

HR RESEARCH SERIES 2026 - REPORT R34 OF 10 (EXTENDED)

Financial Services Talent Acquisition 2026

Hiring strategies for banks, fintechs, insurance and asset managers in Europe's most regulated and competitive talent market.

Financial services TA in Europe operates at the intersection of the most competitive talent market and the most regulated hiring context, FCA, BaFin and ECB fitness and propriety, mandatory reference checks, regulatory approval for senior functions.

4.1%

job vacancy rate in EU financial services, above EU average

41 days

average time to hire (EU avg 34 days)

€10,200

average cost-per-hire, the highest of all tracked sectors

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Traditional finance roles are less attractive to younger talent than fintech, big tech or consulting alternatives, yet fintech requires the same regulatory knowledge. The companies winning have modernised their employer brand and hiring process without compromising regulatory rigour.

The financial services talent landscape

Sub-sector	Key challenge	Primary competition	Hiring strategy priority
Retail / commercial banking	Branch transformation, digital skills	Fintech, big tech	Reskilling + digital hiring, culture modernisation
Investment banking	Junior analyst competition, culture scrutiny	Consulting, PE, tech	Employer brand, culture transparency, comp
Asset management	Quant and data science scarcity	Hedge funds, tech	Comp premium + research reputation
Insurance	Actuarial scarcity, digital skills gap	Consulting, tech	Actuarial partnerships, tech hiring expansion
Fintech	Competition with FAANG, compliance talent	Traditional banks, tech	Mission + tech quality, equity, flexibility
RegTech	Cross-domain talent almost non-existent	Consulting, regulators	Build pipeline, reskill from regulation or tech

Regulatory hiring requirements

Requirement	Roles affected	Timeline impact	Management approach
FCA Senior Manager Regime (UK)	SMF holders, SMCR certification staff	+14-21 days	Pre-approval before resignation where possible
BaFin fit and proper	Management board, supervisory board	+21-45 days	Early submission, legal pre-review
ECB significant institution approval	Executive roles	45-90 days	Board-level process, external counsel
Regulatory reference (Form C/equiv.)	All regulated roles	+7-18 days	Template process, parallel with background check
Criminal record check	All regulated roles	3-10 days	Standard process, automate where possible

Attracting tech talent to financial services

- **Mission framing:** 'We process €2 trillion of retirement savings' is genuinely meaningful for impact-driven tech talent.
- **Tech quality signal:** be honest about the stack; if modern, say so; if legacy, frame the modernisation opportunity.
- **Data at scale:** financial services has some of the richest datasets in the world.
- **Regulatory challenge:** building systems that must comply with financial regulation is more interesting than consumer apps for some technical talent.
- **Stability premium:** for mid-career tech talent with mortgages, financial services stability beats startup risk.

The regulatory reference check process

The single process improvement that most reduces regulatory reference delays: begin the regulatory reference process in parallel with (not after) the final interview round, with candidate consent. For senior roles, this 18-day saving is often the difference between a successful hire and a candidate accepting a competing offer.

Compensation strategy in financial services

Element	Relevance	EU regulatory consideration
Base salary	Critical, must be market competitive	Pay Transparency Directive applies
Annual bonus	Critical for investment roles	CRD V: max 1:1 ratio for MRT, up to 2:1 with shareholder approval
Deferred compensation	Standard for senior investment roles	CRD V: min 40% deferral for MRT, 3-5 year vesting
Long-term incentive	Common in asset management, PE	Subject to local tax treatment
Benefits	Growing importance for junior talent	Pay transparency expected

Forward outlook 2026-2030

MiFID III and DORA compliance roles become critical-shortage in 2026. AI trading and risk systems require specialist AI governance roles by 2027. Fintech and traditional finance talent pools converge by 2028 as bank digital transformation accelerates. By 2030, financial services talent strategy is fully integrated with AI capability strategy.

Built for what's next.

tenperzent.com is the AI-native ATS designed for European hiring in 2026 - GDPR by default, EU AI Act compliant, free to start, €79/month to scale.

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