QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REVIEW

Quality Investment Fund USD Class

Performance returns (USD)

ANNUALIZED RETURNS (QUARTER-END)	Quarter-End	YTD	1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year	Since Inception
Quality Investment Fund USD Class (net)	-2.11	18.58	18.58	8.91	13.76	13.36	13.60
Quality Investment Fund USD Class (gross)	-1.98	19.20	19.20	9.50	14.39	14.00	14.25
MSCI World	-0.16	18.67	18.67	6.34	11.16	9.95	10.00
Value Add vs. MSCI World	-1.96	-0.09	-0.09	+2.58	+2.60	+3.41	+3.60
S&P 500 (Net)	2.31	24.50	24.50	8.43	13.98	12.49	13.28
Value Add vs. S&P 500 (Net)	-4.42	-5.92	-5.92	+0.48	-0.22	+0.87	+0.32

MAJOR PERFORMANCE DRIVERS

2024 was another vintage year for equity investors. Absolute returns were generally positive across global markets, and the Quality portfolio had a return slightly ahead of the MSCI World index but trailed the S&P 500.

Your portfolio generated its returns in the first three quarters of the year, remaining ahead of the U.S. market until the dying days of September. Absolute returns for the portfolio were negative in the final quarter, in contrast to the broader markets' gains. Although we didn't appreciate it immediately, the strategy's relative return began to move early in the third quarter with the betting odds on Trump's chances of winning the presidency. Much of the relative sector performance in Q4 could be interpreted as responses to the Trump policy platform (e.g., with respect to the potential inflationary impact of tariffs, deportations, some aspects of deregulation) alongside a preference for lower interest rates.

As bond yields rose, users of leverage (Real Estate and Utilities) and bond proxies (Consumer Staples and Health Care) were weak. Payers of rates (Financials that borrow short and lend long) and "friends of Donald" (Technology and Consumer Discretionary, e.g., Tesla/Musk, Nvidia, Broadcom) did well. The relatively defensive orientation of your portfolio was an uncomfortable place to be. Overweights in Consumer Staples and Health Care were a drag, and owning the less racy plays in Technology hurt too. Non-U.S. holdings generated lower returns as the initial implications of MAGA and the potential for tariff hardball was priced in and the dollar strengthened.

Disappointing as the quarter was, the silver lining is that we have seen this movie, or one quite like it, before. In the last quarter of 2016, when Trump was elected for the first time, we saw a similar pattern of beneficiaries in terms of sectors and so on, and we also saw our strategy's YTD gain against the broader markets evaporate over a short period. That time around, most of the relative market moves were reversed as markets saw that Trump's aspirations would be hard to implement in practice. By the end of Q1, the strategy was back on track. The Trump team appears to be somewhat more cohesive in 2025, but we suspect that the path ahead will have its twists and turns. We do not presume to make a specific short-term forecast, but believe that investing in well-managed, competitively advantaged businesses with an eye on valuation will generate attractive returns going forward.

Inception Date: 10-Nov-10

QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REVIEW

MAJOR PERFORMANCE DRIVERS CONT.

Health Care is an attractive sector for us in terms of quality and valuation and is our second largest exposure behind Information Technology. However, 2024 presented a challenging environment. Particularly notable was the Managed Care industry that provides health insurance and other services supporting the U.S. health care system. This industry was cast tragically into the spotlight this quarter with the murder of UnitedHealth Group executive Brian Thompson. While we empathize with those wrestling with the strain of health issues, all health systems must make difficult trade-offs as funding is finite. This terrible event unleashed a torrent of often misplaced vitriol against U.S. health insurers; individuals interact directly with insurers, but often people do not realize that health insurers act under the instruction of the ultimate payer – typically private corporations or the government. Looking through all the complexity, their profit margins are not excessive and the utilization management programs they implement on behalf of their clients are an essential lever to manage the growth in U.S. health care spend. Many of the other health care players have incentives to maximize the amount of spend, no matter what the benefits. We see this negative sentiment as a buying opportunity – one that is a repeated motif in the political cycle – and, as such, we have added to our positions in UnitedHealth as well as our other holdings, Elevance and Cigna.

Where do we go from here? We read the same newspapers as you do and, as usual, the future seems much more unpredictable than the past. Indeed, there is plenty to worry about from geopolitics, debt levels, fractious domestic politics, technological change, etc. We try not to spend too much time forecasting a precise shape of things to come. We prefer to lean against detailed shorter-term views that are priced in by the market with confidence. We suspect the consensus that emerged toward the end of last year around developments in U.S. politics is one of those cases. Whether we're right or wrong on that, we believe that your portfolio of well-managed, competitively advantaged businesses trading on valuations that make sense will likely generate compelling returns in the coming quarters and years. In addition, we note that the shares in quality businesses tend to hold up better than the broader market should times turn tougher.

Portfolio weights, as a percentage of equity, for the securities mentioned above were: Nvidia (0.0%), Broadcom (0.0%), Tesla (0.0%), United Health (3.8%), Elevance (2.6%), and Cigna (1.4%).

QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REVIEW

PRODUCT OVERVIEW

The GMO Quality Investment Fund seeks to generate total return by investing primarily in equities the Focused Equity team believes to be of high quality.

The team believes that companies with established track records of historical profitability and strong fundamentals – high quality companies – are able to outgrow the average company over time and are therefore worth a premium price. The Fund's disciplined approach uses both quantitative and fundamental techniques to assess the relative quality and valuation of global companies and aims to exploit a long-term investment horizon while withstanding short-term volatility.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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