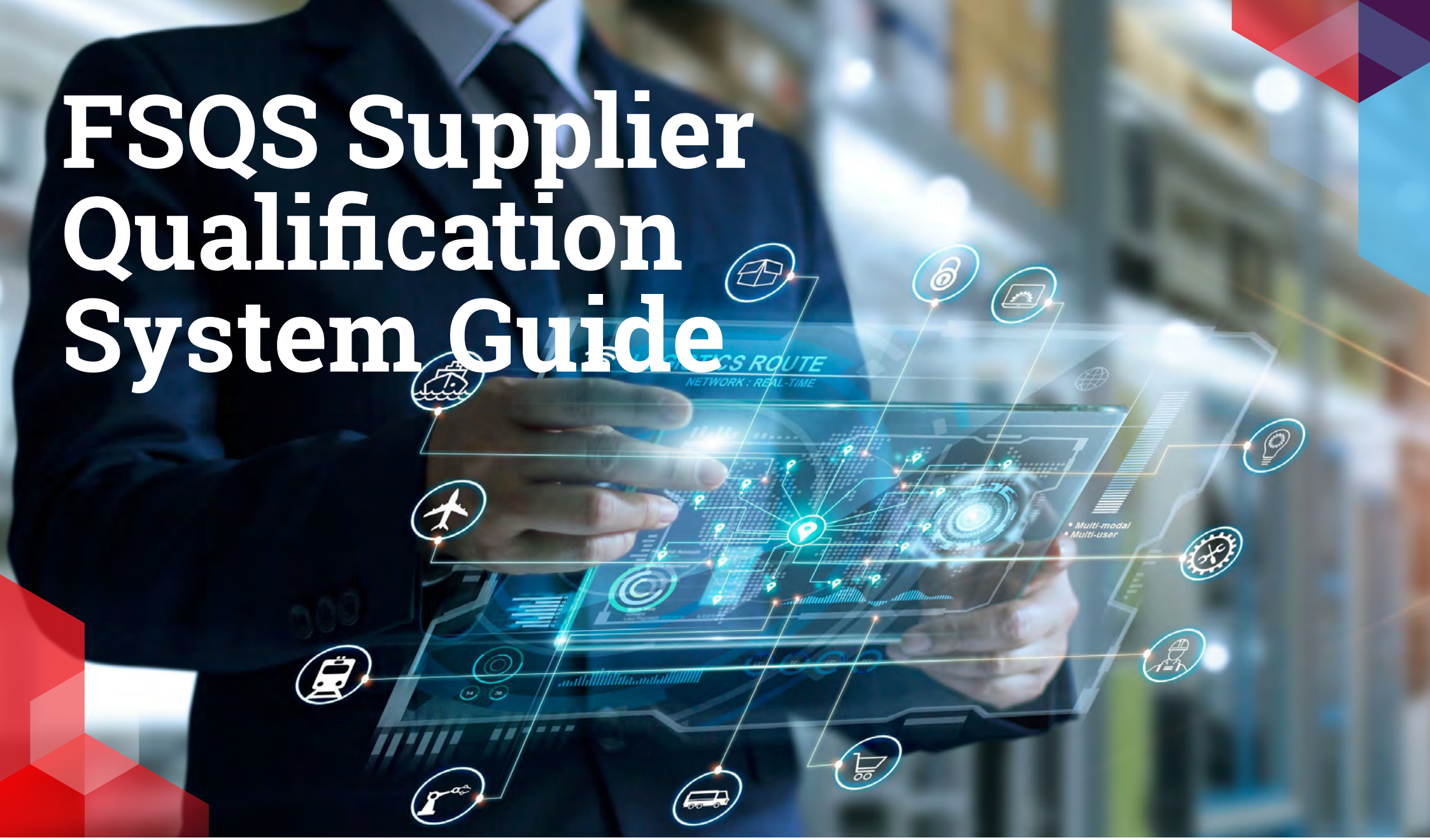
FSQS Supplier Qualification System Guide



First Central
Insurance & Technology Group

FSQS Supplier Qualification System Guide

How to gain qualification

There are two levels of qualification within FSQS. Some suppliers will only be required to complete Stage 1, however, some products and services are subject to additional compliance. An example would be where a supplier has access to First Central Group customer data.

Stage 1 Qualification

Suppliers will receive an email from Hellios Information Limited (Hellios) inviting you to complete an online questionnaire. We expect this questionnaire to take approximately an hour to complete. The information provided in Stage 1 Qualification determines whether your organisation only requires Stage 1 Qualification or whether you need to complete Stage 2 Qualification.

Stage 2 Qualification

Stage 2 Qualification requires the completion of a more detailed questionnaire as well as the provision of evidence to support your application. This stage covers your policies and procedures in areas such as:

- Anti-bribery
- Anti-money laundering
- Business continuity & disaster recovery
- Complaints handling
- Customer treatment
- Cyber & information security
- Data privacy
- Environmental
- Health & safety
- Insurances
- Labour standards
- Operational risks
- Responsible business governance
- Sanctions
- Supply chain
- Whistle blowing

Funding of FSQS is shared by First Central Group, all other Financial Services organisations that will use the system and larger suppliers.

For those organisations where Stage 2 of the process is required, an annual fee is payable directly to our external partner Hellios. Micro and small organisations are fully subsidised by the Financial Services community with no fee payable. Medium sized organisations are partially subsidised. For more information, please click here.

Following Stage 2 Qualification, First Central Group may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit.

Timelines

It typically takes between 4 to 8 weeks to attain qualification for the first time; annual renewals are typically quicker. For exact timescales you should refer and adhere to the deadline dates in the FSQS email communications you'll receive from Hellios.

If you're being asked to apply for qualification as part of a tender process, please contact suppliermanagement@first-central.com where a member of the team will confirm completion deadlines.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why have First Central Group introduced a supplier qualification system?
Our suppliers spend a significant amount of time responding to multiple supplier assurance requests from their customers. We don't believe this is a good use of your time and we'd rather free up that time so you can invest in value-add activities for your clients. The financial services industry is complex and subject to many regulations. By using FSQS we can demonstrate quickly to our customers, regulators and stakeholders that we are working with our suppliers in a responsible manner to minimise risks across our supply chain and to protect our customers.

As the industry becomes more complex, it's critical we have a robust system in place to support the collection and validation of supplier assurance data.

Who are Hellios and what is their role?

Hellios Information Limited is a UK-based company. The team has extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of a number of global companies. First Central Group has appointed Hellios to collect and administer supplier assurance data on behalf of the Group. Hellios will collect and check the data you've provided and ensure the data is maintained on FSQS. Hellios is an approved supplier to First Central Group and has been subject to our due diligence processes and controls.

Will Hellios be assessing or approving our company for qualification?

No. Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification or approval. That decision rests with First Central Group.

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

Not necessarily. If the entity that submits invoices to First Central is covered by the same policies, processes and procedures as the entity your organisation has registered on FSQS (i.e. so the FSQS questionnaire answers would be the same), if you can send email confirmation of this to suppliermanagement@first-central.com, we will be happy to accept that.

Can any supplier apply for qualification on FSQS?

No. Suppliers are invited to qualify.

Will our competitors or other suppliers be able to see the information we provide?

No. Other suppliers won't be able to see the information you provide.

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Will other buying members (the other financial services organisations) be able to see the information we provide?

Yes. This is one of the many benefits of FSQS to you. The information you provide will be available to the other financial services members of FSQS. This will reduce the requests you receive for supplier assurance data, including those who aren't already your clients.

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. The purpose of FSQS is not to capture commercial data, only data that relates to supplier assurance.

If our organisation is required to apply for Stage 2 Qualification and a fee is payable, how do I pay this fee to Hellios?

Hellios will provide full details of the payment options available, however, we recommend suppliers make an online payment to Hellios for the fastest access to the Stage 2 Qualification process.

Once we've qualified, how long is this valid for?

You'll be required to renew your data annually. The 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. You'll receive reminders from Hellios well in advance of your qualification expiry deadline.

How long does it take to complete qualification?

It typically takes less than one business day to enter the information into the system (if you're asked to complete both stages). However, the time it takes to collate the information can vary considerably.

We'd expect qualification to take between 4-8 weeks to complete.

What happens if I fail to complete FSQS within the assigned timelines?

Suppliers will have the full support of Hellios throughout the qualification process. However, failure to complete FSQS will result in a supplier being classified as non-compliant in our internal systems which may impact our decision to contract with you.

FSQS is our standard qualification and compliance process for suppliers.

What if I don't want to use FSQS, can I qualify using a manual process?

Suppliers are strongly encouraged to join FSQS as it is our preferred method for undertaking third party due diligence. Any manual alternative will be significantly more overhead for both suppliers and for

First Central to administer.

I'm in the process of completing your previous version of your supplier assurance questionnaire, what do I do?

Please contact suppliermanagement@first-central.com

We submitted our response to your previous version of your supplier assurance questionnaire quite recently. Will you be transferring our responses into this system?

No. The FSQS questionnaire is a different set of questions and the responses need to be submitted by the supplier. We appreciate this is a duplication of effort and exactly what we are trying to avoid. We hope this short-term pain leads to a longer-term gain for you.

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Where to go for additional support?

Please contact the Hellios Support Services team in the first instance.

Working hours	08:30-17:30 Monday to Friday
Telephone	+44 (0)1865 959120
Email	FSQS@hellios.com

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