METRO BANK

A guide to being a compliant supplier to Metro Bank

Transforming the way we work together

FSQS is a collaborative supplier qualification system for the financial sector, designed to make compliance simpler.

- As the regulatory environment becomes more complex, it's important that we have a robust system in place to collect and maintain data on our suppliers' controls.
- Metro Bank is committed to responsible business practices that make it easier for our suppliers to do business with us.
- To support these objectives, we are part of the Financial Services Supplier Qualification System (FSQS), operated by Hellios.
- FSQS works on the principle of a community: member Banks and Financial Institutions (FIs) agree on a common set of questions, which suppliers need to respond to only once, rather than having to complete different questionnaires for each Financial Institution individually.
- FSQS uses questionnaires to collect data on supplier controls, and artefacts such as policies and certificates.
- The combined expertise of Hellios and other FSQS members means questionnaires are up to date with regulation, consistent with best practice and proportionate to risk.

Benefits for suppliers

- A single online process – store questionnaire responses and documentation once, reducing the burden of administration and cost.
- A real time online profile which can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate your ongoing compliance with Metro Bank policies.
- Your information is available to all the Banks and FIs that are members of FSQS, reducing duplication and effort.
- Guidance and support throughout the process.
- Participation for micro and small sized suppliers is free.
- Compliance requirements which are proportionate to the products and services being provided.
- Qualified supplier status makes you visible across Metro Bank's procurement process, and can potentially create new business opportunities.
- Dynamic questions that are tailored to the products and services you provide, and that evolve with the regulatory and risk landscape.

How it works

All suppliers need to complete a Stage 1 questionnaire which collects basic information about the supplier's risk and controls. Depending on the nature of goods or services being supplied, suppliers may be asked to complete a Stage 2 questionnaire, that focuses on the controls operated by the supplier to reduce the risks identified at Stage 1.

Following Stage 2 qualification, the bank may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit. This will be conducted by Metro Bank or an approved partner and will not incur a fee.

Costs

The community principle that underpins FSQS also extends to costs. All members – including Metro Bank – contribute substantially to the cost of operating the system. Participation for small sized suppliers (SMEs) is free.

Click here for more information. The contribution by the banks and FIs - that make up the buying part of the community - to the cost of the system is proportionately far larger than that made by suppliers.

Timelines

Timelines for qualification

Participating suppliers to Metro Bank are given up to eight weeks to complete qualification for the first time, to allow sufficient time for familiarisation with the new questionnaires and process. However, we expect most suppliers will be capable of completing qualification in significantly less time.

Suppliers bidding for new business with Metro Bank may need to complete the qualification faster in accordance with procurement timescales. Hellios will advise the deadline dates for Stage 1 and, if required, Stage 2 completion in the FSQS email communications issued.

FAQs

What is the FSQS community?

FSQS operates on the basis of a community – buying members share resources and agree a common approach to gathering due diligence information which minimizes the burden on buyers and suppliers alike. Supplier members' information is available to all buyer members.

The group of banks and FIs that make up the buying member community stands at over 50 and is growing all the time... - you can find the latest list of buyer members by contacting Hellios.

Who are Hellios and what is their role?

Hellios Information Management Ltd is a UK-based company. The team has extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of a number of global and UK companies.

The FSQS buying community have appointed Hellios to collect and administer supplier assurance-related data on their behalf. Hellios will collect and validate the data provided by suppliers and ensure it's maintained on FSQS. Hellios is an approved supplier of Metro Bank and both they and the FSQS system have been subjected to our due diligence controls. Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification or approval - that decision rests with Metro Bank.

Why does Metro Bank use a Supplier Qualification System?

Suppliers have told us that past processes for collecting compliance and assurance information were often numerous, time-consuming and complex. The introduction of an online system has simplified the process and prevents suppliers receiving multiple requests from Metro Bank and other banks and FIs using FSQS. It is also important that we (your organisation and the bank) can demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are working together responsibly to minimize risk across our supply chain to protect our customers.

Do we have to register each of our legal entities separately?

Yes, your organisation is required to register any legal entity that invoices Metro Bank.

Can any supplier apply for qualification?

No, qualification is by invitation only.

Will other suppliers have access to the information we provide?

No, other suppliers will not have access to the information you provide.

Will control information be available to anyone else?

Yes, one of the benefits of the FSQS is that suppliers' assurance information will be available to other financial services organisations that have also adopted FSQS. This will reduce requests for duplicate information from the different customers you may provide services to. Hellios will not share any information you provide with any other party or use your information for any other purpose.

Will I be asked to provide pricing information on my company's products and services?

No, your organisation will not be asked to provide any commercial information of this nature.

How does Hellios protect the data we provide?

The FSQS application, infrastructure and data storage is hosted exclusively in the UK in data centres that are SSAE18 SOC2 and ISO27001 certified. Encryption to the latest industry standards is employed, along with cyber security measures such as weekly scans and penetration testing. Hellios ensures the limited amount of personal data collected is fully compliant with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Hellios is certified to ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus, the National Cyber Security Centre standard backed by the UK Government.

FAQs (Continued)

If I'm required to apply for Stage 2 Qualification, how do I pay the fee to Hellios?

Hellios will provide full details of the payment options available.

How long is Qualification valid for?

The renewal date is set at one year after Stage 1 Qualification has been granted. Or in the case of Stage 2 Qualification, one year after your Stage 2 questionnaire has been issued. Hellios will issue reminders to suppliers well in advance of their qualification expiry deadline.

As an existing supplier, what happens if I fail to complete FSQS within the assigned timelines?

You will be fully supported by Hellios throughout the qualification process. However, failure to complete FSQS will result in a supplier being classified as non-compliant in our internal systems. This will affect future business with Metro Bank since FSQS is now our standard qualification and compliance process for suppliers.

Can I 'Fail' FSQS?

FSQS is a mechanism for gathering accurate, up to date information from suppliers and supports the evaluation of supplier risks and controls. It is not possible therefore to 'Pass' or 'Fail' FSQS but inaccurate responses may contribute to a negative perception of a supplier's control standards.

I'm already a supplier - why do I need to do this?

As a regulated business, it's important that Metro Bank holds consistent, high quality data on our suppliers. We therefore need all our suppliers to complete the same process.

Why do I have to pay?

Our intent is that FSQS should be a community. Suppliers benefit through reducing their due diligence burden and making pre-qualified information available to a range of potential customers. Banks and FIs benefit from pooling resource in collecting the data. The cost of the system is shared – all buying members pay a substantial contribution.

Why do I have to do it every year?

As the financial landscape is constantly evolving with regulation and risk e.g PRA SS2/21 outsourcing guidelines, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies, Metro Bank needs to hold up-to-date information on our suppliers.

One of the benefits of FSQS is that data is regularly updated – for example expired certificates, policies are updated – so the activity is ongoing. A benefit for suppliers is that FSQS information is pre-populated at renewal, significantly reducing renewal workload.

What happens if I can't answer a question/can't provide a document requested?

Metro Bank uses the information obtained through FSQS to assess the risk presented by supply relationships. This is why suppliers should provide whatever documentation they are able to. Any residual risks will need to be managed by the Metro Bank supplier manager.

Who can I contact for further information?

Hellios Supplier Support team:

fsqs@hellios.com

01865 959120 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm (excluding Public Holidays)