

Our interview and selection process is designed to help you and us decide whether joining the Financial Services Authority (FSA) is the right move for your career. We assess your suitability for our positions through a combination of structured interviews using competency-based questions, online testing, case studies and role plays. It is a rigorous but fair approach that helps us to identify the best talent.

## What do we look for throughout our recruitment process?

- People with the right knowledge, skills and experience for the job.
- People who can clearly demonstrate how their achievements apply to the job.
- People who are keen to learn and develop.
- People with the right qualifications for the job – in their education and any relevant professional field.
- People who can demonstrate our core competencies – see below.
- People who can demonstrate why they want to join the FSA and take on that particular role.
- People who want to make a difference by creating better outcomes for consumers and financial markets.

## What should I include in my application?

To make it easier for us to assess your application you can take a few simple steps when applying online:

- Complete all screens of the online application form in full, including your personal information (except the diversity fields, which are optional) and be sure to include your full name and contact details.
- Your CV should accurately reflect your academic qualifications, employment history and achievements and accomplishments at work or when studying. Make it easy to read, with no gaps.
- Complete our application questions, ensuring your answers relate to the skills and competencies detailed in the position advert. We also want to see concise, important details on your specific accomplishments and the impact your efforts had on your previous employment.

## Who will interview me?

This depends on the position. However, you can expect to be interviewed by a combination of managers and specialists from the business area you are applying for, and sometimes HR.

## How should I prepare for the interview?

Think about how your experience matches the role and how it would help you stand out. Understand what motivates you and what you need to succeed. And find out about us – how we

regulate, our statutory objectives, and our current successes and challenges. For latest press releases, our annual report and recent speeches please see our [website](#).

## Do you have any interviewing tips?

- Know what interests you about the FSA, why you have applied and why you are suitable for the role.
- Familiarise yourself with the FSA and how we operate, including our statutory objectives – visit our [website](#).
- Familiarise yourself with the job description you are interested in and align your skills and experience accordingly.
- Ensure you can substantiate anything your CV says as you may be asked about it.
- Refer to our guide on competency-based interviews at the back of this pack.

## How will I be assessed?

Where appropriate, your technical abilities will be assessed either online or in person, using a format appropriate for your area of expertise. A web-based test can be completed from home, but we may invite you to attend our office for a case study and/or structured technical and competency-based interview with a member of the business. Often we refer to the case study and interview as an ‘Assessment Centre’ and you will be asked to meet with us at our headquarters in Canary Wharf for half a day to allow us time to assess you fully. We believe this type of selection process gives us a fully rounded view of your capabilities.

We have eight core competencies and the interviewers will look to understand more about the competencies that are most relevant to the new role. There’ll be other questions as well, but the competencies will be the core of the interview.

1. **Corporate citizenship/organisational ethics** – Considers the overall needs of the FSA, as well as own interests and acts within common courtesy and demonstrates respect to all colleagues. Ensuring compliance with the intent of policies, procedures and agreements. Behaves professionally ensuring the protection of the FSA brand.
2. **Decision making and action oriented** – Makes timely and appropriate judgments based on accurate analysis and experience, driving towards clearly identified outcomes while assessing risks. Uses sound judgment even in conditions of uncertainty.
3. **Collaboration and teamwork** – Works actively with others to achieve targets and objectives. Accomplishes own tasks in support of team goals and proactively offers to help colleagues. Supports group decisions. Seeks and provides feedback in a constructive way at all levels.
4. **Communicating clearly** – Makes an immediate and long lasting positive impression on others. Has presence and comes across with credibility. Shows confidence in self and others. Has a positive impact.
5. **Internal and external stakeholder management** – Uses interpersonal styles to create and sustain effective relationships with business partners (e.g. suppliers, firms, industry groups), and colleagues. Is open to approaches that meet mutual goals.

6. **Personal accountability** – Takes proactive responsibility for own work and resources including taking action, making decisions and proactively seeking opportunities by considering both current and future possibilities. Builds others' trust in own professionalism, integrity, expertise and ability to get results. Takes responsibility for own learning by proactively seeking opportunities for learning.
7. **Business acumen** – Understands FSA business principles and language, including the fundamentals of external markets and industry. Uses this understanding to achieve results and to increase the performance of FSA. Considers the impact and consequences of actions on the wider business context.
8. **Flexibility/adaptability** – Responds positively to change and is open to new ideas, assignments and approaches. Maintains effectiveness when confronted with new work situations or the uncertainty and ambiguity that come with change.

## What happens after the interview?

We will let you know our decision as soon as possible after your interview, either through your recruitment agency, where appropriate, or a member of our Resourcing team.

If you're successful in the interview and selection process we'll make you a verbal offer, which will be subject to satisfactory checks and references. At the point we make you an offer, we will need to carry out security and credit checks. Once these are clear, we will issue the formal written offer and start to seek references looking back at the last five years of your career.

Once all of our paperwork is complete, we will then be able to confirm your start date in line with the notice period that was agreed when we made our verbal offer. Your contact within HR Transactions or the Resourcing team is there to answer any questions you may have.

## What is it like to work at the FSA?

We aim to attract a wide range of people who aspire to work for us. You may be working in the industry, have a public policy background or be an experienced professional from another discipline.

Your work at the FSA is structured to give you an opportunity to make a difference. The issues that we typically handle are varied, challenging and fulfilling. You will go through an Induction to welcome you, and after we have got you comfortable, you will receive training which will equip you to be confident in your role. Regular feedback on your progress and development is important to us and is designed to help your development with us.

We are writing the regulatory agenda and we want you to be part of it and be ready to work hard to achieve that with us.

Using the links below, you can get a feel for our working environment and hear directly from our people about what it is like to work here.

- [Our culture and environment](#) – gain an insight into our culture.
- [Career profiles](#) – an explanation of different levels and job skills of our employees.
- [International activities](#) – view our reach in assisting overseas organisations.
- [Our offices](#) – address, map of location, directions to our offices.

## What about reward and benefits?

With your work comes reward. Our success depends on the quality and performance of our people. We want to ensure that we attract and retain the right people by offering a competitive ‘total reward’ package. Some of the rewards that you can expect can be found on our [website](#).

We wish you good luck with your application and thank you for your interest in the FSA.

We are always looking to improve our recruitment process and feedback is always appreciated. Please feel free to share your thoughts with the Resourcing team.

## Supervisor induction programme (for supervisors only)

In a predominantly knowledge-based organisation, there is a lot for any new starter to learn. Because of this we ask all successful applicants for supervisor positions to attend an eight-week induction programme, designed to help develop the knowledge and skills that will enable you to make an immediate, professional and valued contribution to our regulatory objectives.

### About the induction programme

The induction programme provides new employees with a comprehensive grounding, based on best practice from across the FSA. It will be a challenging and very enjoyable introduction to the organisation and its culture. The programme also provides an opportunity to network with other new supervisors and to learn and share experiences, both past and present.

The induction programme comprises a number of classroom-based training modules, supported by a variety of e-learning and reading materials. Each week will focus on a specific theme. The first week covers how we operate and what our principles are. Weeks two and three cover the markets in which we operate, the products and the people involved, the interaction between them and the risks associated with those. Week four looks at financial literacy and how it can be used effectively in a supervisory role. Weeks five and six concentrate on specific topics, such as Capital and Liquidity. The concluding weeks cover the practical models and processes used to ensure we can deliver our statutory objectives and that form the transition to what the on-the-job work is like.

Assessments are included at the end of most of the training modules. These will ensure you can demonstrate that you have understood the technical detail and practical application of the learning, and are ready to move on to the next stage of the induction process. We also operate a training and competence scheme, and the induction programme provides an excellent opportunity for you to start gathering evidence of your increasing knowledge and competence, and helps identify your ongoing development needs.

We are confident you will find the induction programme to be a rich and rewarding introduction to the FSA and our varied and fulfilling work in regulating firms.

## Competency-based interview: Tips and advice

### What is a competency-based interview?

- Competency-based interviews are based on the premise that past behaviour predicts future behaviour. Candidates are asked questions about how they have actually behaved in past, job-related situations.
- In developing competency-based interviews, the role/job is firstly thoroughly analysed. This identifies the competencies (skills and behaviours) required for the role. Questions are developed from this, each targeting a specific competency, such as collaboration and teamwork.

- During the interview all candidates are asked the same opening questions to ensure consistency across interviews. The interviewer will then ask probing questions to follow-up candidates' responses. Notes are taken during the interview in order to assess the candidate's performance once the interview has finished. Candidates' responses are marked against a pre-defined rating scale to ensure consistency across interviews.

### **Before the interview: preparation is key**

- List all the skills and behaviours required for the role. Ask for details of the competencies to be assessed. If the competencies are not provided, review the job description. This will highlight the job's duties and responsibilities. Use this to identify the skills and behaviours that are required for the role and are therefore likely to be assessed.
- For each competency think of specific examples of situations in which you have demonstrated these skills and behaviours. Have these examples in your mind during the interview, so that you are able to refer to these when relevant.
- However, avoid preparing 'model' answers for a competency as this may cause you to provide responses that do not completely answer the specific question being asked.

### **During the interview: top tips when responding**

- Do not feel that you have to immediately jump in to responding to a question. For example, you can say to the interviewer 'Please can I take a moment to gather my thoughts'. Take a moment to think of a specific example that would best demonstrate your capabilities.
- Ensure that you listen carefully and fully understand the question and what is required before responding.
- The interviewer is interested in you and your suitability for the role. When providing an example it is therefore important to demonstrate what you personally did in that situation. For example, if describing an example of working as part of a team, the interviewer is less interested in what the team as a whole did, and more interested in the actions you personally took as part of that team.
- Use genuine examples and be prepared to have your examples explored in more depth.
- Be specific in your responses. Provide examples of specific situations to demonstrate the behaviours required. In addition, when responding to the probing questions, ensure you are specific in your response. This will help to ensure the authenticity of your responses.
- Avoid responding in general terms. The assessor is not as interested in what you tend to do or what you might do, but more interested in what you actually did.
- Provide clear, concise and informative responses. Provide enough detail so the interviewer understands the example and so that you are able to demonstrate your ability in that area, but not too much that your key messages are lost.

### **A useful model to use for interviews**

- Using the **STAR** model may help you when preparing for your interview. It is also useful to keep in mind when responding to questions, as it provides a logical structure to your answer.

- The **STAR** model describes the following:

**Situation:** the context of your example.

**Task:** what you had to do.

**Action:** what you did, how you did it and why.

**Result:** the outcome.

- When responding to a question using the STAR model, the action step is particularly important. This is where you will need to demonstrate your skills and capabilities. It is therefore important to focus the majority of your response on this part.
- However, it is also important that you make the outcome clear, so that the assessors can see the impact and effectiveness of your actions.