

RISK LEVEL

The Fixed Income Blend Plus strategy is classified as having moderately low risk. Fixed Income holders essentially lend money to a borrower. The borrower is called an issuer of debt. Although debt instruments are considered low risk because the issuer (i.e. pool of individuals, companies, governments, etc.) is obligated to service the debt, there is always the risk that an issuer can default. Other sources of risk exist including: marketability, liquidity, and market effects caused by economic and regulatory changes (a.k.a. interest rate risk). Lastly, this strategy allows for the purchase of preferred stock, which introduces an element of price volatility; albeit at much smaller degree than common stock. Despite such risks, this strategy is considered moderately low because returns are expected to be positive on an annual basis. However, over long periods of time, returns are not expected to exceed our higher risk products.

INVESTMENT PROCESS

Security Selection

We take a conservative approach when identifying Fixed Income Blend Plus securities. For example, when purchasing corporate bonds, we'll limit our universe to highly-rated, investment grade issues. We take a *ladder* approach by holding securities with diversified lengths of maturities in an effort to minimize interest rate risk. We treat fixed income securities like stock in that we'll research the debt issuer with regard to financial stability. Such research includes the analysis of financial statements and an assessment of economic and business fundamentals. We also take care in analyzing indentures to understand the issuer's intentions for borrowed funds and plans for servicing loan commitments.

Marketability of securities is also important. We primarily seek securities that can be sold in a reasonable amount of time in a fair, open market. For example, we shy away from non-negotiable CDs. Moreover, size of market and the number of outstanding issues helps to determine liquidity. We will generally not sacrifice low risk for tax advantage.

MANAGEMENT/MONITORING OF SEPARATE CLIENT PORTFOLIOS

The utilization of a model portfolio provides consistency in portfolio construction and management. In this framework, we set a goal for all client portfolios to resemble our model in terms of yield-to-maturity and position weights. Differences are typically the result of any client guidelines and/or the timing and amount of cash flows. We will also 'eyeball' each client portfolio as a check to ensure the portfolio represents the strategy implemented. Nonetheless, client portfolios can differ significantly from our Fixed Income Blend Plus model portfolio when compared to other products because some fixed income securities require minimum trade amounts that certain clients can not satisfy. However, we aim to maintain common risk/return characteristics for all portfolios.

TRADING

We aim to keep trading costs at a minimum by utilizing brokers who charge low commissions relative to industry standards. We would only pay higher commissions if there were additional services rendered by the broker besides trade execution that would be beneficial to clients. We also keep trading costs low via sound management of client cash flows. The timing and amount of client funds requires judgment on our part in balancing the speed of becoming fully invested with trading costs. For example, if a client opens an account at a time that's not suitable to invest in certain holdings in our model portfolio, we may have to forgo purchase of certain investments until other opportunities present themselves. We may purchase other investments with similar characteristics, but are more suitable considering the timing of investments. Suitability is largely a function of size, price entry points, time to expiration, availability of securities, etc. Whenever such optimization is necessary, we will still take proper risk control with regard to diversification.

All client portfolios are traded simultaneously to ensure fairness of security prices achieved. This is done electronically with a model-based trading platform. Each trade requires one order through the broker's platform, at which point, shares will be bought or sold for each client designated to the model's respective product group. Shares will be traded and/or allocated on a pro-rata basis so that each client's portfolio obtains the same percentage. For client portfolios in which optimization or some other customization is necessary, trading will be made subsequent to the model portfolio's trades. If for some reason this directed-order service becomes unavailable by the broker, we will use same price limit orders when trading identical securities for separate accounts.