








# Guide to content





## 'Essentials' suite

financial ASSESS is now FSA L4 standards compliant.

financial ASSESS is an online system designed to help the financial planning industry improve its commercial performance, enhance levels of customer care and importantly, meet the Training and Competence requirements of the Financial Services Authority (FSA).






























financial ASSESS complements existing training and L&D programmes and is suitable for all types of organisation involved with the provision of financial advice.

































Course	Module / Subject	Topic	Duration (mins)	Format	Level
CII Ethics	Ethics	Ethics			1
Regulatory Essentials - Financial	Financial Planning Environment	Dignity at work	60		1
		Important statutes			
		Regulated financial planning products			
	Financial Services Authority (FSA)	Introduction to FSA regulation	100		1
		High level standards			
		Financial: Conduct of Business rules			
		Complaints, FOS and FSCS			
	Data Protection	Data Protection Laws	80		1
		Important terms			
		Eight data protection principles			
		Fair and lawful processing			
		Individuals rights			
		Practical guidance			
	Information Security	Why information security is important	90		1
		How to mitigate information security risks			
		Your responsibilities for information security in your job			
	Financial Crime (FS)	What is money laundering?	80		1
		Laws, offences and penalties			
		Joint Money Laundering Steering Group			
		Know Your Customer			
Reporting					
Fraud					
Treating Customers Fairly (Financial Services)	Introduction	60		1	
	TCF principles and outcomes				







		TCF and you			
		TCF within corporate culture			
<b>Regulatory Essentials – Financial</b>	<b>Approved Persons</b>	Authorisation of approved persons	115		1
		Code of conduct of approved persons (principles 1–4)			
		Code of conduct of approved persons (significant influence functions)			
	<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	Defining conflicts of interest	90		1
		Recognising and managing conflicts of interest			
		FSA rules and conflicts of interest			
	<b>Professional Obligations</b>	Sources of professional obligations	105		1
		Professional obligations and the FSA			
		CII code, business ethics and ISO standards			
	<b>Treating Customers Fairly (Supervisory)</b>	FSA 'treating customers fairly' initiative	90		2
		Your firm's TCF strategy			
		TCF operational reviews			
















































# Soft Skills content













































All courses are available in either non-audio versions or audio versions and in some cases both.

Course	Module / Subject	Topic	Duration (mins)	Format	Audio
Business Essentials	Appraisals	an overview of appraisals and performance management	30		
		an overview of appraisals and performance management (post test)	5	A	
		preparing for the appraisal discussion	30		
		preparing for the appraisal discussion (post test)	5	A	
		the appraisal discussion	30		
		the appraisal discussion (post test)	2	A	
		on-going appraisal	30		
		On-going appraisal (Post test)	5	A	
		appraisal and performance management (competency assessment)	15	A	
	Body language	a background to body language	30		
		a background to body language (post test)	5	A	
		silent speech - understanding body language	30		
		silent speech - understanding body language (post test)	5	A	
		using body language in the workplace	30		
		silent selling - using body language in sales	30		
		silent selling - using body language in sales (post test)	5	A	
Business Essentials	Listening skills	an introduction to listening	30		
		an introduction to listening (post test)	5	A	
		removing the barriers to	30		






















		listening				
		removing the barriers to listening (post test)	5	A		
		becoming a better listener	30			
		becoming a better listener (post test)	5	A		
		listening skills (competency assessment)	15			
	<b>Meetings</b>	introduction to meetings and meeting types	30			
		introduction to meetings and meeting types (post test)	5	A		
		meeting planning and preparation	30			
		meeting planning and preparation (post test)	5	A		
		conducting effective meetings	30			
		conducting effective meetings (post test)	5	A		
		meeting behaviour and dealing with problem characters	30			
		meeting behaviour and dealing with problem characters (post test)	5	A		
		virtual meetings	30			
		virtual meetings (post test)	5	A		
		meetings (competency assessment)	15	A		
		<b>Negotiations</b>	introduction to negotiation	30		
			introduction to negotiation (post test)	5	A	
			negotiating strategies 1 - strategy basics	30		
	negotiating strategies 1 - strategy basics (post test)		5	A		
	negotiating strategies 2 - psychological strategies		30			
	negotiating strategies 2 - psychological strategies (post test)		5	A		
	negotiating (competency assessment)		15	A		



























<b>Business Essentials</b>	<b>Persuasion</b>	introduction to persuading and influencing	30		
		introduction to persuading and influencing (post test)	5	A	
		the persuasion process	30		
		the persuasion process (post test)	5	A	


























		persuasion (competency assessment)	15	A	
	<b>Presentations</b>	presentations 1 - preparing for the presentation	30		
		presentations 1 - preparing for the presentation (post test)	5	A	
		presentations 2 - the presentation	30		
		presentations 2 - the presentation (post test)	5	A	
		presentations (competency assessment)	15	A	
	<b>Questioning skills</b>	why are questions important?	30		
		why are questions important? (post test)	5	A	
		using open questions	30		
		using open questions (post test)	5	A	
		using probing questions	30		
		using probing questions (post test)	5	A	
		using closed questions	30		
		using closed questions (post test)	5	A	
unproductive questions		30			
unproductive questions (post test)		5	A		
questioning skills (competency assessment)		15	A		
	<b>Recruitment</b>	the recruitment process - an overview	30		
		the recruitment process - an overview (post test)	5	A	
		writing job description and person specifications	30		
		writing job description and person specifications (post test)	5	A	
		attracting candidates and producing job advertisements	30		
		attracting candidates and producing job advertisements (post test)	5	A	
		shortlisting candidates and interview techniques	30		
		shortlisting candidates and interview techniques (post test)	5	A	
		candidate references and selection	30		
		candidate references and selection (post test)	5	A	
	<b>Time management</b>	purpose and goals of time management	20		
		purpose and goals of time management (post test)	5	A	
		organising your time	35		
		organising your time (post test)	5	A	
		planning your time	30		






















		planning your time (post test)	5	A	
		dealing with time-wasting situations	30		
		dealing with time-wasting situations (post test)	5	A	
		time saving tips and technology	30		
		time saving tips and technology (post test)	5	A	
		time saving tips and technology (post test)	15	A	
<b>Health and Safety Essentials</b>	<b>Health and Safety</b>	An introduction to health and safety at work	35		
		VDU and workstation health and safety	35		
		Fire safety and evacuation	35		
		Safe manual handling	35		
		Avoiding slips, trips and falls	35		
		Managing and handling stress at work	35		
		Managing health and safety	75		
		Repetitive strain injury (rsi)	40		
		Risk assessment for managers	75		
		Staying safe with noise	45		
		Staying safe with electricity	45		
		Staying safe with hazardous substances	45		
		Staying safe with vehicles	45		
	<b>Risk Assessments</b>	VDU and workstation safety	15		
		Manual handling	15		
		Slips, trips and falls	15		
		Handling stress at work	15		
Repetitive strain injury (RSI)		15			






















# FA Technical Learning Modules (FSA L4 standards compliant)














Unit Title	Learning Outcome	Module	Format	Level
1. Financial services, regulation and ethics	1.1 The UK financial services industry in its European and global context	1.1.1 The role, structure and context of the UK financial services market and international markets.		4
		1.1.2 The function and operation of financial services within the economy.		4
		1.1.3 The role and impact of government and the impact of the EU on UK regulation.		4
	1.2 The retail consumer is served by the financial services industry.	1.2.1 The obligations that the financial services industry has towards consumers.		4
		1.2.2 Consumers' main financial needs and how these may be prioritised and met.		4
	1.3 The legal concepts and considerations relevant to financial advice.	1.3.1 The concepts of legal persons, power of attorney, law of contract and agency, and ownership of property.		4
		1.3.2 The relevant laws governing insolvency and bankruptcy.		4
		1.3.3 The relevant laws governing wills, intestacy and trusts.		4
	1.4 The regulation of financial services.	1.4.1 Examine the role of the FSA, HM Treasury and the Bank of England in regulating the market.		4
		1.4.2 Examine the role of other regulatory bodies and sources of additional oversight.		4
		1.4.3 Examine the statutory framework of regulation, including the role of EU regulation and key directives.		4
	1.5 Understand the FSA's responsibilities and approach to regulation.	1.5.1 Explain the FSA's statutory objectives and how it is structured to achieve these objectives.		4
		1.5.2 Explain the main principles and rules in the FSA handbook.		4
		1.5.3 Explain the approach to risk based supervision, discipline and enforcement, and sanctions to deal with criminal activities.		4
	1.6 Apply the principles and rules as set out in the regulatory framework	1.6.1 Apply the FSA's regulatory principles and rules.		4
		1.6.2 Apply current anti-money laundering, proceeds of crime, and data protection obligations.		4
		1.6.3 Apply the rules of relevant dispute resolution and compensation schemes.		4
	1.7 Apply the regulatory framework in practice for the consumer.	1.7.1 Apply client relationships, regulated advice standards, and the adviser responsibilities in terms of these.		4
		1.7.2 Monitor and review client plans and circumstances.		4
	1.8 Understand the range of skills requirements when advising clients.	1.8.1 Examine the range of skills required when advising clients.		4
1.9 Understand the FSA's use of principles and outcomes based regulation	1.9.1 Examine the Principles for Businesses and the discretionary obligations these place on firms.		4	

	<b>to promote ethical and fair outcomes.</b>			
		1.9.2 Examine the impact of corporate culture and leadership.		4
		1.9.3 Examine the responsibilities of approved persons and the need for integrity, competence and fair outcomes for clients.		4
	<b>1.10 Apply the Code of Ethics and professional standards to business behaviours of individuals.</b>	1.10.1 Apply the Code of Ethics and the professional principles and values on which the code is based.		4
		1.10.2 Identify ethical dilemmas and apply the steps involved in managing ethical dilemmas.		4
	<b>1.11 Critically evaluate the outcomes that distinguish between ethical and compliance driven behaviours.</b>	1.11.1 Evaluate the positive indicators of ethical behaviour.		4
		1.11.2 Evaluate the negative indicators of limiting behaviour to compliance within the rules.		4
		1.11.3 Critically evaluate the outcomes that distinguish ethical and compliant behaviours.		4
<b>2. Investment principles and risk</b>	<b>2.1 Analyse the characteristics, inherent risks, behaviour and correlation of asset classes.</b>	2.1.1 Analyse the characteristics and inherent risks of the main asset classes.		4
		2.1.2 Analyse the behaviour and correlation of asset classes and their relevance to asset allocation.		4
	<b>2.2 Understand the macro-economic environment and its impact on asset classes.</b>	2.2.1 Explain the key economic trends and their impact on asset classes.		4
		2.2.2 Explain the key economic indicators, their trends and interpretation.		4
		2.2.3 Explain the impact of monetary and fiscal policy.		4
	<b>2.3 Understand the merits and limitations of the main investment theories.</b>	2.3.1 Explain the main investment theories, their benefits and limitations.		4
		2.3.2 Explain portfolio theory, diversification and hedging.		4
		2.3.3 Explain behavioural finance and its impact on investment markets and individuals.		4
	<b>2.4 Apply the principles of the time value of money.</b>	2.4.1 Apply the principles of the time value of money.		4
		2.4.2 Calculate compound interest, discounts, real returns and nominal returns.		4
	<b>2.5 Analyse and explain the nature and impact of the main types of risk on investment performance.</b>	2.5.1 Explain the nature and impact of the main types of risk on investment performance.		4
		2.5.2 Analyse the nature and impact of the main types of risk on investment performance.		4
	<b>2.6 Analyse the characteristics, inherent risks, behaviours and relevant tax considerations of investment products.</b>	2.6.1 Explain the advantages and disadvantages of direct investment in securities and assets compared to indirect investment through collectives and other products.		4
		2.6.2 Analyse the characteristics, inherent risks, behaviours and relevant tax considerations of the main types of indirect investment products.		4
	<b>2.7 Apply the investment advice process.</b>	2.7.1 Explain the Know Your Client requirements applied to the investment advice process.		4
		2.7.2 Apply asset allocations to different client risk profiles and requirements.		4
	<b>2.8 Understand the principles of investment planning.</b>	2.8.1 Explain the main approaches to asset allocation.		4
		2.8.2 Explain the portfolio construction process.		4
		2.8.3 Explain the principles of wraps and other platforms.		4




	<b>2.9 Analyse the performance of investments.</b>	2.9.1 Analyse portfolio performance using different benchmarks and other methods.		4	
		2.9.2 Apply an appropriate investment portfolio review process.		4	
<b>3. Personal Taxation</b>	<b>3.1 Understand the UK tax system as relevant to the needs and circumstances of individuals and trusts.</b>	3.1.1 Understand the UK tax system as relevant to the needs and circumstances of individuals and trusts.		4	
		3.1.2 Explain the main features of National Insurance Contributions (NICs).		4	
		3.1.3 Explain the main features of Capital Gains Tax (CGT).		4	
		3.1.4 Explain the main features of Inheritance Tax (IHT).		4	
		3.1.5 Explain the implications of residence and domicile on tax liability.		4	
		3.1.6 Explain the main features of UK tax compliance.		4	
		3.1.7 Explain Stamp Duty Reserve Tax and Stamp Duty Land Tax.		4	
		3.1.8 Describe the rules and impact of Value Added Tax (VAT) and Corporation Tax.		4	
		<b>3.2 Analyse the taxation of investments as relevant to the needs and circumstances of individuals and trusts.</b>	3.2.1 Analyse the taxation of direct investments.		4
			3.2.2 Analyse the taxation of indirect investments.		4
		<b>3.3 Analyse the role and relevance of tax in the financial affairs of individuals and trusts.</b>	3.3.1 Analyse the impact of taxes on individuals, trusts and their investments in different situations.		4
			3.3.2 Analyse the ways in which key elements of tax planning provide tax efficiency to individuals and trusts.		4
		<b>3.4 Apply the knowledge of personal taxation to the provision of investment advice.</b>	3.4.1 Calculate common elements of Income Tax, NICs, CGT, and IHT, including the impact of lifetime transfers and transfers at death.		4
			3.4.2 Recommend elementary tax plans in the context of investments and pensions advice.		4
<b>4. Pensions and retirement planning</b>	<b>4.1 Understand the political, economic and social environment factors which provide the context for pensions planning.</b>	4.1.1 Examine the role of Government, policy direction, challenges and reforms.		4	
		4.1.2 Examine corporate responsibilities, their challenges and impact on pension planning.		4	
		4.1.3 Examine demographic trends, longevity and the ageing population.		4	
		4.1.4 Examine incentives, disincentives and attitudes to saving.		4	
		4.1.5 Explain the main pension provision scheme types and methods of pension provision.		4	
		<b>4.2 Understand how the HMRC tax regime applies to pensions planning.</b>	4.2.1 Explain how the HMRC tax regime applies to pension planning.		4
			4.2.2 Explain how the annual allowance, lifetime allowance, special annual allowance, associated charges and transitional reliefs apply.		4
			4.2.3 Outline the tax treatment of other types of schemes.		4
		<b>4.3 Understand the relevant aspects of pensions law and regulation to pensions</b>	4.3.1 Explain the relevant aspects of pensions law and regulations.		4

	planning.			
		4.3.2 Describe the role and duties of trustees and administrators of pension schemes.		4
	<b>4.4 Understand the structure, characteristics and application of Defined Benefit (DB) schemes to an individual's pension planning.</b>	4.4.1 Describe the main types, attributes and benefits of DB pension provision.		4
		4.4.2 Describe the rules and operation of DB schemes.		4
		4.4.3 Describe funding methods and explore issues surrounding funding.		4
		4.4.4 Explain the role of trustees and other parties, including scheme reporting.		4
		4.4.5 Explain the factors to consider and the benefits on leaving, early and normal retirement.		4
		4.4.6 Explain the benefits available on ill health and death.		4
		4.4.7 Explain eligibility and top-up options.		4
		4.4.8 Describe the main transfer issues and considerations in broad terms.		4
		4.4.9 Describe the structure, main attributes and benefits of public sector schemes.		4
	<b>4.5 Analyse the range of Defined Contribution (DC) scheme options as they apply to an individual's pension planning.</b>	4.5.1 Analyse the types of DC schemes, their main attributes and benefits.		4
		4.5.2 Explain the legal bases of DC schemes and their impact on an individual's pension planning.		4
		4.5.3 Outline the benefits on leaving, and death before crystallisation.		4
		4.5.4 Explain to an individual the contracting out decision and rebates.		4
		4.5.5 Outline transfer issues and considerations.		4
	<b>4.6 Analyse the options and factors to consider for drawing pension benefits.</b>	4.6.1 Analyse the options to consider in drawing State Retirement Benefits.		4
		4.6.2 Analyse the options available from DB schemes for drawing pension benefits.		4
		4.6.3 Analyse the options available from DC schemes for drawing pension benefits.		4
		4.6.4 Analyse the suitability of phased retirement.		4
		4.6.5 Explain the pension's triviality rules.		4
	<b>4.7 Understand the structure, relevance and application of the State schemes to an individual's pension planning.</b>	4.7.1 Examine the structure, relevance and application of basic and additional State Retirement Benefits and the Pension Credit framework as part of an individual's pension planning.		4
		4.7.2 Explain the key considerations in relation to contracting in/out.		4
	<b>4.8 Evaluate the aims and objectives of retirement planning including the relevant investment issues.</b>	4.8.1 Evaluate the aims and objectives of retirement planning in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An individual's aims and objectives</li> <li>• Investments available to meet these objectives</li> <li>• Alternative sources of retirement income</li> <li>• Regular reviews and the factors affecting them</li> <li>• Asset allocation factors</li> <li>• The main characteristics of self-investment</li> </ul>		4
<b>5. Financial protection</b>	<b>5. 1. Understand the consumer and retail market factors and trends relevant to financial protection.</b>	5.1.1. Explain the role of insurance in mitigating personal financial risk.		4
		5. 1.2. Describe consumer attitudes and behaviours to protection needs planning.		4

		5.1.3. Describe trends relevant to financial protection.		4
	<b>5.2. Understand the areas of need for protection planning and the main sources of financial protection.</b>	5.2.1. Describe the need for protection planning for individuals and businesses.		4
		5.2.2. Explain the relationship between insurance and assets and liabilities..		4
		5.2.3. Describe the sources of financial protection.		4
	<b>5.3. Understand the role and limitations of State Benefits and State/local authority funded solutions for financial protection.</b>	5.3.1. Examine the role and limitations of State Benefits and State/local authority funded solutions for financial protection.		4
	<b>5.4. Understand the range, structure and application of life assurance and pension based policies to meet financial protection needs.</b>	5.4.1. Describe the types of life assurance and pension based policies, their benefits, limitations, tax treatment and how they meet financial protection needs.		4
		5.4.2. Describe the underwriting and claims issues and processes associated with life assurance and pension based protection policies.		4
	<b>5.5. Understand the taxation treatment of life assurance and pension based protection policies.</b>	5.5.1. Describe the taxation treatment of life assurance and pension based protection policies.		4
	<b>5.6. Understand the range, structure and application of income protection insurance and options to meet financial protection needs.</b>	5.6.1. Describe the types of income protection policies, their benefits, limitations, tax treatment and how they meet financial protection needs.		4
		5.6.2. Explain the underwriting and claims issues and processes associated with income protection insurance.		4
	<b>5. 7. Understand the range, structure and application of critical illness insurance to meet financial protection needs.</b>	5.7.1. Describe the types of critical illness policies, their benefits, limitations, tax treatment and how they meet financial protection needs.		4
		5. 7.2. Explain the underwriting and claims issues and processes associated with critical illness insurance.		4
	<b>5. 8. Understand the range, structure and application of long term care insurance to meet financial protection needs.</b>	5. 8.1. Describe the regulation which applies to long term care insurance.		4
		5.8.2. Describe the main types of long term care insurance policies and their features.		4
		5.8.3. Describe the long term care planning process.		4
	<b>5.9. Understand the main features of other insurance based protection policies.</b>	5.9.1. Describe the main features of other insurance based protection policies.		4
	<b>510. Understand the needs and priorities for financial protection and the relevant factors in selecting appropriate solutions..</b>	5.10.1. Identify the priorities, risks and choices for individuals or business clients.		4
		5.10.2. Assess and quantify an individual's or business's future capital and income needs in real terms.		4
		5.10.3. Determine the suitability of product types and options.		4
		5.10.4. Explain planning considerations.		4
		5.10.5. Explain the importance of regular reviews.		4

<b>6. Financial planning practice</b>	<b>6.1 Obtain appropriate client information and understand clients' needs, wants, values and risk profile essential to the financial planning process</b>	6.1.1 Apply appropriate techniques for asking about the client's aims and objectives, their needs and wants, values and priorities.		<b>4</b>
		6.1.2 Explain risk, and how the different types of risk apply to clients.		<b>4</b>
		6.1.3 Establish the client's risk profile and explain what this means in terms the client will understand.		<b>4</b>
	<b>6.2 Synthesise the range of client information, subjective factors and indicators to provide the basis for financial planning assumptions and decisions</b>	6.2.1 Recognise any potential errors and inconsistencies in client information, subjective factors or indicators.		<b>4</b>
		6.2.2 Identify where additional information is required and ask appropriate questions.		<b>4</b>
	<b>6.3 Analyse a client's situation and the advantages and disadvantages of appropriate options</b>	6.3.1 Analyse a client's situation using key financial planning data and approaches.		<b>4</b>
		6.3.2 Identify gaps in a client's current financial provision and identify how the client's financial provision could be improved.		<b>4</b>
		6.3.3 Explain the options available and their respective advantages and disadvantages.		<b>4</b>
	<b>6.4 Formulate suitable financial plans for action and explain and justify recommendations</b>	6.4.1 Formulate a suitable financial plan and make recommendations.		<b>4</b>
		6.4.2 Explain and justify your recommendations.		<b>4</b>
		6.4.3 Explain any risks or limitations in the plan.		<b>4</b>
	<b>6.5 Implement, review and maintain financial plans to achieve the clients' objectives and adapt to changes in circumstances.</b>	6.5.1 Explain how the plan is to be implemented and serviced.		<b>4</b>
		6.5.2 Conduct reviews at appropriate times using appropriate benchmarks and adapting to changes in circumstances.		<b>4</b>

**Key:**

Format	Symbol
Standard e-learning	
Interactive e-learning	
Audio format	
Level 1 – foundation	<b>1</b>
Level 2 – intermediate	<b>2</b>
Level 4 – standard compliant	<b>4</b>