

How to choose a suitable Financial Adviser

Your guide to finding the right adviser for your money



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You've now realised you need financial advice. Most people seek recommendations from family and friends. However, this is a haphazard approach and can't ensure that candidates are knowledgeable, ethical, experienced, or a good fit with you.

You're also most likely searching on Google to understand more about what you should look for and what questions to ask. The amount of information is endless, confusing and overwhelming.

It can be an intimidating process. But, if you break it down into steps, it's simpler than you think.

Here are 5 tips to help choose a suitable Financial Adviser for you.

1: Determine the type of advice you need

How much help do you need?

There are 2 types of financial advice: General and Personal.

General advice doesn't consider your personal situation or goals, or how it might affect you personally.

Personal advice is tailored to your financial situation and goals and is in your best interests. It can include one-off advice, or comprehensive advice and regular ongoing advice.

2: Find a Financial Adviser

When you've determined the type of advice you need, **it's time to find a Financial Adviser.**

You can find one through their professional associations such as the [Financial Planning Association](#) and [Association of Financial Advisers](#). Shop around and assess up to 3 Financial Advisers.

Here are some things to look for:

Qualifications and License: The CFP (Certified Financial Planner) is the highest financial planning designation worldwide, coupled with a commitment to the highest ethical standards. It's generally considered as the gold standard in the industry. Advisers must demonstrate several years of experience, take an extensive course and pass assessments and a 4-hour exam to become a CFP. You can check your adviser is licensed through MoneySmart's Financial Advisers Register [here](#).

Specialty: If you have a specific area that you need to focus on, then it's beneficial to find one who specialises in that area, like superannuation or retirement planning.

Experience: How long have they been practising? What did they do in previous roles? While formal and ongoing education is important, they must also have experience in dealing with real-life financial situations.

Comfort level: Some prefer independent planners not tied to any institution while some feel more secure dealing with someone from a well-recognised financial institution.

“57 per cent of Australians would like the gift of time with a financial planner, indicating a strong overall positive desire for professional help to create a financial plan.”^[1]

1. <https://fpa.com.au/news/asic-report-shows-growing-demand-for-financial-advice/>



3: Meet and Compare

A good Financial Adviser will not rush you. They will carefully listen to you and clearly explain where they can help.

Here are 3 things you should do:

- Contact and visit each adviser on your list. The first meeting is usually complimentary and is a good opportunity to ask them about their qualification, specialities, fees, who will look after your account while they're away and how they'll deal with complaints, etc.
- Ask plenty of questions (use the [FPA Guiding Questions](#)) and take notes so you don't need to remember who said what.
- Collect and review their Financial Services Guide (FSG). This document shows:
 - the services they offer
 - how they charge
 - who owns the company
 - any links to product providers
 - their Australian Financial Services licence number

4: Decide and Select

Narrow your list and only include those whose personality and preferences are a good fit with yours. **Decide and select the one you're most comfortable with. This is critical because you'll need to like and trust your Financial Adviser.**

The process will begin, and you'll need to be willing to provide adequate information, learn about investments, and take an active interest in your finances. Importantly, be willing to ask questions and not accept unsatisfactory answers. Get a second opinion from your accountant for tax consequences if you want to.

5: Measure your success

You'll want a Financial Adviser who'll make the time to focus on your concerns and is interested in growing with you.

The Statement of Advice they create and provide you will be your roadmap to achieving your goals now and, in the years, to come. So, it must be clear and easy to understand.

- Ensure the Statement of Advice they provide is reviewed at least annually.
- Was there adequate communication from the Financial Adviser over the last 12 months?
- Were the projected outcomes from the Statement of Advice close to what was expected?
- If not, did the Financial Adviser explain why and made additional recommendations?





Be active, not passive

You must do the initial legwork because you deserve the best retirement your efforts and sacrifices can buy.

A recent [report](#) provided insights on the attitudes, behaviours and expectations of consumers towards Financial Advisers. 1,298 consumers felt the most important factors when choosing a financial planner to be honesty and trustworthiness, transparency about fees and commissions, and adviser experience.

How do you measure honesty, transparency and experience?

Follow the steps above and you'll be on your way to finding a suitable Financial Adviser for you.



About Centaur Financial Services

At Centaur Financial Services, we help Australian families plan and live well. Our mission is to make a positive and meaningful difference in our clients' lives and maximise the probability of you reaching their goals.

Every client we work with benefits from our proven formula of action, implementation, commitment, and discipline that brings a financial plan to life and makes it successful in reaching your goals. Plus, we offer tailored, clear and transparent advice — all designed to give you a sense of security and peace of mind.

Learn more at [CentaurFinancial.com.au](https://centaurfinancial.com.au)

When it comes to helping you with financial planning and advice, the most important thing we can do is be proactive and work alongside you.

Start planning for a better future today because securing your future is more than just managing money.

Contact Us and Get Started.