AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers

July 2018 to 1 November 2019
AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers

Introduction 2
Part One 3
  Nominated adviser eligibility criteria and approval process 3
    Criteria for being a nominated adviser 3
      1 General 3
      2 Criteria 3
      3 Overriding principle of the preservation of the reputation and/or integrity of AIM 3
      4 Qualified Executives 4
      5 Relevant Transactions 5
      6 Fees 5
  Process for becoming a nominated adviser 6
    7 Application forms and documentation 6
    8 Interview 6
    9 Gazetting 6
   10 Appeals 6
Continueing eligibility for nominated advisers and notification requirements 7
  11 Continuing eligibility 7
  12 Changes at a nominated adviser 7
  13 Departing or new Qualified Executives 8
Part Two 9
  Continuing Obligations of a Nominated Adviser 9
    General Obligations 9
      14 Appropriateness of an AIM company 9
      15 Compliance with the rules 9
      16 Due skill and care 9
    Nominated adviser responsibilities 9
      17 Advising and guiding an AIM company 9
      18 Nominated adviser responsibilities 9
    Information obligations 10
      19 Liaison with the Exchange 10
      20 Becoming or ceasing to be nominated adviser to an AIM company 10
  Independence and conflicts 10
    21 Independence on a continuing basis 10
    22 Conflicts of interest 11
    Procedures, staff and records 11
      23 Proper procedures 11
      24 Adequacy of Staff 11
      25 Maintenance of appropriate records 11
Part Three 12
  Review and Discipline of a Nominated Adviser 12
    26 Review of nominated advisers 12
    27 Other supervisory powers 12
    28 Removal of Qualified Executives 13
    29 Disciplinary action against a nominated adviser 13
    30 Jurisdiction 13
    31 Moratorium on acting for further AIM companies 13
    32 Appeals by nominated advisers 13
    33 Publication of the removal of nominated adviser status 14
Glossary 15
Schedules 16
  Schedule One - Independence in relation to rule 21 16
  Schedule Two – Nominated adviser’s declaration 17
  Schedule Three – Nominated adviser Responsibilities 18

AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers (effective 30 July 2018, as amended 1 October 2018 pursuant to AIM Notice 54-1 November 2019)
Introduction

Pursuant to the AIM Rules for Companies, a nominated adviser is responsible to the Exchange for assessing the appropriateness of an applicant for AIM, or an existing AIM company when appointed its nominated adviser, and for advising and guiding an AIM company on its responsibilities under the AIM Rules for Companies.

The AIM Rules for Companies state that a nominated adviser must be approved by the Exchange and included on the current register maintained by the Exchange. A copy of this register is available for public inspection on the Exchange's website: www.londonstockexchange.com/aim, although the definitive list is kept by the Exchange.

These AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers ("these rules") set out the eligibility, ongoing obligations and certain disciplinary matters in relation to nominated advisers.

These rules should be read in conjunction with the AIM Rules for Companies and the Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals Handbook.

The obligations and responsibilities of a nominated adviser under these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies are owed solely to the Exchange.

Terms in bold in these rules have the meanings set out in the AIM Rules for Companies, or as otherwise set out in the Glossary at the end of these rules.
Part One

Nominated adviser eligibility criteria and approval process

Criteria for being a nominated adviser

1 General

The eligibility criteria are the requirements that an applicant must satisfy before the Exchange will consider approving it as a nominated adviser. The eligibility criteria are in addition to any legal or regulatory authorisation required by an applicant in any jurisdiction in which it operates. The Exchange is able to exercise discretion as to the application and interpretation of the eligibility criteria, as it thinks fit.

An applicant will not necessarily be approved even if it satisfies the eligibility criteria and there is no right to be granted, or retain, the status of a nominated adviser. When deciding whether or not an applicant should be approved as a nominated adviser, the Exchange’s overriding consideration will be the preservation of the reputation and/or integrity of AIM (including the regulatory obligations of the Exchange as a Recognised Investment Exchange under the FSMA Recognition Requirements). Accordingly, the Exchange reserves the right to decline an application or impose conditions on approval as the Exchange thinks fit in its discretion, notwithstanding that an applicant otherwise satisfies the eligibility criteria.

2 Criteria

An entity seeking approval as a nominated adviser must:

— be a firm or company (individuals are not eligible);  
— have practised corporate finance for at least the last two years;  
— have acted on at least three Relevant Transactions during that two-year period;  
— employ at least four Qualified Executives and in this regard the Exchange will take into account the overall experience of the Qualified Executives on an individual basis and as a team; and  
— evidence to the satisfaction of the Exchange that the applicant:
  o is capable of being effectively supervised by the Exchange;  
  o has appropriate financial and non-financial resources; and  
  o is able to comply with rules 23 to 25.

The Exchange may, at its sole discretion, waive the requirement for the applicant firm to have a two-year track record and/or three Relevant Transactions where it determines that the applicant has highly experienced Qualified Executives and pursuant to rule 27(b) the Exchange may impose restrictions or limitations on the services a firm can provide at the time of granting a nominated adviser’s approval or subsequently.

The requirement to practise corporate finance means that the entity (or in some cases a separate division of it) should have practised as its principal business the provision of corporate finance advice, such as advising on public market fundraisings. This should be distinguished from the provision of legal advice or accounting services in relation to corporate finance transactions, which would not qualify for the purposes of this rule.

3 Overriding principle of the preservation of the reputation and/or integrity of AIM

The Exchange will consider all of the circumstances, including whether the approval of an applicant or a Qualified Executive might be detrimental to the reputation and/or integrity of AIM.
In considering whether an applicant might be detrimental to the reputation and/or integrity of AIM, the Exchange will examine matters including:

— whether the applicant is appropriately authorised and regulated and the applicant's standing with its regulators;
— the applicant's general reputation and financial standing;
— whether the applicant or its executives are, and/or have in the past been, the subject of any investigation, disciplinary action, criminal proceedings, conviction or finding of breaches of regulatory duties (including the subject-matter and seriousness of such matters); and
— insofar as is relevant, the commercial and regulatory performance of its clients to whom it has given corporate finance advice.

Even if an applicant otherwise meets the other eligibility criteria, if the Exchange considers that an applicant, any shareholder of an applicant, or any officer of the applicant might be detrimental to the reputation and/or integrity of AIM, this is likely to be treated as a basis for declining the application.

4 Qualified Executives

A Qualified Executive is an full-time employee of an applicant (or nominated adviser in relation to continuing eligibility), who can demonstrate a sound understanding of the UK corporate finance market and AIM in particular, and who satisfies one of the following:

— in respect of a person applying to be approved as a Qualified Executive has acted in a corporate finance advisory role, for at least the last three years and who has acted in a lead corporate finance role on at least three Relevant Transactions in that three-year period; or
— in respect of an existing Qualified Executive who was approved as a Qualified Executive within the last five years, and has been a Qualified Executive on a continuous basis within that period, has acted in a lead corporate finance role on at least three Relevant Transactions within the last five years; or
— in respect of an existing Qualified Executive who has been approved as a Qualified Executive for five or more years on a continuous basis, has acted in a lead corporate finance role on at least one Relevant Transaction in the last five-year period and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Exchange that they are involved in an active capacity in the provision of corporate finance advisory work, and in relation to AIM in particular.

An individual will not be considered for approval as a Qualified Executive by the Exchange (or be eligible to be a Qualified Executive on a continuing basis) where that person has been subject to disciplinary action or similar by a regulator or law enforcement agency in the context of financial services, corporate finance or similar or has any unspent convictions in relation to indictable offences.

As part of the Qualified Executive approval process, the Exchange reserves the right to conduct interviews in order to assess the competence and suitability of the individual. If, as a result of any interview which it conducts, the Exchange considers that the individual has an inadequate understanding of corporate finance, market practice, the legal or regulatory framework for corporate finance or these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies, it will not approve the individual as a Qualified Executive. Accordingly, the Exchange reserves the right to decline an application for Qualified Executive status notwithstanding that an individual otherwise meets the requirements set out in this rule.

Qualified Executive status is a designation which is granted to a nominated adviser firm denoting those individuals within the firm who are authorised by the Exchange to lead AIM Rules for Companies advice for that nominated adviser. Accordingly, Qualified Executive status is not an individual status or qualification. An application by a nominated adviser to denote an employee with Qualified Executive status will be considered in the wider context of the firm’s obligations under rules 23 and 24. A nominated adviser is responsible for the conduct of a Qualified Executive in the respect of its obligations and responsibilities as a nominated adviser.
5 Relevant Transactions

A Relevant Transaction is:

— a transaction requiring a Prospectus or equivalent in any EEA country; or
— a transaction involving acting for the offeror on the take-over of a public company within the UK or an EEA country which requires the publication of an offer document (or similar document where it is being effected by a scheme of arrangement);

in each above case in respect of shares quoted on a UK regulated market or an EU regulated market (as defined by the Market in Financial Instruments Directive (2014/65/EU in the FCA Handbook), as amended from time to time); or

— in the case of a proposed or current Qualified Executive, or in relation to the continuing eligibility a nominated adviser, a transaction requiring the publication of an admission document where he or she has been employed by the acting nominated adviser.

The Exchange will at its discretion consider similar initial public offerings or other major corporate transactions for publicly quoted companies on major stock exchanges (including mergers and acquisitions requiring the publication of a public document) whether within the UK or an EEA country or elsewhere in the world.

The Exchange will generally not consider a transaction as a Relevant Transaction unless the applicant or employee (or nominated adviser in relation to continuing eligibility) acted as a lead corporate financial adviser and was (in the case of an applicant or nominated adviser) named prominently and unequivocally as such in the public documentation pertaining to that transaction.

Copies of this public documentation must be included with the application to become a nominated adviser.

Where an applicant has acted as lead financial adviser on one of the above transactions but was not, for example, the UK Official List sponsor or nominated adviser, the Exchange will take into account whether the activities conducted by the applicant in relation to such transaction(s) are similar to those set out in Schedule Three to these rules.

Both a proposed Qualified Executive and an existing Qualified Executive may cite the same Relevant Transaction if they have each been involved to an appropriate extent.

6 Fees

At the same time that any application form is submitted, the applicant must submit the requisite fee to the Exchange in order for its application to be processed.

This fee is non-refundable whether or not the applicant is subsequently approved as a nominated adviser except in the circumstances in which an application is withdrawn prior to gazetting (see rule 9 below) where half the application fee will be refunded.

The application fee is in addition to the annual fee which is payable upon approval as a nominated adviser, and subsequently, at the rates set out in and in accordance with the ‘AIM Fees for Companies and Nominated Advisers’ as published by the Exchange from time to time.

In order to remain eligible, a nominated adviser must pay the annual fees as soon as such payment becomes due.
Process for becoming a nominated adviser

7 Application forms and documentation

An applicant seeking approval as a nominated adviser must complete and submit to the Exchange the following (all of which are available at www.londonstockexchange.com/aim):

— Form NA1;
— Form NA2 in respect of each proposed Qualified Executive (a minimum of 4 will therefore be required);
— all supporting documentation requested within the above Forms (and in particular at the beginning of Form NA1); and
— a cheque made payable to London Stock Exchange plc in respect of the application fee payable (the current fee is set out in the publication entitled ‘AIM Fees for Companies and Nominated Advisers’ as published by the Exchange from time to time).

The Exchange reserves the right to request any other information, documentation or confirmations from the applicant or other persons as it might require in order to consider or progress an application.

Upon receipt of the above information the Exchange will indicate to the applicant the likely time period required to process and consider the application.

8 Interview

The Exchange may conduct interviews of some or all of the proposed Qualified Executives put forward by an applicant to ensure that they have sufficient understanding of corporate finance, market practice and the legal or regulatory framework for corporate finance (including these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies). Such interviews will be conducted either at the Exchange or at the applicant’s premises. Costs incurred by the Exchange (for example accommodation and travel) in visiting the applicant’s premises will be reimbursed by the applicant.

9 Gazetting

At least fourteen days before the Exchange determines whether to approve an applicant, it will notify the applicant’s name and its proposed Qualified Executives together with any other information the Exchange thinks necessary in order to give public notice of the application and to invite comment from market participants.

In addition, where an applicant operates mainly outside the United Kingdom, at least fourteen days before it makes its decision, the Exchange may issue a newspaper advertisement in a leading domestic financial newspaper(s) in the jurisdiction in which the applicant is registered or in which it operates stating the same information and inviting any objections.

The Exchange will take into account any comments which it receives as a result of the above gazetting process when considering whether to approve the application.

Where an application does not proceed to the gazetting stage, the Exchange will refund half of the application fee.

10 Appeals

An applicant will be informed privately, in writing (including by email), of the decision of the Exchange concerning whether to approve the applicant or not as a nominated adviser.

If an applicant is approved, the Exchange will include with its written decision a list of the nominated adviser’s employees which it has accepted as Qualified Executives.
Any such decision of the Exchange may be appealed by an applicant (but not an individual) as a non-disciplinary appeal in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals Handbook.

Continuing eligibility for nominated advisers and notification requirements

11 Continuing eligibility

A nominated adviser and each Qualified Executive of a nominated adviser, once approved, must satisfy the eligibility criteria on a continuing basis at all times as if it/he/she were a new applicant.

A nominated adviser must regularly consider whether it and its Qualified Executives continue to meet the eligibility criteria. If at any time a nominated adviser believes it or a Qualified Executive(s) might not satisfy these requirements, it must inform AIM Regulation forthwith.

The Exchange may at any time request any information from a nominated adviser and/or a Qualified Executive it requires, including submission of all or any of the forms and documentation set out at rule 7, in order for it to consider and determine whether a nominated adviser is still eligible.

The Exchange may at any time conduct interviews and/or tests of the nominated adviser and its Qualified Executives in order to ensure that it has maintained an understanding of corporate finance and these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies. The provisions of rule 8 in relation to interviews will apply as appropriate.

If the Exchange finds that a nominated adviser has fallen below the eligibility criteria or a Qualified Executive no longer fulfils the requirements of rule 4, the Exchange may remove nominated adviser or Qualified Executive status or impose conditions on the nominated adviser’s ability to act as a nominated adviser (including those set out in rule 27 and/or the imposition of a moratorium pursuant to rule 31). Any such decision of the Exchange may be appealed by such nominated adviser (but not an individual) as a non-disciplinary appeal in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals Handbook.

12 Changes at a nominated adviser

A nominated adviser must inform AIM Regulation as soon as possible (by telephone and by email) of any matters that may affect its operation, role or performance as a nominated adviser. Such notifications include (but are not limited to):

— any proposed changes to its name, its address or places of business;
— the commencement of an investigation by any other regulatory body or law enforcement authority in any jurisdiction which relates to the conduct of the nominated adviser;
— the commencement of any disciplinary action or criminal proceedings which relate to the conduct of the nominated adviser and/or any of its employees relevant to the work undertaken by the nominated adviser;
— the receipt of any conviction or finding of breach of duties to which the nominated adviser and any of its employees was subject, or any formal warning or disciplinary communication from any other regulatory body or law enforcement authority;
— any material adverse change in its financial or operating position that may affect its ability to act as a nominated adviser;
— as soon as any decision is made to consult, engage or appoint an administrator(s) or similar practitioners;
— any potential changes to the structuring or organisation of the directors, partners or employees which impacts the nominated adviser services provided by the firm. Such changes include (without limitation) the notice of resignation of a Qualified Executive, Head of Corporate Finance or relevant compliance officer; or
— any proposed change of control of the nominated adviser which is reasonably likely.
Should the Exchange deem a change of control to have occurred, a new application for nominated adviser status will be required, including the payment of the associated application fee. For the avoidance of doubt, the Exchange will consider the new controller when determining eligibility of the nominated adviser, in particular the ability of the new controller to satisfy the eligibility criteria in its own right.

13 Departing or new Qualified Executives

If a Qualified Executive leaves the full-time employ or ceases to work in the corporate finance team of a nominated adviser for whom he/she was a Qualified Executive, the nominated adviser must inform the Exchange by submission of a Form NA3.

On leaving the full-time employ or ceasing to work in the corporate finance team of a nominated adviser, a person who was a Qualified Executive will no longer be a Qualified Executive under these rules. However, if he/she joins another nominated adviser, that firm can submit a Form NA2 to apply for approval of that person as a Qualified Executive of that nominated adviser. The Exchange may, at its discretion, waive the requirement to submit a Form NA2 on submission by a person who was (until very recently) previously approved as a Qualified Executive.

A nominated adviser can submit at any time a Form NA2 in respect of any employee who it proposes be approved as a Qualified Executive.
Part Two
Continuing Obligations of a Nominated Adviser

General Obligations

14 Appropriateness of an AIM company

The nominated adviser to an AIM company is responsible to the Exchange for assessing the appropriateness of an applicant for AIM, or an existing AIM company when appointed as its nominated adviser.

Where a nominated adviser believes that an AIM company for which it acts as nominated adviser is no longer appropriate for AIM it must contact AIM Regulation.

15 Compliance with the rules

A nominated adviser shall be bound by and observe:

— these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies, including any guidance notes issued by the Exchange;
— any rules and procedures set out in any supplementary documentation issued by the Exchange under these rules;
— the provisions of any notices issued by the Exchange; and
— any requirement, decision or direction of the Exchange.

Each nominated adviser should nominate a person within its firm to act as the Exchange’s principal contact on compliance matters. That person should be a senior person within the firm’s compliance function or its corporate finance team.

16 Due skill and care

A nominated adviser must act with due skill and care at all times.

Nominated adviser responsibilities

17 Advising and guiding an AIM company

The nominated adviser is responsible to the Exchange for advising and guiding an AIM company on its responsibilities under the AIM Rules for Companies both in respect of its admission and its continuing obligations on an ongoing basis. A nominated adviser must be available to advise and guide AIM companies for which it acts at all times.

A nominated adviser should allocate at least two appropriately qualified staff to be responsible for each AIM company for which the nominated adviser acts in that capacity, including at least one Qualified Executive, in order to ensure an appropriate corporate finance contact with knowledge of the AIM company is available at all times.

18 Nominated adviser responsibilities

In deciding whether a nominated adviser has complied with these rules and the undertakings it has provided to the Exchange in its nominated adviser’s declaration, the Exchange will have
regard to the matters set out in Schedule Three, which should be exercised with due skill and care and after due and careful enquiry.

**Information obligations**

19 **Liaison with the Exchange**

A nominated adviser must provide the Exchange with any information, in such form and within such time limits as the Exchange may reasonably require. A nominated adviser should reasonably satisfy itself that all such information provided by it is correct, complete and not misleading and, if it comes to the subsequent attention of the nominated adviser that the information provided does not meet this requirement, the nominated adviser should advise the Exchange as soon as practicable.

A nominated adviser must liaise (and be available to liaise) with the Exchange when requested to do so by the Exchange or an AIM company for which it acts and should be contactable at all times, in particular during the Exchange’s market hours.

A nominated adviser must, at the earliest opportunity, seek the advice of the Exchange (via AIM Regulation) in any situation where it is unsure as to the application or interpretation of these rules or the AIM Rules for Companies or it has a concern about the reputation and/or integrity of AIM. It should be noted that on detailed or specific regulatory matters the Exchange will not liaise with nominated advisers (or AIM companies or other advisers) on a ‘no-names’ basis.

A nominated adviser should advise the Exchange as soon as practicable if it believes that it or an AIM company has breached the AIM Rules for Companies or these rules.

All communications between the Exchange and a nominated adviser are confidential to the Exchange and should not be disclosed, except as required by any other regulatory or statutory body. Such communications can be disclosed to appropriate advisers to the nominated adviser or to the relevant AIM company, unless the Exchange states otherwise.

20 **Becoming or ceasing to be nominated adviser to an AIM company**

A nominated adviser must submit to the Exchange a completed nominated adviser’s declaration in relation to any applicant seeking admission (in accordance with the AIM Rules for Companies) or where that nominated adviser becomes nominated adviser to an existing AIM company.

Where a nominated adviser ceases to act for an AIM company, it must inform AIM Regulation as soon as possible (by email) and must include with that notification the reason why it has ceased to act.

**Independence and conflicts**

21 **Independence on a continuing basis**

A nominated adviser must be able to demonstrate to the Exchange that both it and its executives are independent from the AIM companies for which it acts such that there is no reasonable basis for impugning the nominated adviser’s independence.

Where the Exchange requires a nominated adviser to demonstrate clearly that neither its independence nor that of any of its executives has or will be compromised by any potential conflict of interest, the burden of proof will be upon the nominated adviser.
In cases of doubt about its independence a nominated adviser should consult the Exchange in advance of entering into any arrangements.

Schedule One sets out further rules in relation to the independence of a nominated adviser.

22 Conflicts of interest

A nominated adviser must not have, and must take care to avoid, the semblance of a conflict between the interests of the AIM companies for which it acts and those of any other party.

In particular, a nominated adviser must not act for any other party to a transaction or take-over other than its AIM company client.

Procedures, staff and records

23 Proper procedures

A nominated adviser must ensure that it maintains procedures, systems and controls which are sufficient for it to discharge its ongoing obligations under these rules. The nominated adviser should ensure that its compliance and procedures manual (or similar) reflects and takes account of the requirements of these rules, as appropriate.

In particular, it must ensure that any members of staff who are not approved as Qualified Executives are properly supervised by a Qualified Executive at all appropriate times in relation to matters relating to AIM companies.

24 Adequacy of Staff

A nominated adviser must ensure that it has sufficient Qualified Executives (and other corporate finance staff) to discharge its obligations as a nominated adviser under these rules at all times. In assessing whether a nominated adviser has sufficient staff under these rules, the Exchange will have regard to the number and type of AIM companies for which the firm acts, and the experience in relevant corporate finance matters of the corporate finance team as a whole.

25 Maintenance of appropriate records

A nominated adviser must retain sufficient records to maintain an audit trail of the key discussions it holds with, advice which it has given to, and the key decisions it has made in respect of, the AIM companies for which it acts as nominated adviser. A nominated adviser should ensure that it is able (including by keeping appropriate records) to demonstrate the basis for advice given and key decisions taken, such as internal considerations and any actions taken prior to the advice being given. Such records must be retained whilst a firm is nominated adviser to a company and for at least three years after it ceases to be nominated adviser.

When performing a review of a nominated adviser, the Exchange will look for clear evidence that at least those matters set out in Schedule Three have been considered and that appropriate actions have been taken in order to ensure compliance with these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies.
Part Three

Review and Discipline of a Nominated Adviser

26 Review of nominated advisers

A nominated adviser may be subject to a formal review by the Exchange to ensure that it has fully discharged its responsibilities under these rules and the AIM Rules for Companies. A nominated adviser must ensure that its Qualified Executives co-operate fully with the Exchange and that the Qualified Executive who was responsible for a transaction is available to answer any questions by the Exchange about any relevant matter.

A nominated adviser must allow Exchange officers access to its records (hard and electronic copies) and business premises when so requested by the Exchange.

27 Other supervisory powers

The Exchange may take any of the following actions in respect of a nominated adviser’s performance:

a) require remedial action to be undertaken within the nominated adviser, including directing (pursuant to rule 15) that the nominated adviser take specific steps, such as the employment of additional staff.

b) impose restrictions or limitations on the services a nominated adviser can provide taking into account:
   (i) the nominated adviser’s experience and expertise of providing certain types of nominated adviser responsibilities to certain types of companies; and/or
   (ii) the nominated adviser’s procedures, systems and controls in place taking into account the nature of the services it is undertaking or proposing to undertake.

c) should the Exchange become concerned about the conduct, competency and/or suitability of a Qualified Executive it may review the ongoing eligibility of such Qualified Executive, including as part of a review of a nominated adviser under rule 26 and may require certain actions or restrictions in relation to that Qualified Executive and/or suspend a Qualified Executive’s approval, for such a time that it considers appropriate.

In relation to (b) above the Exchange may make public these actions by way of an AIM notice published by RNS and/or mark the register accordingly.

The Exchange may take an action(s) under rules 28, 29 and/or 31 regardless of whether or not it has previously undertaken any steps under rules 26 or 27.

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1 Nomad Rules 29 and 33 as amended with effect from 1 October 2018 pursuant to AIM Notice 54
28 Removal of Qualified Executives

The Exchange may remove the Qualified Executive status of an employee of a nominated adviser where that employee is subject to bankruptcy, disciplinary action by another regulator, mentally incapacitated or has been shown by a formal review by the Exchange of the nominated adviser or otherwise to have failed to act with due skill and care or in accordance with these rules or the AIM Rules for Companies in relation to his/her employer’s role as a nominated adviser.

29 Sanctions against a nominated adviser

If the Exchange considers that a nominated adviser is either in breach of its responsibilities under these rules or the AIM Rules for Companies or that the reputation and/or integrity of AIM has been or may be impaired as a result of its conduct or judgment, the Exchange may in relation to such nominated adviser take one or more of the following actions:

— issue a warning notice;
— levy a fine;
— issue a censure; or
— remove the nominated adviser from the register; and
— publish the action the Exchange has taken and the reasons for that action.

The Exchange will take any proposed disciplinary action against a nominated adviser in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals Handbook.

30 Jurisdiction

When a nominated adviser is removed from the register, the Exchange retains jurisdiction over the nominated adviser for the purposes of conducting an investigation or taking disciplinary action in relation to breaches or suspected breaches of these rules whilst it was approved as a nominated adviser.

31 Moratorium on acting for further AIM companies

The Exchange may prevent a nominated adviser from acting as a nominated adviser to any additional AIM companies where, in the opinion of the Exchange, a nominated adviser:

- no longer meets the eligibility criteria or it is not meeting its responsibilities under these rules;
- the Exchange has reasonable concerns that a nominated adviser’s procedures, systems and controls are not appropriate to support the nominated adviser services;
- it has insufficient staffing levels pursuant to rule 24 of these rules;
- there is an unplanned, temporary or permanent loss of appropriately experienced member(s) of staff;
- it is the subject of disciplinary action by the Exchange;
- if there is a reasonable likelihood of a change of control or there has been a change in its financial position or operating position that may affect its ability to act as a nominated adviser.

A moratorium on acting for additional AIM companies will remain until that situation is resolved to the Exchange’s satisfaction.

The Exchange may make the imposition of any moratorium public by way of an AIM notice published by RNS and/or marking the register accordingly.

32 Appeals by nominated advisers

Where the Exchange takes any steps against a nominated adviser or a Qualified Executive pursuant to these rules, any decision of the Exchange in relation to these rules or the AIM Rules
for Companies in respect of a nominated adviser may be appealed by that nominated adviser in accordance with the procedures set out in the Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals Handbook.

33 Publication of the removal of nominated adviser status

Where the Exchange removes nominated adviser status (for example, due to action pursuant to rule 29 of these rules or it failing to continue to meet the eligibility criteria set out in Part One of these rules) or where a nominated adviser requests to have that status removed, the Exchange will notify such removal by way of an AIM notice published on RNS and/or mark the register accordingly.
**Glossary**

The following terms have the following meanings when used in these rules unless the context otherwise requires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIM Regulation</td>
<td>The AIM Regulation team at the Exchange contactable at <a href="mailto:aimregulation@lseg.com">aimregulation@lseg.com</a> and 020 7797 4154.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eligibility criteria</td>
<td>The criteria set out in rules 1 to 6 inclusive of these rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominated adviser’s declaration</td>
<td>The declaration to be given by the nominated adviser to an AIM company as required in the AIM Rules for Companies which should be in the form set out in Schedule Two of these rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Executive</td>
<td>As defined in rule 4 of these rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Transaction</td>
<td>As defined in rule 5 of these rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schedules

Schedule One - Independence in relation to rule 21

For the avoidance of doubt:

— A nominated adviser may not act as both reporting accountant and/or auditor on the one hand and nominated adviser to an AIM company on the other unless it has satisfied the Exchange that appropriate safeguards are in place;

— No partner, director, employee of a nominated adviser or associate of any such partner, director or employee may hold the position of a director of an AIM company for which the firm acts as nominated adviser;

— No nominated adviser or partner, director, employee of a nominated adviser or associate of any such partner, director or employee either individually or collectively may be a substantial shareholder (i.e. 10% or more, taking into account options, warrants or similar that it may hold as if they have been exercised) of an AIM company for which the firm acts as nominated adviser;

— A nominated adviser or partner, director, employee of a nominated adviser or associate of any such partner, director or employee may be a significant shareholder (i.e. 3% or more, taking into account options, warrants or similar that it may hold as if they have been exercised) of an AIM company for which the firm acts as nominated adviser provided adequate safeguards are in place to prevent any conflict of interest;

— No nominated adviser or partner, director, employee of a nominated adviser or associate of any such partner, director or employee may deal in the securities of an AIM company or any related financial product for which the firm acts as nominated adviser during any MAR closed period of that company;

— When calculating an interest in a client company a nominated adviser is permitted to disregard any interest in shares pursuant to rules 5.1.3 to 5.1.5 inclusive of the DTR; and

— If a nominated adviser breaches any of the above limits as a result of its underwriting activities it must make best endeavours to sell down its holding to within the guidelines as soon as reasonably practicable.

Note: As guidance, bullet points 3 - 5 inclusive above will only apply to the corporate finance function of a nominated adviser firm and not to other areas adequately separated by Chinese walls or similar safeguards. In such situations the burden of proof required of the nominated adviser under rule 21 remains.
Schedule Two – Nominated adviser’s declaration

This nominated adviser confirms that:

SECTION A:

to the best of its knowledge and belief having made due and careful enquiry and considered all relevant matters under the AIM Rules for Companies and AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers in relation to this application for admission, all applicable requirements of the AIM Rules for Companies and AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers have been complied with and, in particular, (i) the admission document complies with Schedule Two of the current AIM Rules for Companies, or (ii) (in the case of a quoted applicant only) the requirements of Schedule One and its supplement have been complied with; and

SECTION B:

(a) it is satisfied that the applicant and its securities are appropriate to be admitted to AIM, having made due and careful enquiry and considered all relevant matters set out in the AIM Rules for Companies and the AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers and;

(b) the directors of the applicant have received advice and guidance (from this nominated adviser and other appropriate professional advisers) as to the applicant’s responsibilities and obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies in order to facilitate due compliance by the applicant on an ongoing basis; and

(c) it will comply with the AIM Rules for Companies and AIM Rules for Nominated Advisers as applicable to it in its role as nominated adviser to this applicant.

NOTE:

Sections A and B must be completed where securities are being admitted to AIM pursuant to an admission.

Only Section B must be completed where this form is being completed pursuant to a change of nominated adviser and Section A will not be applicable. In such cases, the term applicant should be deemed to read AIM company.

Terms used in this nominated adviser’s declaration are as defined in the AIM Rules for Companies.
Schedule Three – Nominated adviser Responsibilities

The responsibilities set out in this Schedule Three consist of numbered principles in bold followed by a list of actions. The numbered principles must be satisfied in all cases. The actions which follow each principle represent a non-exhaustive list of tasks that the Exchange would usually expect a nominated adviser to fulfil in satisfying that principle.

Other actions can therefore be substituted in order to satisfy each overriding principle or the nominated adviser may decide that a particular action set out below is not appropriate. The reasons for this should be noted as part of the record keeping duties under rule 25 in order to evidence to the Exchange that a nominated adviser has acted with due skill and care.

Admission Responsibilities

These apply to a nominated adviser that is acting for an applicant (including in relation to a reverse takeover coming within rule 14 of the AIM Rules for Companies and also including, as applicable, a quoted applicant) in respect of its admission to AIM.

THE APPLICANT AND ITS SECURITIES

AR1 - In assessing the appropriateness of an applicant and its securities for AIM, a nominated adviser should achieve a sound understanding of the applicant and its business

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:
— ensure it has, or has access to, appropriate knowledge of the applicant's area of business (taking into account its country of incorporation and operation), using in-house specialists or external experts where necessary to achieve this
— consider the applicant's sector, proposition, business plan or similar, historical financial information and other corporate information, including the due diligence performed further to AR3
— consider any issues relating to the applicant's country of incorporation and operation and any other issues that might affect its appropriateness
— undertake a visit to the applicant's material site(s) of operation and meet the directors and key managers. The necessity of meeting any other relevant material stakeholders (e.g. key shareholders) should also be considered
— consider appointing its own legal advisers who are independent from the applicant to assist in the nominated adviser's understanding of the applicant and to provide advice to the nominated adviser that is independent of the applicant

DIRECTORS AND BOARD

AR2 – In assessing the appropriateness of an applicant and its securities for AIM, a nominated adviser should (i) investigate and consider the suitability of each director and proposed director of the applicant; and (ii) consider the efficacy of the board as a whole for the company’s needs, in each case having in mind that the company will be admitted to trading on a UK public market

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:
— issue and review directors’ questionnaires and review directors’ CVs
— test the information revealed by the above questionnaires and CVs, for example by conducting press searches, Companies House checks, taking-up references and, where appropriate, obtaining third party checks. For directors who are not UK-based, appropriate investigations should be undertaken
— extend these investigations and considerations as appropriate to key managers and consultants who are discussed in the admission document
— consider undertaking such investigations in relation to **substantial shareholders** at **admission** as appropriate, especially where there is uncertainty as to their identity or where they are not established institutions, in particular to enquire about the existence of **persons** exerting control over the **applicant**
— analyse any issues arising from these investigations, in particular as to how they could affect the **applicant**'s appropriateness to be admitted to **AIM** and be publicly traded
— consider each **director**'s suitability and experience in relation to their (proposed) company role and consider whether each (proposed) **director** is suitable to be a **director** of a **UK** public company
— consider the board of **directors** as a whole in relation to the **applicant**'s needs, for example given its type, size, expected profile and the fact that the **applicant** will be admitted to a **UK**-based, English-language public market
— consider, with the **directors** of an **applicant**, the adoption of appropriate corporate governance measures

**DUE DILIGENCE**

**AR3** – The nominated adviser should oversee the due diligence process, satisfying itself that it is appropriate to the applicant and transaction and that any material issues arising from it are dealt with or otherwise do not affect the appropriateness of the applicant for **AIM**

In meeting this, the **nominated adviser** should usually:
— be satisfied that appropriate financial and legal due diligence is undertaken by an appropriate professional firm(s)
— be satisfied that appropriate working capital and financial reporting systems and controls reviews are undertaken (usually including reports or letters from accountants to the **applicant**)
— consider whether commercial, specialist (e.g. intellectual property) and/or technical due diligence is required and be satisfied that it is undertaken where required
— agree the scope of all such due diligence and reports (including, in relation to the working capital report, assumptions and sensitivities)
— review and assess the above due diligence, reports and adviser comfort letters, considering any material issues, recommended actions or adverse analysis raised and be satisfied that appropriate actions have been undertaken to resolve such matters or otherwise be satisfied that such matters do not affect the appropriateness of the **applicant** for **AIM**

**ADMISSION DOCUMENT**

**AR4** – The nominated adviser should oversee and be actively involved in the preparation of the admission document, satisfying itself (in order to be able to give the nominated adviser’s declaration) that it has been prepared in compliance with the AIM Rules for Companies with due verification having been undertaken

In meeting this, the **nominated adviser** should usually:
— oversee and be actively involved in the drafting of the sections of the **admission document** that relate to the business of the **applicant** (usually the Key Information and Part 1 sections) and the risk factors, being satisfied that they take into account matters raised by due diligence
— be satisfied that the financial and additional information sections have been appropriately prepared
— consider whether any specialist third party reports are required (e.g. for companies in particular sectors such as property or biotechnology)
— be satisfied that appropriate verification of the **admission document** and any related **notifications** has taken place
— be satisfied (in the terms of the **nominated adviser’s declaration**) that the **admission document** (or any appendix prepared by a **quoted applicant** in relation to paragraph (k) of the supplement to Schedule One of the **AIM Rules for Companies**) complies with the **AIM Rules**
for Companies, liaising with AIM Regulation to the extent that rule derogations or interpretations may be required.

Quoted applicants: Quoted applicants are not required to produce an admission document and therefore some of the provisions of AR4 will not be applicable. However, paragraph (k) of the supplement to Schedule One of the AIM Rules for Companies will necessitate a full consideration of the requirements of Schedule Two of the AIM Rules for Companies. In addition, the statements required to be given pursuant to the Supplement to Schedule One of the AIM Rules for Companies should be given after due and careful enquiry.

AIM RULE COMPLIANCE

AR5 – The nominated adviser should satisfy itself that the applicant has in place sufficient systems, procedures and controls in order to comply with the AIM Rules for Companies and should satisfy itself that the applicant understands its obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies.

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:
- be satisfied that procedures within the company have been established to facilitate compliance with the AIM Rules for Companies, e.g. release of unpublished price sensitive information, Rule 17 notifications, rule 21 dealing policy.
- be satisfied that the directors have been advised of their and the company’s continuing responsibilities and obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies and that the directors are aware of when they should be consulting with or seeking the advice of the nominated adviser. The nominated adviser should be involved in the provision of this advice to the directors so that they are aware of the practical consequences of the requirements of the AIM Rules for Companies.

Ongoing Responsibilities

These apply on a continuing basis in respect of any nominated adviser who acts for an AIM company.

REGULAR CONTACT BETWEEN COMPANY AND NOMINATED ADVISER

OR1 – The nominated adviser should maintain regular contact with an AIM company for which it acts, in particular so that it can assess whether (i) the nominated adviser is being kept up-to-date with developments at the AIM company and (ii) the AIM company continues to understand its obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies.

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:
- maintain regular contact with the AIM company, in particular to be satisfied that the nominated adviser is kept up-to-date in order that it can advise the company on its obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies (especially the requirements of Rule 11 and to identify breaches of the AIM Rules for Companies (e.g. in relation to Rule 17 disclosures))
- assess whether the AIM company continues to understand its obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies, for example by having discussions with the directors where appropriate and be satisfied that any procedures required pursuant to AR5 continue to be effective.

REVIEW OF NOTIFICATIONS

OR2 – The nominated adviser should undertake a prior review of relevant notifications made by an AIM company with a view to ensuring compliance with the AIM Rules for Companies.

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:
- review in advance (although without prejudice to the requirement of Rule 10 to release information without delay) all notifications to be made by an AIM company for which it acts to
ensure as far as reasonably possible that they comply with the AIM Rules for Companies. Where the nominated adviser reasonably believes a company's directors have appropriate knowledge and experience of the AIM Rules for Companies, review of routine announcements (e.g. pursuant to rule 17) may not be necessary

— include the nominated adviser's name and a contact name on all such announcements that a nominated adviser reviews, other than routine announcements

**MONITOR TRADING**

**OR3** – The nominated adviser should monitor (or have in place procedures with third parties for monitoring) the trading activity in securities of an AIM company for which it acts, especially when there is unpublished price sensitive information in relation to the AIM company

In meeting this, the nominated adviser should usually:

— use suitable alerts or other triggers to alert the nominated adviser to substantial price or trading movements. This can be satisfied via the broker

— contact an AIM company where appropriate if there is a substantial movement to ascertain whether an announcement or other action is required, liaising with the Exchange where appropriate

— consider the necessity for arranging relevant press monitoring, particularly when there is material unpublished price sensitive information in existence

**ADVISE THE AIM COMPANY ON ANY CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OR4** – The nominated adviser should advise the AIM company on any changes to the board of directors the AIM company proposes to make, including (i) investigating and considering the suitability of proposed new directors and (ii) considering the effect any changes have on the efficacy of the board as a whole for the company's needs, in each case having in mind that the company is admitted to trading on a UK public market

In satisfying this, the Exchange would expect the nominated adviser to usually:

— be satisfied that the AIM company knows to liaise with the nominated adviser at the earliest opportunity about proposed changes to the board, in order to allow the nominated adviser appropriate time to comply with OR4

— in relation to new directors, consider the requirements of AR2 (and where relevant the guidance to admission responsibilities) and take the appropriate actions including issuing and reviewing director's questionnaires, reviewing the director's CV and testing such information

— consider whether such proposed directors are suitable to be a director of a UK public company and consider the effect of the appointment on the efficacy of the board as a whole for the company's needs

— in relation to the removal of directors, consider how this affects the efficacy of the board as a whole for the company's needs, make any recommendations it thinks fit to the AIM company and considering whether this in turn affects the AIM company's appropriateness for AIM

**Engagement Responsibilities**

These apply when a nominated adviser is being engaged as a nominated adviser to an existing AIM company.

In satisfying these responsibilities, a nominated adviser should in addition refer to AR1 (in relation to ER1 below), AR2 (in relation to ER2) and AR5 (in relation to ER3) and where relevant the guidance to admission responsibilities and consider what actions may be appropriate. The actions to be taken will depend on, for example, the circumstances surrounding the change of nominated adviser or the changes that have taken place in the company since admission. For example, it is unlikely that the
due diligence reports usually obtained in preparation for admission as mentioned in part of AR1 would be required on engagement pursuant to ER1 or ER3 below.

THE AIM COMPANY AND ITS SECURITIES

ER1 - In assessing the appropriateness of an AIM company and its securities for AIM when taking on an existing AIM company, a nominated adviser should achieve a sound understanding of the AIM company and its business

In satisfying this, the nominated adviser should usually:
--- gain a knowledge of any major developments relating to the company since admission and consider their effect on the appropriateness of the AIM company
--- consider contacting the outgoing nominated adviser to discuss their experiences with the AIM company. An outgoing nominated adviser should be constructive and open (to the extent possible) with a new nominated adviser who contacts them for such discussion.

DIRECTORS AND BOARD

ER2 – In assessing the appropriateness of an existing AIM company and its securities for AIM, a nominated adviser should (i) investigate and consider the suitability of each director and proposed director of the AIM company and (ii) consider the efficacy of the board as a whole for the company’s needs, in each case having in mind that the company is admitted to a trading on a UK public market

AIM RULE COMPLIANCE

ER3 – The nominated adviser should satisfy itself that the AIM company has in place sufficient systems, procedures and controls in order to comply with the AIM Rules for Companies and should satisfy itself that the AIM company and its directors understand their obligations under the AIM Rules for Companies

General

In this Schedule Three:
--- Where a nominated adviser is expected to consider or satisfy itself of a particular matter, this is expected to be after due and careful enquiry and exercising due skill and care. The nominated adviser should keep an appropriate record to evidence this.
--- A nominated adviser should seek advice and assistance from other professional advisers where appropriate in fulfilling these responsibilities but should retain overall management and responsibility (i) for any admission process in relation to AIM companies for which it acts and (ii) in relation to advising AIM companies on their ongoing compliance with the AIM Rules for Companies.

Guidance to Admission Responsibilities

Before a Schedule One form is submitted in respect of a new applicant, a nominated adviser is required to submit an early notification form under rule 2 of the AIM Rules for Companies. Irrespective of the requirement for early notification, it is important for a nominated adviser to have early discussions with the Exchange where the circumstances of the applicant and its AIM securities could affect its appropriateness for AIM. The Exchange will generally consider the following non-exhaustive examples as matters that could affect appropriateness:
--- questions as to the good character, skills, experience or previous history of a director, key manager, senior executive, consultant or major shareholder
--- the rationale for seeking admission to AIM is not clear
- formal criticism of the applicant and/or any of its directors by other regulators, governments, courts, law enforcement or exchange bodies
- the applicant has been denied admission to trading on another trading platform or exchange
- the applicant has a vague or ill-defined business model or its business operations
- corporate structure and business models which may give rise to concerns regarding appropriateness for a public market, for example where there are issues regarding the legality of the applicant’s business operations in the UK and any jurisdiction where they are materially carried on; or the applicant has not yet secured the key licences, government approvals, intellectual property rights or other property rights it will need to operate its business
- the applicant holds a derivative or economic interest in a material part of its assets or business operations via a risky contractual arrangement (for example contractual arrangements that are potentially unenforceable or may not be enforced or may be difficult to enforce in practice) with the owner of the assets or operations rather than by owning them itself or through a subsidiary

These factors can be of such importance that each in their own right may mean that an applicant is not appropriate for AIM. Further, there may be circumstances where an individual factor which may not on its own prevent an admission but when presented in combination with other factors may make an applicant not appropriate for admission.