



A GUIDE TO THE

# FINANCIAL SUPPLIER QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

*Improving the way we do business  
with our suppliers*



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## **A GUIDE TO THE FINANCIAL SUPPLIER QUALIFICATION SYSTEM**

*Improving the way we do business with our suppliers*

As the regulatory environment becomes more complex, it is important that we can demonstrate that we are working responsibly with our suppliers to minimise risk and protect customers.

To achieve this, we use the Hellios Financial Supplier Qualification System (FSQS).

FSQS works on the principle of a community: member Banks and Financial Institutions 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 services organisations that have adopted FSQS. It is designed to standardise and manage our requests for compliance and assurance data, along with other major financial services organisations that have adopted FSQS.

Quite Simply, it's one questionnaire that helps us to simplify and keep track of every request for compliance and assurance information.

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## **What are the Benefits for you:**

- A single online process to submit assurance and compliance data – reducing duplicate requests from Union Bank UK PLC and other financial services customers who you provide goods and services to.
- Compliance requirements which are proportionate to the products and services being provided.
- An online supplier profile which can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate your ongoing compliance with our policies.
- Qualification means you will not have to provide assurance information each time you bid for business with us.
- Our Supplier Managers also use the system to find pre-qualified suppliers to be considered for new business
- Qualifying means you won't have to share assurance information every time you bid for business with us. (Repetition of point no 4)

## **How it Works:**

There are two levels of qualification. Stage 1 Qualification collects basic information about your organisation and is used to determine whether Stage 2 Qualification is necessary, based on the nature of the goods or services being supplied. For example, if a supplier deals directly with our customer data, then they will be asked to demonstrate how they comply with relevant regulatory requirements.

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## Stage 1 Qualification

Suppliers will receive an email invitation to complete an online questionnaire. The invitation will come from Helliios, who collect and manage the data on behalf of Union Bank UK PLC. The questionnaire should take around one hour to complete. This information will help us to decide whether your organisation only requires Stage 1 Qualification or is required to complete Stage 2 qualification.

## Stage 2 Qualification

Stage 2 requires the completion of a more detailed online questionnaire and, in some areas, may require the provision of supporting evidence. To make the process as efficient as possible, most of the questions have selectable answer options rather than requiring lengthy written responses, and no proprietary, contractual, or pricing information will be asked. This stage typically covers your policies and practice in areas such as:

- Anti-Bribery
- Sanction
- Remuneration
- Customer Treatment
- Products and Sales
- Anti-Money Laundering
- Health & Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Business Continuity
- Information Security
- Data Management
- Records Management
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Environmental
- IT Asset Management
- GDPR
- Physical Security
- Operational Resiliency
- Cyber Security
- Conduct Risk

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## **Costs**

Application for stage 2 incurs an annual fee which is payable directly to Hellios. Please contact Hellios for associated costs.

Following Stage 2 qualification, Union Bank UK PLC may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit. This will be conducted by Union Bank UK PLC and will incur no further fees.

## **Timelines for qualification**

Qualifying for the first time usually takes around four to eight weeks – as long as you check and keep up to Hellios' deadline dates. For exact timelines, existing suppliers should refer to the deadline dates in the Hellios email communications.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **1. Why has Union Bank UK PLC introduced a Financial Supplier Qualification System?**

An online system simplifies the process for suppliers to submit information and prevents suppliers receiving multiple requests from us for qualification data. It is also important that we can demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are working together responsibly to minimise risk across our supply chain to protect our customers. As the regulatory environment we operate in becomes more complex, it is vital that we have a robust system in place to support the collection and maintenance of Supplier Assurance data and respond to regulatory change.

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## **2. Who is Hellios and what is their role?**

Hellios Information Management Ltd is a UK based company. They will collect and check the data provided by suppliers and ensure the data is maintained on the Financial Supplier Qualification System. Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification. That decision rests with Union Bank UK PLC.

## **3. 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.

## **4. Do we have to register each of our legal entities separately?**

Yes, your organisation is required to register any legal entity that submits an invoice to Union Bank UK PLC.

## **5. Can any supplier apply for qualification?**

No, qualification is by invitation only.

## **6. Will other suppliers have access to the information we provide?**

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

## **7. Will assurance information be available across Union Bank UK PLC?**

Yes, one of the benefits of the new system is that suppliers' assurance information will be available to other areas in Union Bank UK PLC. This will reduce requests for duplicate information from us.

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**8. 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.

**9. If I am 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 suppliers make an online payment to Hellios for immediate access to the Stage 2 assessment.

**10. How long is qualification valid for?**

The renewal date is set at one year after Stage 1 Qualification has been granted. For suppliers that are required to also complete Stage 2 Qualification, the renewal date is set one year after your Stage 2 questionnaire has been issued. Hellios will issue reminders to suppliers several weeks in advance of their qualification expiry deadline.

**11. How long does it take to complete qualification?**

Typically, it takes less than one business day to enter the information in the system (if you're asked to complete both stages). However, the time required to collate the information varies dependent on the size of an organisation. Larger organisations often have to source the data from a number of internal departments and therefore we're giving existing suppliers approximately eight weeks to complete qualification.

**12. As an existing supplier, what happens if I fail to apply for qualification within the assigned timelines?**

Suppliers will be fully supported by Hellios throughout the qualification process. However, failure to complete qualification will result in a supplier being classified as non-compliant in our internal systems.

**13. Who can I contact for further information?**

Please contact Hellios Supplier email: [fsqs@hellios.com](mailto:fsqs@hellios.com) or telephone **01865 959120** 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

\* An SME is defined as an enterprise which has less than 250 employees and a turnover of less than £40m (including any consolidated figures should the enterprise belong to a group of companies).