

# Candidate assessment and selection guide

September 2025



# Introduction

## Starting your journey!

At **SmartestEnergy**, we believe that a diverse and inclusive workplace is essential for innovation, performance, and long-term success. Our graduate scheme is designed to reflect these values and provide a supportive environment where early talent can thrive.

We're not just hiring graduates; we're investing in future leaders who will shape the energy transition.

Our graduate scheme is built on a foundation of inclusion, empowerment, and real responsibility from day one.

## Diversity, equity, inclusion and graduate impact at SmartestEnergy

On our trading graduate scheme, you'll be solving real market challenges, engaging with senior leaders, and contributing to live trading decisions from the moment you join.

We're looking for graduates who are:

- Curious and commercially aware.
- Resilient under pressure.
- Collaborative and inclusive.
- Analytical and solutions-focused.
- Passionate about sustainability and innovation.

We actively promote diversity in our graduate intake by:

- Partnering with organisations like SEO London and the Women Utilities Network (WUN) to reach underrepresented talent.

- Targeting universities with strong female STEM representation and expanding outreach beyond traditional institutions.
- Offering reasonable adjustments at every stage of the recruitment process to ensure accessibility and fairness.

We're committed to:

- Closing the gender pay gap in trading and risk roles.
- Providing mentorship and buddy systems for every graduate.
- Equipping managers and assessors with bias awareness training.
- Using recruitment data to improve equity and representation.



# Supporting you on your application

This guide is designed to support candidates applying to SmartestEnergy's Trading Graduate Scheme, helping them navigate the application process and prepare for the assessment centre. It reflects SmartestEnergy's core values, and the competencies required for success in trading and risk roles.

SmartestEnergy's values are embedded throughout the graduate programme and assessment process. Candidates should demonstrate alignment with these values.

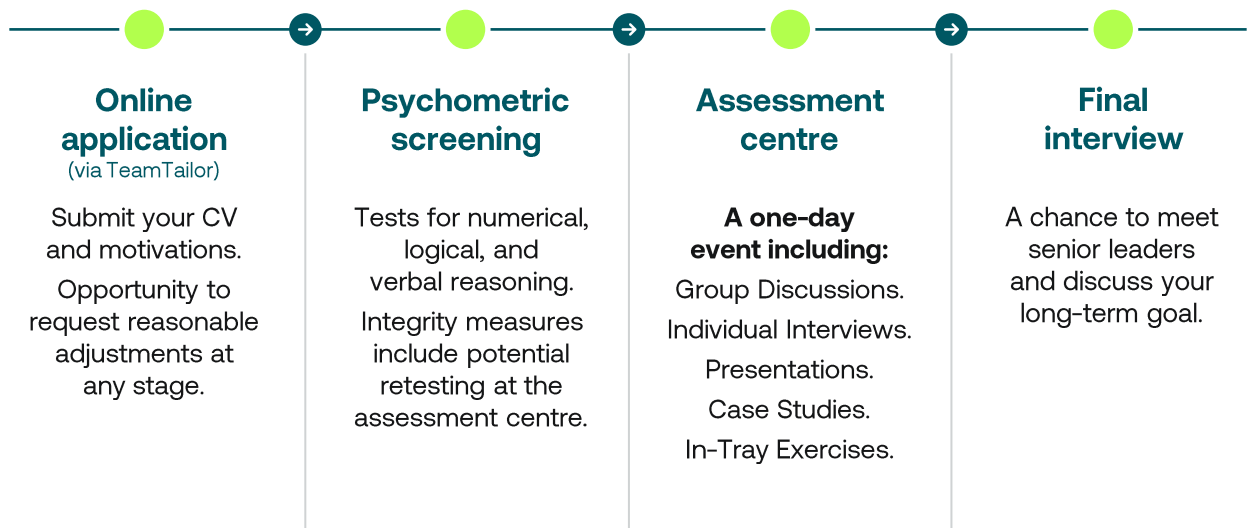
One of SmartestEnergy's ambitions is to become a company which embeds a culture focused on inclusion for all of our people.

We are interested in getting to know each candidate and for them to get to know us – this is a two-way selection process.

If at any stage of the process, there are any arrangements or adjustments to facilitate this, let us know. Speak to a member of our recruitment team confidentially as necessary.

## Application process

Our process is designed to be inclusive, transparent, and competency-based.





# What are we looking for?

Our Trading Graduate Scheme is designed to stretch and support you — and we want to see your strengths in action from the very start.

During our assessment process, we'll be looking at a core set of competencies that reflect the skills needed to thrive in energy trading, manage complexity, and work collaboratively across the business. You'll demonstrate these through tasks like simulations, case studies, interviews, and group exercises.

Competency	Assessed through	What we're looking for	Related leadership behaviours
Communication skills	Interviews, group exercise, presentation	Clear, confident speaking, active listening, engagement	Communicating effectively, instilling confidence
Analytical thinking	Case study, trading simulation, in-tray task	Logical reasoning, data interpretation, structured analysis	Thinking deeper, exploring solutions
Planning & time management	In-tray exercise, case study	Prioritisation, organisation, meeting deadlines	Getting results, being agile
Teamwork	Group exercise, trading game	Collaboration, respect, contribution to shared goals	Encouraging collaboration, coaching others
Problem solving	Case study, trading game	Creative thinking, practical solutions, applying frameworks	Exploring solutions, looking beyond
Financial market awareness	Interview, trading simulation	Understanding of trading mechanics, market influences, risk	Thinking deeper, instilling confidence
Working under pressure	All exercises (especially time-limited tasks)	Composure, adaptability, performance under pressure	Being agile, empowering action

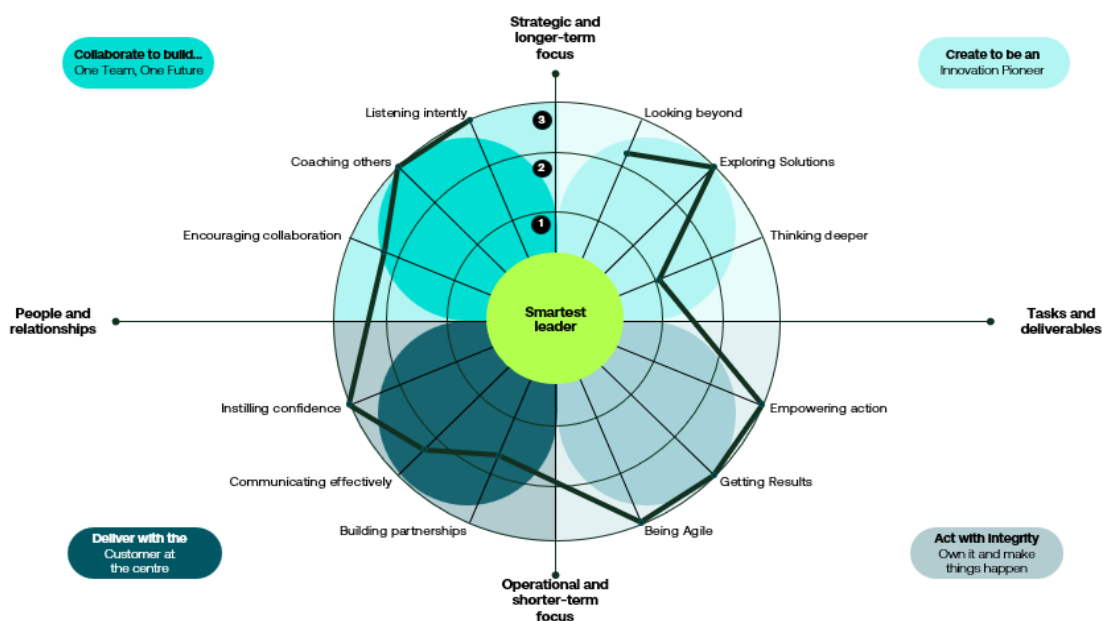
We don't expect perfection — we're looking for potential. Use the process to show us how you think, how you work with others, and how you respond to challenge. These are the foundations of a successful trading career.

# Leadership behaviours

At SmartestEnergy, leadership isn't defined by a title — it's a mindset. Whether you're presenting your first analysis or collaborating on a complex trading challenge, we expect everyone to act like a leader.

Our Leadership Behaviours guide how we work, how we grow, and how we succeed together. They're embedded into our graduate programme and assessed at every stage of your journey — from application to performance review.

Behaviour theme	What we look for	Where you'll show it
One team, one future	Collaboration, empathy, team success over ego	Group tasks, trading games, buddying, peer support
Own it	Accountability, decision-making, follow-through	Trading simulations, in-tray exercises, project ownership
Innovate to accelerate	Curiosity, solution-thinking, creative risk-taking	Case studies, presentations, offering fresh ideas in meetings
Think customer	Commercial awareness, user-focus, clarity of communication	Stakeholder roleplays, pitch exercises, reflections during assessment and rotations



You'll be supported to build these behaviours throughout your journey — through reflection, feedback, mentoring, and learning. But the mindset starts now. Bring your curiosity, your drive, and your best team spirit.

# What to expect from us?

**SmartestEnergy, use psychometric tests as part of the graduate recruitment process. These tests may be part of the initial online screening or the assessment centre.**

## Why we use them:

1

To identify candidates best suited to the role.

2

To assess fit with our company culture.

3

To efficiently shortlist from a large pool of applicants.

**Tests are standardised and timed, so both speed and accuracy matter. These tests may include:**

- Ability tests to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Aptitude tests to measure your natural strengths.
- Personality questionnaires to explore your typical behaviours and motivations.
- Verbal reasoning to gauge your understanding written information.
- Numerical reasoning to see how you work with numbers.
- Abstract or spatial reasoning to assess how you spot patterns or working with shapes.
- Situational judgement to show how you'd respond in work scenarios.

## Feedback and development



Throughout the assessment process, you'll receive objective, personalised feedback based on your performance in exercises such as group tasks, presentations, and interviews. This feedback is designed to highlight your strengths and identify areas for development, helping you understand how your skills align with SmartestEnergy's values and the requirements of the role. You are encouraged to reflect on this feedback and discuss it with assessors to support your ongoing growth.

SmartestEnergy is committed to your professional development from day one. As a graduate, you'll benefit from:



### Mentoring

Each graduate is paired with a mentor and a buddy for guidance, support, and advice throughout the scheme.



### Rotational Placements

The scheme includes rotations across different teams and functions, giving you broad exposure to the business and helping you build a diverse skill set.



### Structured Training

You'll take part in a comprehensive induction and ongoing learning modules covering technical, commercial, and professional skills.



### Personal Development Plans

Feedback from the assessment centre and ongoing reviews are used to create tailored development plans, ensuring you have clear goals and support as you progress.



## Online testing

Online and psychometric tests are used to fairly and objectively assess key abilities, aptitudes, and behaviours relevant to success at SmartestEnergy. These tests help us identify candidates who best match the requirements of the role and our company values, ensuring a consistent and inclusive selection process. They also give you the opportunity to demonstrate your strengths in areas such as problem-solving, numerical reasoning, and situational judgement.

You don't need to revise, but practising similar tests can help you:

- Get familiar with question types.
- Manage nerves.
- Pace yourself.
- Pick up useful tips to perform at your best.

You can find free practice tests on sites like:

- [The Psychometric Test Project](#)
- [The British Psychological Society](#).
- [SHL practice tests](#).

## STAR interview technique

The interview at a SmartestEnergy graduate assessment centre gives you the chance to discuss your motivations, skills, and experiences, and to show how you align with our values and leadership behaviours. It's an opportunity for you to demonstrate your strengths and potential fit for both the role and our company culture.

**Situation** → Set the scene

**Task** → What was your responsibility?

**Action** → What did you do?

**Result** → What was the outcome?

## Presentation exercise

These exercises assess how clearly and confidently you can communicate ideas, structure information, and engage your audience, skills that are essential for success at SmartestEnergy. It also gives you the opportunity to demonstrate analytical thinking, commercial awareness, and alignment with our values in a real-world context.

- Structure clearly: Have a clear introduction, main points, and conclusion.
- Be relevant: Link your content to SmartestEnergy's business, values, and the role.
- Use evidence: Support your points with data or examples.

- Communicate confidently: Speak clearly, make eye contact, and use positive body language.
- Engage your audience: Invite questions and respond thoughtfully.
- Keep visuals simple: Use slides to highlight key points, not overwhelm.
- Manage your time: Practise to stay within the limit.
- Prepare for questions: Anticipate and answer confidently.
- Show your strengths: Demonstrate analytical thinking, commercial awareness, and teamwork.

# Preparation and top tips



## Group exercise

A group exercise is designed to assess how you collaborate, communicate, and solve problems as part of a team.

During this activity, you'll work with other candidates to tackle a real-world scenario, allowing assessors to observe your teamwork, leadership, decision-making, and ability to contribute effectively in a group setting. These are key qualities SmartestEnergy looks for in future leaders.

## In-tray exercise

The in-tray exercise is designed to assess how you prioritise tasks, manage your time, and make decisions under pressure.

You'll be presented with a series of tasks and information, allowing you to demonstrate your organisational skills, attention to detail, and ability to work effectively in a fast-paced environment—qualities valued at SmartestEnergy.

## Case study

The case study exercise is designed to assess how you approach complex challenges, interpret information, and present practical solutions.

You'll have the opportunity to demonstrate your analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and decision-making using real-world scenarios, qualities valued in trading and risk roles at SmartestEnergy.

## Key contacts



### Trading Graduate Scheme General

Candidates may reach out to the professional team at:  
[tradinggrad-programme@smartestenergy.com](mailto:tradinggrad-programme@smartestenergy.com)

### Professional lead

Our professional is contactable at  
[professionallead-trading@smartestenergy.com](mailto:professionallead-trading@smartestenergy.com)

## Additional resources

### Learn more about SmartestEnergy

You'll find information about our company history, culture and our core values on our website.

> [About SmartestEnergy](#)

### Download our Sustainability Report

Explore our sustainability goals and ambitions and download our latest Sustainability Update Report.

> [ESG and Sustainability information](#)

### Corporate Reports

Read our Annual Reports detailing our Group company highlights and financial information.

> [Download our corporate reports](#)

### Get in touch

If we can help you with any further questions or information, please get in touch.

> [Contact us](#)