

**Vanguard**<sup>®</sup>

# **Vanguard UCITS ETF strategic model portfolios**

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**Third Quarter 2021**

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# Broadly diversified, low-cost index portfolios from an indexing leader

Vanguard UCITS ETF model portfolios offer a strategic asset allocation framework to help build diversified portfolios to meet investor needs. Using low-cost Vanguard UCITS ETFs, our well-diversified portfolios provide broad access to the global equity and fixed income markets.\*

These portfolios reflect our conviction that investment success relies on asset allocation, broad diversification, and low costs. Our portfolios offer many benefits:

- Gain broad-market exposure to global equities and global investment-grade fixed income products.
- Achieve diversification across both asset classes, through the underlying Vanguard ETFs that seek to track broad-market or market-segment indexes.
- Mitigate active manager risk.
- Keep costs low relative to the average actively managed investment strategy.
- Distributing and accumulating options available, including 100% accumulating UCITS ETF models.
- Benefit from Vanguard's 40+ years of experience in portfolio construction and indexing.
- Simplify investing, and spend more time with your clients.

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## Leveraging our experience as an indexing leader

Vanguard strategic model portfolios are created and maintained by our Investment Strategy Group, which is responsible for overseeing Vanguard's investment methodology, including portfolio construction and asset allocation modeling.

The group draws from Vanguard's broad and deep experience as an indexing pioneer to ensure that our model portfolios follow our investment philosophy. We believe that investors maximize their chance of success when they:

- Select and stick with asset allocations that reflect their goals, tolerance for risk, and time horizons.
- Diversify broadly within each asset class.
- Limit the costs of investing.



# Strategist commentary

As a strong third quarter approached the finish, investors reacted negatively in the last few days to a potential Chinese real estate debt bomb, Washington's fumbling with its debt ceiling, and the Federal Reserve's signal that it might begin tapering asset buybacks as soon as November—a move widely seen as a precursor to eventual tightening.

## Highlights

- › The Standard & Poor's 500 Index ended the third quarter up 0.6%, after hitting record highs just weeks earlier. The broader CRSP US Total Market Index was just underwater, at -0.1%.
- › U.S. fixed income markets took the same ride, with higher interest rates in late September wiping out strong July gains.
- › International bonds fared similarly, ending the quarter at 0.0%.

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## Mixed outlook, mixed results

Investors' sentiment in the quarter had been largely positive, with the market shrugging off the business effects of the COVID-19 Delta variant given the absence of lockdowns. But in September, investors switched to defense in view of an increasingly mixed outlook for economic growth. Big tech stocks benefited from a late-quarter rotation away from cyclical names, and large-capitalization stocks in general outperformed small-caps.

Across major equity sectors, winners and losers were divided roughly evenly, with financials leading the way. Growth stocks bested value stocks in the third quarter, as they had in the second quarter.

### Asset classes at glance<sup>1</sup>

For the quarter ended  
September 30, 2021

	Average return
U.S. equities	-0.1%
U.S. bonds	0.1%
International equities	-2.4%
International bonds	0.0%

<sup>1</sup> Returns are in U.S. dollars. Benchmarks referenced: U.S. equities, CRSP US Total Market Index; U.S. bonds, Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Float Adjusted Index; international equities, FTSE Global All Cap ex US Index; international bonds, Bloomberg Global Aggregate ex-USD Float Adjusted RIC Capped Index (USD Hedged).

**Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. The performance of an index is not an exact representation of any particular investment, as you cannot invest directly in an index.**

## Performance drivers and detractors<sup>1</sup>

In a quarter that ended mostly flat for all stock and bond sectors, international equities (-2.4%) detracted from Vanguard model returns, with developed ex-U.S. markets (-1.0%) leading emerging markets (-6.6%), as the latter continued to struggle with COVID-19 lockdowns in the absence of widespread vaccine availability.

In the busiest half-year on record for worldwide initial public offerings and mergers and acquisitions activity (source: Refinitiv), financials (+3.0%) was the quarter's best-performing sector in the U.S., while industrials (-4.0%) was the worst-performing sector.

Large-cap growth stocks (+1.2%) were the best-performing equity style box in the U.S. and small-cap growth stocks (-5.7%) were the biggest detractor. Large-cap stocks (+0.2%) outperformed small-cap stocks (-4.4%), and growth stocks (+0.7%) outperformed value stocks (-0.9%).

Fixed income gains (if any) were minimal across the board during the third quarter, with higher-quality fixed income securities generally performing better than lower-quality securities. In the U.S., Treasuries (+0.1%), long duration (+0.1%), and mortgage-backed securities (+0.1%) were the best performers, while longer-duration corporates (-0.1%) were the largest detractor. Emerging markets bonds were down in the quarter (-0.5%), and municipal bonds were also slightly negative (-0.4%).

### U.S. equities



With stocks generally flat over the period, size and style made the difference. Small-caps underperformed the asset class (-4.4%), with small-cap growth trending even lower (-6.6%).

### U.S. bonds



Fixed-income returns were also virtually unchanged at quarter's end, as the market digested mixed economic data and the Fed's apparently imminent tapering of its buyback program.



### International equities



International equities (-2.4%) was the worst performing of the four major asset classes, with emerging markets returning -6.6%.

### International bonds



In another flat asset class, emerging markets bonds were the laggards (-0.5%).

### Sectors



Financials were up (3.0%), thanks in part to surging deal activity.



Industrials lagged (-4.0%) amid growing questions about a straight-line pandemic recovery.

<sup>1</sup> Benchmarks referenced: international stocks: FTSE Global All Cap ex US Index; developed ex-U.S. equities: FTSE Developed ex North America Index; emerging markets stocks: FTSE Emerging Index; U.S. financial and industrial stocks: MSCI Financials and MSCI Industrials Indexes, respectively; U.S. large- and small-cap growth stocks: Russell 1000 Growth and Russell 2000 Growth indexes, respectively; U.S. large- and small-cap stocks: Russell 1000 and Russell 2000 indexes, respectively; U.S. growth and value stocks: Russell 3000 Growth and Russell 3000 Value indexes, respectively. U.S. Treasuries: Bloomberg U.S. Treasury Index; long-duration bonds: Bloomberg U.S. Long Government/Credit Float Adjusted Index; mortgage-backed securities: Bloomberg U.S. MBS Float Adjusted Index; intermediate-duration bonds: Bloomberg U.S. 1-5 Year Government/Credit Float Adjusted Index; emerging markets bonds: JP Morgan Emerging Markets Bond Index; and municipal bonds: S&P National AMT-Free Municipal Bond Index.



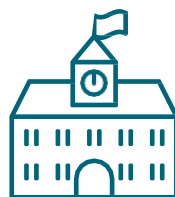
## All eyes on Delta

While the human toll of the COVID-19 Delta variant continues to be of concern, its economic impact on the United States has dampened, but not reversed, growth trends. China, however, is another story.



### The U.S. economy

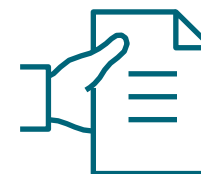
Full-year real GDP growth is on track to reach our target range of 7.0% to 7.5%. In addition, we expect a strong upswing in employment in the coming months, paving the way for a full labor market recovery by mid-2022. Contributing factors include:



- Schools' reopening, which should enable more current stay-at-home parents to return to work.



- Increasing vaccination rates, in part because of the federal mandate covering about two-thirds of all U.S. workers.



- The expiration of enhanced unemployment benefits.

Together, these developments should push the jobless rate, currently at 5.4%, toward the mid-4.0% range by year-end.

## Outside the U.S.

**China:** Indicators of economic activity in China weakened in the third quarter, hit by the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant and related lockdowns, flooding in central China, and the delayed effects of recent policy tightening.

Vanguard has downgraded its expectation for third-quarter real GDP growth in China from an annual rate of 1.0% to 0.5%. We anticipate China's full-year economic growth will come in just below 8.5%.

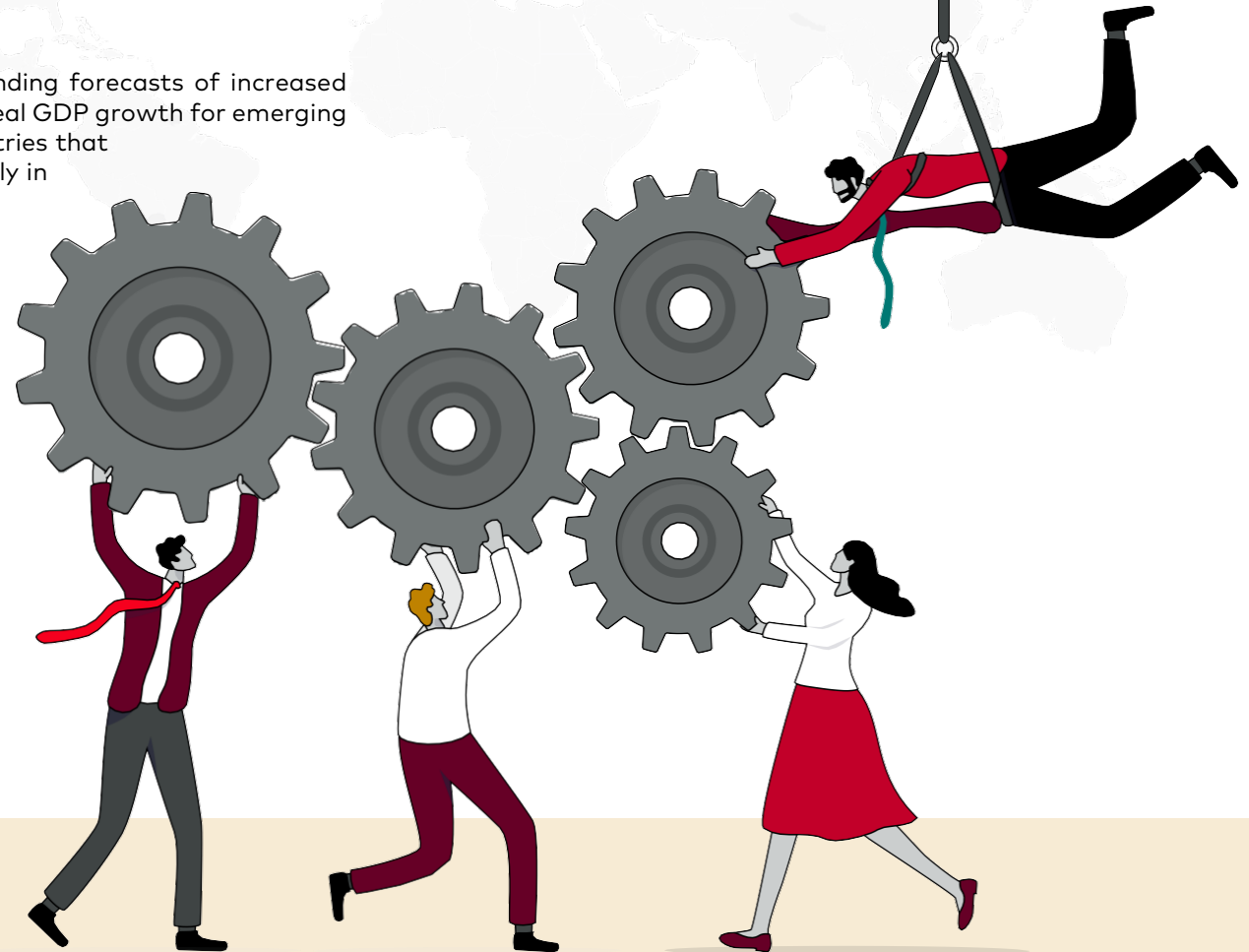
**Euro area:** Growth momentum here remains strong, with suggestions of modest softening where cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant have risen. Vanguard continues to expect that euro area real GDP growth in the third quarter will be slightly stronger than in the second and that full-year growth could reach 5.0%. GDP remains 3 percentage points below its pre-pandemic level, a gap that may be erased late this year.

## Emerging markets

Any prospects for accelerated growth remain on hold pending forecasts of increased vaccine production this winter. Vanguard expects full-year real GDP growth for emerging markets will be above 6.0%. We'll be closely watching countries that have had the most success in warding off COVID-19, notably in Asia, as they have the greatest risk of further lockdowns.

## The Federal Reserve and inflation

Although the Fed considers inflation at recent levels as transitory, it thinks inflation risks are skewed to the upside. Vanguard believes the Fed will want to see further labor market gains in the months ahead before it starts paring its asset purchases—and we believe the Fed will indeed see those gains. We anticipate inflation will remain above the Fed's 2% target until the spring of 2022.



# Model Portfolios Description

## UCITS Core ETF Portfolios

The Vanguard UCITS Core ETF strategic model portfolios provide with a highly diversified and balanced investment portfolio using broad market equity and fixed income indexes, while making implementation simple and cost-effective.

## UCITS Simplified ETF Portfolios

The Vanguard UCITS Core ETF strategic model portfolios provide with a highly diversified and balanced investment portfolio using broad market equity and fixed income indexes, while making implementation simple and cost-effective.

## UCITS Detailed ETF Portfolios\*

The Vanguard UCITS Detailed ETF strategic model portfolios provide with a highly diversified and balanced investment portfolio using broad market equity and fixed income indexes, while allowing advisors the opportunity to have more control over their portfolio allocations.

## UCITS Income Tilt ETF Portfolios

The Vanguard Income Tilt ETF strategic model portfolios provide a highly diversified and balanced investment portfolio using broad equity and fixed income indexes, for clients seeking income generation from their portfolio.



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The model is generated using Morningstar Direct, incorporating globally recognized diversified benchmarks to represent the underlying asset class exposures. Vanguard pays Morningstar Direct to produce the model data. This model has an income tilt, which weights high-dividend equity securities and USD corporate bonds at 75% in their respective equity and fixed income allocation. The high-dividend equity exposure is represented by the FTSE AW High Dividend Yield NR USD index, and the U.S. corporate bond exposure is represented by Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Corporate—United States Dollar Index.

The backtest uses weights as of September 30, 2020 and rebalances monthly to the same weights. All dividends, interest, and capital gains are reinvested.

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