

## Client Preference Ready Badge - Assessment Checklist

### This Assessment Checklist is used for each assessment option:

**Option 1:** Structured self-assessment - Designed for smaller firms or early adopters.

**Option 2:** Verified assessment - Designed for larger firms or those seeking additional assurance

**Option 3:** Network-assured assessment - Designed for networks and large advice groups

PLEASE NOTE: Option 1 Structured self-assessment uses an online submission process:

**CLICK HERE TO START SUBMISSION**

### Entry to the badge assessment

#### Q1: The person submitting confirms:

- I have the responsibility and authority to submit
- I have read the In Accord Assessment Criteria and Methodology, FAQs and T&Cs for badge use and agree to notify In Accord if any changes could affect badge award
- I agree that being awarded the badge can be shared with In Accord Partners
- I agree that anonymised and aggregated data from this submission may be used by In ACCORD for industry research, reporting and insights. No firm or client identifiable data will be published.
- I confirm that any evidence submitted to In Accord for the badge has been redacted of all client identification details and that In Accord has no liability for non-redacted evidence that has been submitted
- I understand that the Client Preference Ready badge is not regulatory approval, does not constitute compliance advice, and does not replace the firm's regulatory obligations.
- I confirm that everything is true and correct to the best of my knowledge

SELECT yes/no to confirm to all above

Stop submission where no is selected.

### Section 1: About you and your firm

#### Q2: Full name of the person completing the form

- free text

#### Q3: Email address

- free text

#### Q4: Telephone number

- free text

**Q5: Full name of firm**

- free text

**Q6: Size of firm**

Select:

Bands:

- 1-5 advisers
- 6-25
- 25-50
- 50-100
- 100-250
- 250-500
- 500+

**Q7: Type of firm**

Select:

- IFA - directly authorised
- IFA - network (with free text - enter network name)
- appointed representative (with free text - enter principal firm name)
- restricted advice
- other (with free text, please specify)

**Q8: Approximate AUA**

Select:

Bands:

- £0-50M
- £50-100M
- £100-250M
- £250M+

**Q9: Target client market**

Select:

- mass market
- mass affluent
- HNW
- specialist niche
- other (with free text, please specify)

**Q10: Advice model**

Select:

- fund picker
- outsourced fund/portfolio selection
- MPS
- Internal CIP
- hybrid
- other (with free text, please specify)

**Q11: How do you capture client investment preferences and objectives (conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based)?**

Select:

- In ACCORD's Accord Initiative free-to-access templates
- co-branded materials
- network templates
- your own internally developed documentation
- other (with free text, please specify)

**Q12: Where in your advice process are client preferences *primarily* captured?**

Select all that apply:

- Fact find / onboarding
- Separate preference document
- Annual review process
- Adviser meeting notes only
- Other (free text)

**Q13: How confident are advisers in your firm when discussing investment preferences with clients?**

Select:

- Very confident
- Generally confident
- Mixed confidence across advisers
- Low confidence
- Not sure

**Q14: How do clients typically respond when asked about their investment preferences?**

Select:

- Very positively
- Generally positively
- Neutral / unsure
- Mixed responses
- We haven't observed a pattern yet

**Section 2: Assessment**

To be awarded the Client Preference Ready badge, firms must meet all four criteria

**CRITERIA 1) Embedded preference questions**

The firm must demonstrate informed choice via client preference and objective questions are structurally embedded within the core advice stages:

- Pre-meeting, fact-finding, discovery
- onboarding documentation
- suitability report templates
- annual review meeting documentation

All investment clients should be asked for their preferences and objectives.

### **Q15: CRITERIA 1) STATEMENT**

I confirm that client investment preference and objective questions are structurally embedded within the core advice stages and that all investment clients are asked for their preferences and objectives.

SELECT yes/no

Stop form submission where no is selected.

### **Q16: CRITERIA 1) EVIDENCE**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of a pre-meeting document that details what options clients have for their investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based)
- Excerpt from a suitability report where report confirms to client that they were made aware of the preference pathways (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based)

### **CRITERIA 2) Adviser and paraplanner familiarity**

The firm must evidence that advisers (and paraplanners, where applicable):

- understand why preference questions are asked
- know how to ask them neutrally and consistently
- know how responses should be recorded
- understand how preferences feed into suitability

This can be demonstrated through CPD, internal guidance, training materials or documented processes - See In ACCORD's Accord Initiative free to access templates and Accord Academy free-to-access training courses.

### **Q17: CRITERIA 2) STATEMENT**

I confirm that all relevant staff understand why preference questions are asked, know how to ask them neutrally and consistently, know how responses should be recorded and understand how preferences feed into suitability.

SELECT yes/no

Stop form submission where no is selected.

### **Q18: CRITERIA 2) EVIDENCE**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of in-house training material
- Copy of CPD records

### **CRITERIA 3) Firm-wide consistency**

The badge is awarded at firm level. The firm must show:

- consistent documentation and wording
- consistent expectations across advisers
- a shared understanding of how preferences are handled

Isolated examples or individual “champions” are not sufficient - meeting the expectations of Consumer Duty applies to all advisers.

#### **Q19: CRITERIA 3) STATEMENT**

I confirm that all investment preferences and objectives are considered consistently for all clients by all advisers across the firm.

SELECT yes/no

Stop form submission where no is selected.

#### **Q20: CRITERIA 3) EVIDENCE**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of the firms Terms of Business or similar applying to all advisers
- Copy of website statement referring to the firm wide approach to considering client investment preferences and objectives

### **CRITERIA 4) Suitability integration**

The firm must demonstrate that investment preference information is meaningfully considered within suitability processes. This may include:

- reference within suitability reports
- acknowledgement where preferences influence recommendations
- clear explanation where preferences are noted

There is no requirement for a particular investment outcome - only a clear audit trail showing investment preferences were considered.

#### **Q21: CRITERIA 4) STATEMENT**

I confirm that all investment preferences and objectives are meaningfully considered within the suitability process.

SELECT yes/no

Stop form submission where no is selected.

## **Q22: CRITERIA 4) EVIDENCE**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of a suitability letter detailing how the client's preferences influenced the recommendation
- Template form used by the firm to capture clients' investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based)

### **Optional indicators (not required for badge award)**

Firms may also choose to evidence and submit one or more of the following, although these are not required for badge award:

- That you are using clear, client-friendly explanatory language
- additional internal guidance or peer review processes

These indicators are not barriers to entry. The indicators are for firms to demonstrate maturity in their processes, firm culture and good practice towards Consumer Duty. Firms are not expected to evidence all indicators.

## **Q23: Optional Indicators (not required for badge award) STATEMENT A**

**A)** I confirm that investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based) are explained to clients using clear, client-friendly explanatory language

SELECT yes/no

Yes → evidence upload appears

No → user proceeds normally

## **Q24: Optional Indicators EVIDENCE A**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of statement to confirm details of a Consumer Duty style assessment taking place

## **Q25: Optional Indicators (not required for badge award) STATEMENT B**

**B)** I confirm that additional internal guidance or peer review processes are undertaken in relation to investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based).

SELECT yes/no

Yes → evidence upload appears

No → user proceeds normally

## **Q26: Optional Indicators EVIDENCE B**

Attach - add file size requirements - one piece of evidence only

Please note: we are not looking for full client files or large document packs. One representative example is sufficient.

Examples for evidence may include

- Copy of a statement to confirm details of an adviser peer review session or role play discussing investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based).
- Copy of a file review which included assessment of investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based).
- Copy of internal guidance issued to clarify how advisers deal with client conversations related to investment preferences and objectives (including conventional, ESG, sustainable, values-based).

### **Find out more, ask a question:**

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