

Principles for Businesses

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1

Application and purpose

Application

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The *Principles* (see ■ PRIN 2) apply in whole or in part to every *firm*. The application of the *Principles* is modified for *firms* conducting *MiFID business* and *Annex II benchmark administrators*. ■ PRIN 3 (Rules about application) specifies to whom, to what and where the *Principles* apply.
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The *Principles* also apply to certain *payment service providers* and *electronic money issuers* that are not *firms*. ■ PRIN 3.1.1AR sets out the application of the *Principles* to these *persons*. The references to a *firm* in ■ PRIN 2 includes such *persons*.

Purpose

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The *Principles* are a general statement of the fundamental obligations of *firms* and the other *persons* to whom they apply under the *regulatory system*. They derive their authority from the *FCA's* rule-making powers as set out in the *Act*, including as applied by the *Payment Services Regulations* and the *Electronic Money Regulations*, and reflect the *statutory objectives*.
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Link to fit and proper standard

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In substance, the *Principles* express the main dimensions of the "fit and proper" standard set for *firms* in *threshold condition 5* (Suitability), although they do not derive their authority from that standard or exhaust its implications. Being ready, willing and organised to abide by the *Principles* is therefore a critical factor in applications for *Part 4A permission*, and breaching the *Principles* may call into question whether a *firm* with *Part 4A permission* is still fit and proper.
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For *persons* authorised or registered under the *Payment Services Regulations* or the *Electronic Money Regulations*, the relevant "fit and proper standards" are the standards set in those Regulations.

- 1.1.5** **G** **Taking group activities into account**
Principles 3 (Management and control), 4 (Financial prudence) and (in so far as it relates to disclosing to the FCA) 11 (Relations with regulators) take into account the activities of members of a firm's group. Compliance by another person to whom the Principles apply with Principles 3, 4 and 11 can also be affected by the activities of other persons who are members of their group. This does not mean that, for example, inadequacy of a group member's risk management systems or resources will automatically lead to a firm contravening Principle 3 or 4. Rather, the potential impact of a group member's activities (and, for example, risk management systems operating on a group basis) will be relevant in determining the adequacy of the firm's risk management systems or resources respectively.
- 1.1.6** **G** **Standards in markets outside the United Kingdom**
 As set out in ■ PRIN 3.3 (Where?), Principles 1 (Integrity), 2 (Skill, care and diligence) and 3 (Management and control) apply to world-wide activities in a prudential context. Principle 5 (Market conduct) applies to world-wide activities which might have a negative effect on confidence in the UK financial system. In considering whether to take regulatory action under these Principles in relation to activities carried on outside the United Kingdom, the FCA will take into account the standards expected in the market in which the firm or other person to whom the Principles apply is operating. Principle 11 (Relations with regulators) applies to world-wide activities; in considering whether to take regulatory action under Principle 11 in relation to cooperation with an overseas regulator, the FCA will have regard to the extent of, and limits to, the duties owed by the firm or other person to that regulator. (Principle 4 (Financial prudence) also applies to world-wide activities.)
- 1.1.6A** **G** ■ PRIN 4 (Principles : MiFID Business) provides guidance on the application of the Principles to MiFID business.
- 1.1.7** **G** **Consequences of breaching the Principles**
 Breaching a Principle makes a firm or other person to whom the Principles apply liable to disciplinary sanctions. In determining whether a Principle has been breached it is necessary to look to the standard of conduct required by the Principle in question. Under each of the Principles the onus will be on the FCA to show that a firm or other person has been at fault in some way. What constitutes "fault" varies between different Principles. Under Principle 1 (Integrity), for example, the FCA would need to demonstrate a lack of integrity in the conduct of a firm's or other person's business. Under Principle 2 (Skill, care and diligence) a firm or other person would be in breach if it was shown to have failed to act with due skill, care and diligence in the conduct of its business. Similarly, under Principle 3 (Management and control) a firm or other person would not be in breach simply because it failed to control or prevent unforeseeable risks; but a breach would occur if the firm or other person had failed to take reasonable care to organise and control its affairs responsibly or effectively.
- 1.1.8** **G** The Principles are also relevant to the FCA's powers of information-gathering, to vary a firm's Part 4A permission or authorisation or registration under the Payment Services Regulations or Electronic Money Regulations,

and of investigation and intervention, and provide a basis on which the *FCA* may apply to a court for an *injunction* or restitution order or require a *firm* or other *person* to make restitution. However, the *Principles* do not give rise to actions for damages by a *private person* (see ■ PRIN 3.4.4 R).

1.1.9 G Some of the other *rules* and *guidance* in the *Handbook* deal with the bearing of the *Principles* upon particular circumstances. However, since the *Principles* are also designed as a general statement of regulatory requirements applicable in new or unforeseen situations, and in situations in which there is no need for *guidance*, the *FCA*'s other *rules* and *guidance* or *onshored regulations* should not be viewed as exhausting the implications of the *Principles* themselves.

Responsibilities of providers and distributors under the Principles
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1.1.10 G *RPPD* contains *guidance* on the responsibilities of providers and distributors for the fair treatment of *customers* under the *Principles*.



1.2 Clients and the Principles

Characteristics of the client

1.2.1 G Principles 6 (Customers' interests), 7 (Communications with clients), 8 (Conflicts of interest), 9 (Customers: relationships of trust), 10 (Clients' assets) and 12 (Consumer Duty) impose requirements on *firms* expressly in relation to their *clients* or *customers*. These requirements depend, in part, on the characteristics of the *client* or *customer* concerned. This is because what is "due regard" (in *Principles* 6 and 7), "fairly" (in *Principles* 6 and 8), "clear, fair and not misleading" (in *Principle* 7), "reasonable care" (in *Principle* 9), "adequate" (in *Principle* 10) or "good outcomes" (in *Principle* 12) will, of course, depend on those characteristics.

Approach to client categorisation

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1.2.5 G [deleted]

Acting through an agent

1.2.6 G If the *person* with or for whom the *firm* is carrying on an activity is acting through an agent, the ability of the *firm* to treat the agent as its *client* under ■ COBS 2.4.3 R (Agent as client) will not be available. For example, if a *general insurer* is effecting a *general insurance contract* through a general insurance broker who is acting as agent for a disclosed *policyholder*, the *policyholder* will be a *client* of the *firm* and the *firm* must comply with the *Principles* accordingly.

Non-designated investment business - clients that a firm may treat as an eligible counterparty for the purposes of PRIN

- 1.1 A *firm* may categorise the following types of *client* as an *eligible counterparty* for the purposes of *PRIN*:
- (1) a properly constituted government (including a quasi-governmental body or a government agency) of any country or territory;
 - (2) a central bank or other national monetary authority of any country or territory;
 - (3) a supranational whose members are either countries or central banks or national monetary authorities;
 - (4) a State investment body, or a body charged with, or intervening in, the management of the public debt at national level;
 - (5) another *firm*, or an *overseas financial services institution*;
 - (6) any *associate* of a *firm* (except an *OPS firm*), or of an *overseas financial services institution*, if the *firm* or institution consents;
 - (7) a *client* when he is classified as an *eligible counterparty* in accordance with 1.2; or
 - (8) a *recognised investment exchange*, *EU regulated market* or *clearing house*.
- 1.2 A *firm* may classify a *client* (other than another *firm*, *regulated collective investment scheme*, or an *overseas financial services institution*) as an *eligible counterparty* for the purposes of *PRIN* under 1.1(7) if:
- (1) the *client* at the time he is classified is one of the following:
 - (a) a *body corporate* (including a *limited liability partnership*) which has (or any of whose *holding companies* or *subsidiaries* has) called up share capital of at least £10 million (or its equivalent in any other currency at the relevant time);
 - (b) a *body corporate* that meets (or any of whose holding companies or subsidiaries meets) two of the following tests:
 - (i) a balance sheet total of 12.5 million euros (or its equivalent in any other currency at the relevant time);
 - (ii) a net turnover of 25 million euros (or its equivalent in any other currency at the relevant time);
 - (iii) an average number of employees during the year of 250;
 - (c) [deleted]
 - (d) a *partnership* or unincorporated association which has net assets of at least £10 million (or its equivalent in any other currency at the relevant time) (and calculated, in the case of a limited *partnership*, without deducting loans owing to any of the *partners*);
 - (e) a trustee of a trust (other than an *occupational pension scheme*, *SSAS*, *personal pension scheme* or *stakeholder pension scheme*) with assets of at least £10 million (or its equivalent in any other currency), calculated by aggregating the value of the cash and *designated investments* forming part of the trust's assets, but before deducting its liabilities;
 - (f) a trustee of an *occupational pension scheme* or *SSAS*, or a trustee or operator of a *personal pension scheme* or *stakeholder pension scheme* where the *scheme* has (or has had at any time during the previous two years):

- (i) at least 50 members; and
 - (ii) assets under management of not less than £10 million (or its equivalent in any other currency at the relevant time); and
 - (2) the *firm* has, before commencing business with the *client* on an *eligible counterparty* basis:
 - (a) advised the *client* in writing that he is being categorised as an *eligible counterparty* for the purposes of *PRIN*;
 - (b) given a written warning to the *client* that he will lose protections under the *regulatory system*;
 - (c) for a *client* falling under (1)(a) or (b):
 - (i) taken reasonable steps to ensure that the written notices required by (a) and (b) have been delivered to a *person* authorised to take such a decision for the *client*; and
 - (ii) not been notified by the *client* that the *client* objects to being classified as an *eligible counterparty*;
 - (d) for a *client* falling under (1)(c), (d), (e) or (f):
 - (i) taken reasonable steps to ensure that the written notices required by (a) and (b) have been delivered to a *person* authorised to take such a decision for the *client*; and
 - (ii) obtained the *client's* written consent or is otherwise able to demonstrate that consent has been given.