



investment architecture

TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha
Fund

Assessment of Value Report

For the year ended
31 March 2021

Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Fund Information

Fund objective:	The Fund aims to achieve a positive absolute return (net of fees) over a market cycle (typically 3 years), irrespective of market conditions.
Fund size:	£28,540,251.00
Performance comparator:	SONIA Lending Rate GBP

Assessment of Value

The Board of the Authorised Fund Manager (AFM) is required to perform an annual Assessment of Value for each unit class within the fund and to report its findings to investors.

The Assessment of Value places a responsibility on the AFM to determine whether the fees and charges of the fund are justified in the context of the overall service and value provided to investors.

Following the introduction of the Assessment of Value requirement in 2019, we appointed two independent non-executive directors with a particular remit to oversee and challenge the Assessment of Value process conducted in relation to the fund.

In this Assessment of Value report, we have used a traffic light system whereby:



Provided good value



Provided good value but action or monitoring is required



Did not provide good value and action is required

Independent AFM model – terminology

The AFM has the regulatory responsibility for all aspects of the fund operations including the actions of its delegates. Its role requires a focus on good investor outcomes, investor protection, oversight, compliance and general regulatory matters.

The Investment Manager is appointed by the AFM and has the full discretion to manage the assets of the portfolio in accordance with the fund's objective and investment policy. The Investment Manager is the entity which delivers out- or under-performance on behalf of investors. It is the entity which in turn receives the greatest share of the Annual Management Charge.

The Investment Manager and the AFM can be part of the same organisation or separate. When they are separate the fund can be described as having an Independent AFM which is the case with the TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha Fund.

Background to our firm – Independent AFM

Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited is a specialist provider of independent AFM services. Our approach to delivering good outcomes for investors in our funds, from the initial design phase and throughout the fund life cycle, is based upon having the right blend of experience, culture and governance.

We choose to work with a variety of service providers (fund accountants, depositaries, transfer agents and auditors) and provide independent, bespoke and flexible solutions. By outsourcing day-to-day activity to specialist providers our teams can focus on investor outcomes, risk management, oversight, product governance and regulatory change.

We delegate fund servicing to a panel of reputable institutions. Consequently, we have an informed view of this part of the supply chain. We benchmark those fund servicers against a range of criteria including service and cost. We build close relationships with our delegates at all levels within our respective organisations allowing for effective escalation when appropriate and always with the best interests of investors in mind. We are also able to change a service provider with relative ease as and when required to improve quality of service, reduce cost or for other strategic or operational reasons.

We delegate investment management to a wide range of firms who utilise different strategies and investment techniques. As such we have a broad and informed view of the investment management marketplace and independently benchmark across a range of criteria including service, performance and costs. Coming from a fund management background we have qualified investment managers and research analysts within our AFM business who have the experience to monitor fund performance and challenge third party investment managers on behalf of investors in the funds.



Independent AFM – service and costs

In assessing the quality and cost of our independent AFM service we have concluded that we have delivered a service that meets the requirements of investors in the funds, and the fund sponsor, and which has delivered value.

Examples of the criteria that we considered included the operation and compliance of the fund (including the number of errors and investor complaints), the results from the depositary's inspection and audit of our AFM arrangements, and other factors such as the implementation of regulatory change at no cost to investors.

We judge whether our AFM fee is competitive and can be justified based on feedback from independent consultants, our clients who select us and when existing funds move to us from our competitors. Our fees are tiered thereby providing economies of scale for investors as the fund value increases.



Service provider service and costs

Having separately assessed the quality and cost of the outsourced fund service providers we have concluded that services have met the requirements expected and delivered value to investors.

Examples of the criteria that we considered included Key Performance Indicators in the key areas including pricing, delivery of statements, delivery of report and accounts, and investor complaints.

We have assessed that the service providers' fees are competitive and provide value to investors by benchmarking against the other service providers on our panel. The majority of fees are tiered thereby providing a mechanism for economies of scale as the fund value increases.

Investment manager service and costs

It is our judgement that the experience of investors in the fund and an assessment of whether the fund has delivered value is most directly impacted by the services, performance and costs that are

attributable to the Investment Manager. Further details of our value assessment, with a particular focus on the Investment Manager, are shown below:



Quality of service

The range and quality of service delivered by the Investment Manager including the experience of the team, track record, quality of relationship with our AFM team, and the results from our governance and oversight arrangements

We monitor the Investment Manager on a daily basis, and maintain frequent contact with them on a range of aspects of their work including adherence with the investment mandate and policy, liquidity management, and fair value pricing as well as regulatory compliance. We have more formal contact quarterly and further periodic reviews on a thematic basis.

We are satisfied that the Investment Manager continues to meet our requirements and provides a good quality of service.

Performance

Whether the fund has provided good performance, net of fees, in relation to its investment objective. We have considered performance against the fund's benchmark and/or appropriate peer group, compliance with investment policy, volatility and liquidity, and any evidence of closet tracking.

The fund has outperformed against its comparator over 1 year. As the fund was launched in February 2019, performance history for the 3 and 5 year periods does not exist. The fund is being actively managed in accordance with the investment objective and policy and positive returns have been delivered.

Class/Comparator	1 year performance (%)	3 year performance (%)	5 year performance (%)	Value
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc	25.01	N/A	N/A	
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc	25.00	N/A	N/A	
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc	24.23	N/A	N/A	
SONIA Lending Rate GBP	0.06	1.38	2.01	



Costs

Whether the charges are reasonable compared with the costs of providing the service (considering factors such as the size of the Investment Manager, its balance sheet strength and profit margins).

At a fund size of £28,540,251.00 we are satisfied that the costs charged to the fund are reasonable given its size and a holistic assessment of the benefits that accrue to its investors.



Economies of Scale

Is the fund or the Investment Manager of a size or scale where economies of scale should be passed on to investors.

In view of the fund's size, we do not believe that there are economies of scale available yet to be passed back to the fund. However, we will discuss the feasibility of a tiered fee schedule with the investment manager in order that economies of scale are passed on should the fund grow sufficiently.

Comparable market rates

Whether the charges are comparable with similar funds in this sector of the market.

As an independent AFM we operate multiple funds. We appoint different service providers and a wide range of Investment Managers and can readily benchmark fees.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is lower than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is lower than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds in the market.

Class/Peer group	OCF (%)
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc	0.80
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc	0.80
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc	1.39
IA Global	0.98
Peer group highest OCF	2.66

Comparable services

How the charges compare to other comparable funds that the Investment Manager manages.

Whilst we do not have visibility of the rates that the Investment Manager charges for providing comparable services outside of our fund range, we have assessed the charges relative to other similar funds that we operate.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is lower than the OCF of other similar funds that we operate.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is lower than the OCF of other similar funds that we operate.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc

It is our assessment that the OCF of this class is higher than the OCF of other similar funds that we operate but is within 0.10% which we deem acceptable.

Class/Average Managed by the AFM	OCF (%)
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc	0.80
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc	0.80
TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc	1.39
Average managed by the AFM	1.29



Classes of shares

Whether investors are invested in a share class with higher charges than another class which is available. We have also considered different fees which apply to retail and institutional investors where institutional investors are subject to a significantly higher minimum investment.

The OCF of the P class is 0.59% higher than the F class. This differential is being discussed with the investment manager.

Overall Assessment of Value

Following our assessment, the board of Thesis Unit Trust Management Limited has concluded its assessment of value for each share class as follows:



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Acc

Provided good value.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha F Inc

Provided good value.



TM Neuberger Berman Absolute Alpha P Acc

Provided good value.

We will publish any updates on our website of any actions we have taken as a result of this Assessment of Value.