



A guide to the Supplier Qualification System

Improving the way we do business with our suppliers

Financial Supplier Qualification System

1. Supporting responsible, proportionate and efficient supplier assurance

At Irwin Mitchell, we are committed to responsible, transparent and proportionate supply chain management.

To support this, Irwin Mitchell uses the Hellios Financial Supplier Qualification System, known as FSQS. FSQS provides a standard online process for collecting, managing and maintaining supplier assurance and compliance information. This helps reduce duplicate information requests and supports a more consistent approach to supplier due diligence.

You may be invited to complete FSQS as part of a tender, onboarding activity, contract renewal or supplier assurance review. The information you provide will support Irwin Mitchell's supplier due diligence and risk assessment process. Completion of FSQS does not guarantee an award of work, but it forms an important part of the way we assess supplier assurance and manage third-party risk.

Hellios will provide instructions and support throughout the process.

2. Why Irwin Mitchell is using FSQS

We understand that supplier due diligence can be time-consuming, particularly where similar compliance and assurance questions are asked by multiple customers.

FSQS provides a single online process for suppliers to submit assurance and compliance information. This helps reduce duplicate requests and allows information to be maintained and updated throughout the year.

Using FSQS will help Irwin Mitchell:

- collect supplier assurance information in a consistent way
- apply due diligence requirements proportionately
- maintain more up-to-date supplier information
- reduce repeated information requests where relevant information is already held in FSQS
- support responsible supply chain management and
- evidence that supplier risks are being considered as part of our procurement and third-party risk management processes.

3. Benefits for suppliers

By completing FSQS, suppliers can benefit from:

A single online process - you can submit assurance and compliance information through one online platform, reducing the need to respond to duplicate requests from Irwin Mitchell and other participating FSQS community members.

Proportionate requirements - the information requested is intended to reflect the goods or services being provided and the level of assurance needed for the supplier relationship.

An online supplier profile - your supplier profile can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate ongoing compliance with relevant requirements.

Recognition across the FSQS community – information maintained within FSQS may be used by other participating FSQS community members, subject to each organisation's own procurement and risk

requirements. This may help reduce duplicate supplier assurance and due diligence requests where the same information is relevant. While FSQS does not guarantee future opportunities, maintaining an up-to-date profile can help ensure your organisation is visible and ready to be considered by other participating buying organisations where your services are relevant to their requirements.

4. How FSQS works

FSQS is a two-stage process designed to match the level of assurance to the nature of the goods or services being supplied.

4.1 Stage 1: Profiling Questionnaire

All invited suppliers will receive an email from Hellios asking them to complete an online questionnaire.

The Stage 1 questionnaire collects high-level information about your organisation and the goods or services you provide. This information is used to determine whether Stage 1 is sufficient or whether a more detailed Stage 2 assessment is required. The Stage 1 questionnaire is expected to take around one hour, depending on the information available to your organisation.

4.2 Stage 2: Detailed Questionnaire

If further assurance is required, you may be asked to complete Stage 2.

Stage 2 is a more detailed online questionnaire and may require supporting evidence, such as policies, procedures, certificates or other relevant documentation.

To make the process more efficient, most questions use selectable answer options rather than requiring lengthy written responses.

Stage 2 may cover areas such as:

- financial crime, including anti-bribery, sanctions, anti-money laundering and tax compliance
- information security, cyber security, data protection, records management and data governance
- business continuity, operational resilience, incident management and supply chain controls
- health and safety, labour standards, diversity and inclusion, whistleblowing and responsible business practices
- environmental and sustainability practices
- insurance, financial standing and legal information
- customer treatment, products, services, technology, AI or other service-specific areas, where relevant.

4.3 Stage 3: Further Assurance

Following Stage 2 qualification, Irwin Mitchell may wish to conduct further assurance including additional assessment or onsite audit.

5. Additional assurance

FSQS supports Irwin Mitchell's supplier due diligence process but does not replace all our assurance activity. In some cases, we may request further information or carry out additional assurance activity after FSQS has been completed. This will depend on the nature of the goods or services being supplied and the risk profile of the relationship.

6. Fees

Stage 1 is free for suppliers. Where Stage 2 is required, an annual fee may be payable directly to Hellios, depending on the size and classification of your organisation within the FSQS process. Micro and small

organisations are currently fully subsidised by the FSQS community, while medium and large organisations may be asked to pay an annual contribution. Hellios will confirm whether a fee applies and provide payment instructions where relevant.

7. Timelines

Suppliers should allow sufficient time to complete FSQS. Stage 1 is expected to be straightforward, but Stage 2 may require input from different teams within your organisation, such as information security, finance, legal, compliance, HR, sustainability or operations. Where completion is required as part of a tender or onboarding process, Irwin Mitchell or Hellios will confirm any relevant deadlines.

8. Data Protection and Information Security

Hellios is responsible for administering the FSQS platform and maintaining supplier information submitted through FSQS. Information about Hellios' data protection, information security, platform hosting and supplier support arrangements is provided within the FSQS materials and support information. Suppliers should contact Hellios directly if they have specific questions about the FSQS platform, data hosting, access controls or information security controls.

9. What you need to do if invited

If your organisation is invited to complete FSQS, Hellios will send an email with instructions on how to access the online questionnaire. Please review the invitation carefully, complete the required sections, upload any requested evidence where applicable, and respond by the deadline provided by Hellios or your Irwin Mitchell contact.

If you are unsure why you have been invited, or how FSQS relates to a tender, onboarding activity, contract renewal or supplier assurance review, please contact your Irwin Mitchell contact.

FAQs

Why is Irwin Mitchell using FSQS?

Irwin Mitchell is using FSQS to help simplify supplier assurance, reduce duplicate information requests and support a consistent approach to supplier due diligence. FSQS provides a structured online process for collecting and maintaining supplier compliance and assurance information.

Who is Hellios?

Hellios Information Management Ltd is a UK-based company with experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of UK and global organisations.

What is Hellios' role?

Hellios administers the FSQS process. This includes issuing supplier invitations, collecting and checking supplier information, and maintaining the information on FSQS.

Hellios does not decide whether a supplier is suitable for Irwin Mitchell. That decision remains with Irwin Mitchell as part of our procurement, due diligence and supplier management processes.

Why have we been selected for FSQS?

Suppliers may be invited to complete FSQS as part of a procurement exercise, onboarding process, contract renewal, periodic supplier assurance review or where the nature of the services being provided requires additional due diligence. Not all suppliers will be required to complete FSQS.

Can any supplier apply for FSQS qualification?

Yes. All suppliers can apply for qualification on Hellios' website at <https://hellios.com/fsqs-uk-self-nomination>

Will other suppliers see the information we provide?

No. Other suppliers will not have access to the information you provide through FSQS.

Will Irwin Mitchell ask for pricing or commercial information through FSQS?

No. FSQS is used to collect supplier assurance and compliance information only. No proprietary, contractual or pricing information will be requested.

Do we need to register each legal entity separately?

If more than one legal entity within your group may contract with or invoice Irwin Mitchell, Hellios or Irwin Mitchell will confirm whether separate registrations are required.

How long is FSQS qualification valid for?

FSQS qualification is renewed annually. Hellios will issue reminders before renewal is due.

What happens if we do not complete FSQS?

Where FSQS completion is required as part of Irwin Mitchell's tender, onboarding, contract renewal or supplier assurance process, failure to complete the required information may delay our assessment of your organisation and exclude you from the process.

For existing suppliers, failure to complete FSQS where requested may limit Irwin Mitchell's ability to evidence appropriate supplier due diligence and may result in further engagement, escalation or alternative assurance activity. It may also exclude you from future sourcing activity.

What if we cannot answer a question or provide a requested document?

Suppliers should provide the information and evidence they have available. Where information is missing or cannot be provided, Irwin Mitchell may review any gaps as part of its supplier risk assessment and may contact you for further information.

Why have we been asked to complete Stage 2?

You may be asked to complete Stage 2 where additional assurance is required. This will depend on the nature of the goods or services being provided and the risk profile of the supplier relationship i.e. where a supplier handles client, colleague or other confidential information, it may be asked to provide further assurance about how it meets relevant legal, regulatory, data protection and information security requirements.

Why have we been asked to complete service-specific questions?

Some suppliers may be asked to provide additional information depending on the goods or services being supplied. This helps ensure that assurance activity is targeted and proportionate to the supplier relationship.

Who can I contact for further information?

For support with the FSQS platform or questionnaire, please contact Hellios Supplier Support:

Email: fsqs@hellios.com

Telephone: 01865 959120

Hours: 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays

For questions about your tender, onboarding activity or supplier relationship with Irwin Mitchell, please contact your Irwin Mitchell Procurement contact.