPTION OF FUND SHARES (SEC RULE 10B-10)

Broker-dealers who handle purchases or redemptions of Fund Shares in Creation Unit size for customers will be permitted to provide such customers with a statement of the number of Creation Unit Aggregations created or redeemed without providing a statement of the identity, number and price of shares of the individual securities tendered to a Fund for purposes of purchasing Creation Unit Aggregations (“Deposit Securities”) or the identity, number and price of shares to be delivered by the Trust for the Fund to the redeeming holder (“Redemption Securities”). The composition of the securities required to be tendered to the Fund for creation purposes and of the securities to be delivered on redemption will be disseminated each business day and will be applicable to requests for creations or redemption, as the case may be, on that day. This exemptive relief under Rule 10b-10 with respect to creations and redemptions is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Confirmations to customers engaging in creations or redemptions must state that all information required by Rule 10b-10 will be provided upon request;
- 2) Any such request by a customer for information required by Rule 10b-10 will be filed in a timely manner, in accordance with Rule 10b-10(c);
- 3) Except for the identity, number and price of shares of the component securities of the Deposit Securities and Redemption Securities, as described above, confirmations to customers must disclose all other information required by Rule 10b-10(a).

## SEC RULE 14E-5

An exemption from Rule 14e-5 has been granted to permit any person acting as a dealer-manager of a tender offer for a component security of a Fund (1) to redeem Fund Shares in Creation Unit Aggregations from the issuer that may include a security subject to such tender offer and (2) to purchase Fund Shares during such tender offer. In addition, a no-action position has been taken under Rule 14e-5 if a broker-dealer acting as a dealer-manager of a tender offer for a security of a Fund purchases or arranges to purchase such securities in the secondary market for the purpose of tendering such securities to purchase one or more Creation Unit Aggregations of Shares, if made in conformance with the following:

- 1) such bids or purchases are effected in the ordinary course of business, in connection with a basket of 20 or more securities in which any security that is the subject of a distribution, or any reference security, does not comprise more than 5% of the value of the basket purchased; or
- 2) purchases are effected as adjustments to such basket in the ordinary course of business as a result of a change in the composition of the underlying index; and
- 3) such bids or purchases are not effected for the purpose of facilitating such tender offer.

## Section 11(d)(1); SEC Rules 11d1-1 and 11d1-2

Section 11(d)(1) of the Act generally prohibits a person who is both a broker and a dealer from effecting any transaction in which the broker-dealer extends credit to a customer on any security which was part of a new issue in the distribution of which he participated as a member of a selling syndicate or group within thirty days prior to such transaction. The SEC has clarified that Section 11(d)(1) does not apply to broker-dealers that are not Authorized Participants (and, therefore, do not create Creation Unit Aggregations) that engage in both proprietary and customer transactions in Shares of the Fund in the secondary market, and for broker-dealer Authorized Participants that engage in creations of Creation Unit Aggregations. This relief is subject to specific conditions, including the condition that such broker-dealer (whether or not an Authorized Participant) does not, directly or indirectly, receive from the fund complex any payment, compensation or other economic incentive to promote or sell the Shares of a Fund to persons outside the fund complex, other than non-cash compensation permitted under NASD Rule 2830(l)(5)(A), (B) or (C). (See [letter](#) from Catherine McGuire, Chief Counsel, SEC Division of Market Regulation, to Securities Industry Association, Derivative Products Committee, dated November 21, 2005.) The SEC also has taken a no-action position under Section 11(d)(1) of the Act that broker-dealers may treat Shares of a Fund, for purposes of Rule 11d1-2, as "securities issued by a registered open-end investment company as defined in the Investment Company Act" and thereby extend credit or maintain or arrange for the extension or maintenance of credit on Shares that have been owned by the persons to whom credit is provided for more than 30 days, in reliance on the exemption contained in the rule.

## SEC RULE 15C1-5 AND 15C1-6

The SEC has taken a no-action position with respect to Rule 15c1-5 and Rule 15c1-6 as to the required disclosure of control by a broker or dealer with respect to creations and redemptions of Fund Shares and secondary market transactions therein. (See [letter](#) from Catherine McGuire, Chief



Counsel, SEC Division of Market Regulation, to Securities Industry Association, Derivative Products Committee, dated November 21, 2005.)

**This Information Circular is not a statutory prospectus. NASDAQ members, BX members and PHLX members and member organizations should consult the Funds' prospectus and/or the Funds' website for relevant information.**

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Inquiries regarding this Information Circular should be directed to:

- Ben Haskell, Listing Qualifications, at 301.978.8092
- NASDAQ / BX / PSX Market Sales, at 800.846.0477