

AQSE Consultation: New Growth Market Rulebooks for Access and Apex Segments

Earlier this year Aquis Stock Exchange (AQSE) issued a consultation paper seeking opinion on proposed enhancements to the markets it operates.

AQSE is now publishing the Access and Apex Rulebooks for final consultation. The rulebooks put into effect the new Access and Apex market segments, designed specifically to support the growth cycle of developing companies. The two rulebooks reflect a tailored and proportionate approach for each segment, recognising the different stages of growth for entrepreneurial public companies.

The Access Rulebook is for companies that are smaller or at an earlier stage in their public life. Companies that are admitted to this segment will publish an admission document that is designed to deliver the key information necessary for qualified investors to make an informed assessment of the investment opportunity.

The Apex Rulebook focuses on larger, more established companies with a strong growth strategy. Companies that are admitted to this segment will publish a Growth Prospectus, allowing retail investors to participate in their IPO.

We have also revised the Aquis Stock Exchange Trading Rules to implement the restriction on short selling proposed in the consultation paper.

Transitional Arrangements

We appreciate that some companies may currently be near the launch of an AQSE IPO, and preparations are likely to have been based on the current AQSE Growth Market - Rules for Issuers (March 2020) (the existing rules).

To provide for a transition period, it is proposed that companies may apply to AQSE for a derogation to allow admission to either Apex or Access by submitting an admission document prepared in accordance with the existing rules. The derogation will be available until 31 March 2021.

Special Purpose Acquisition Companies

In a departure from the consultation paper published earlier in the year, AQSE has responded to market demand and introduced to the Access Rulebook new criteria that apply to special purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) in place of the existing rules that applied to investment vehicles. SPACs will be eligible for admission to Access with a minimum market capitalisation of £750,000.

Prior to admission, AQSE will ask to meet with the executive management of the SPAC to understand their objectives in seeking admission to Access and to discuss the company's strategy and business plan, and the skills and experience of its board.

Next Steps

We very much look forward to receiving your comments.

We ask that responses are directed to AQSEBusinessDevelopment@aquis.eu by no later than 9 November 2020.