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Introduction

About the form

You can use this form to apply for initial registration as a foreign lawyer (RFL).

Please note this form cannot be used if you are either a solicitor or barrister of England and Wales (E&W).

Please note this form cannot be used if you are a registered European Lawyer (REL), or if you need to apply to become a REL. You will need to become a REL (or else register with one of the other United Kingdom (UK) legal professions) if you are:

- a national of an Establishment Directive state; and
- a member of one of the legal professions listed in the Establishment Directive (list available from Information Services); and
- practising as a lawyer “on a permanent basis” in the UK; and
- you are not a solicitor, barrister or advocate of any of the UK jurisdictions.

If this applies you will need a REL application form (RF6) available from our Contact Centre.

How to use the form

- Please complete all the relevant boxes with the information required.
- If you make an error during completion of the form please put a line through any deletions. Do not use liquid paper.

How to contact us

Throughout the guidance notes we may refer you to different departments within the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) for assistance and the contact details for these departments are listed below.

If you need any assistance completing this form please telephone our contact centre on 0870 606 2555. Our lines are open 09.00 - 17.00, Monday to Friday. If you are calling from overseas please call +44 (0)1527 504450. Please note that calls may be monitored/recorded for training purposes. Alternatively you may contact us via e-mail at contactcentre@sra.org.uk.

If you are not sure if you need to register, and the answers are not found in these notes then contact our Professional Ethics team on 0870 606 2577. Our lines are open from 09.00 - 17.00 Monday to Friday. Alternatively you may contact us via e-mail at professional.ethics@sra.org.uk. All contact with Professional Ethics is strictly confidential.

Frequently asked questions

How long does my registration last?

You must renew registration by 31 October each year.

Where do I send the form?

Please send your form and the appropriate fee to:

Operations Unit
Solicitors Regulation Authority
Ipsley Court
Berrington Close
Redditch
B98 0TD

OR DX 19114 Redditch

Alternatively by fax on +44(0)1527 519150, if payment is made via credit card or bank transfer.

Please note that any payment received without an accompanying application form will be held for a maximum of 30 days before being returned to the sender.

How can I pay?

You can pay the full amount by cheque, postal order, bank transfer or credit card. Please note there will be a handling charge of 1.75% for Mastercard/Visa/Maestro/Delta/Electron payments, please note Diners or American Express are not accepted. Please complete the credit/debit authorisation form if you wish to pay by credit/debit card and return it with your application form. If the credit card authorisation/cheque is not signed or payment is not enclosed, we will return the form to you. You may also pay by cash at your own risk, but this is not recommended and we will not be held responsible for monies not received.

Who should I make the cheque payable to?

Please make your cheque payable to the **Law Society**. All foreign cheques need to be endorsed, i.e. signed and dated on the reverse by the drawer. Please note it may take up to 8 weeks for a foreign cheque to clear our account and your application will not be processed until cleared funds have been received. We will not accept postal orders drawn outside the UK.

Will I receive a receipt for the fee and form?

We do not issue receipts for application forms or fees.

Can my RFL registration be back dated to coincide with my commencement in the partnership?

No. If an application is complete, i.e. supporting documentation, fee and correctly completed form, the commencement date of registration will be the date on which we receive the application. You are unable to commence practising as a lawyer until your registration has been granted.

I am a foreign lawyer employee in a firm of solicitors or a multi national partnership (MNP). Do I need to register as a RFL?

You do not need to be registered unless:

- you are about to be made a partner in the MNP; or
- or you are a director, member or beneficial shareowner in a recognised body.

It is important to note that you must be registered before you become a partner in a firm.

Please note there is an exemption from registration for a partner who is a lawyer of a Establishment Directive state based at an office outside E&W.

I am a RFL employed by a MNP, how should I be described on their notepaper?

You must not be held out in any way that suggests you are a partner or a solicitor. You should not be held out on notepaper as a RFL. Please note only a RFL who is a partner in a MNP or a director of a recognised body which is a limited liability partnership (LLP) is entitled to be held out in that way. You can be referred to on the notepaper as a lawyer of your own jurisdiction(s).

I am a RFL in a MNP and the solicitor/REL partner has now left. What does this mean to RFLs and solicitors employed in the MNP?

If there are no solicitors or REL partners then you should no longer hold yourself out as a RFL. The rules state that if there are no longer any solicitor/RELS entitled to carry out reserved litigation, advocacy, probate or conveyancing work for the firm's client, the firm can no longer undertake such work. If the firm is to continue to carry out immigration work it will need to seek authorisation from the Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) on 0207 211 1500.

Can I become a partner once I have posted my RF5 application?

No. You can only become a partner once you have received confirmation from the Authority that you have been registered. Our service standard is to process complete applications within 30 days of receipt.

1 Personal details

Please complete all the boxes in this section.

2 Current practising details

Please complete this section with details of where you currently practise as a lawyer, whether in private practice or as an in-house lawyer.

Status

A person's status in the firm or organisation. Examples of status in private practice include:

- senior partner
- partner.

It is only necessary to register as a RFL if you will be a partner of a MNP or recognised body.

Type of organisation

These may include:

- incorporated practice
- multi-national partnership (MNP)
- limited liability partnership (LLP).

3 Details of intended future practice

Please give details of any MNP or recognised body in which you will practise if registered.

4 Details of home jurisdiction

Please give details of all jurisdictions in which you are admitted. We will also need from each jurisdiction an original certificate of good standing which is less than 3 months old. Please provide a certified copy of the English translation, if applicable.

Your certificate should confirm the following information;

- date of admission,
- whether or not there is any training period, probationary period or stage required after your admission,
- that your name is held on a register and that you are entitled to practise,
- that there are no disciplinary orders or pending proceedings against you (or details of any such orders or proceedings).

We must be satisfied that you are entitled to practise as a member of the legal profession to which you belong. If you are not, we will need details of the reasons why you cannot practise.

5 Previous application

Please give details of any previous application for registration in the register of foreign lawyers. This applies to all applications whether granted or refused.

6 Work categories

Our directory holds information on the types of work undertaken by RFLs. This information is reflected on the Law Society website www.lawsociety.org.uk. Please indicate the work categories you currently undertake. Work categories are listed in the glossary on page 8. Please note our records hold a maximum of six categories.

7 Languages

Our directory holds information on any languages spoken other than English. This information is reflected on the Law Society website www.lawsociety.org.uk. Please indicate the languages you speak. Languages are listed in the glossary on page 9. Please note our records hold a maximum of six languages.

8 Material events or additional information

You must give full details here if, for example:

- you have ever been found guilty of professional misconduct by a court or a disciplinary tribunal,
- proceedings alleging professional misconduct by you have been started before a court or disciplinary tribunal although there has been no decision yet,
- you have ever been struck off or suspended from practise,
- you are admitted within the jurisdiction of another Law Society, Bar, Chamber or court (including being called to the Bar of E&W),
- you stop being entitled to practise as a member of a foreign legal profession,
- your own regulatory body introduces a rule preventing your profession taking part in the kind of MNP in which you are engaged,
- you have ever been made bankrupt in E&W or the equivalent in another country,
- you have ever been convicted of a crime in any court; or,
- you have ever been committed to prison in civil or criminal proceedings.

If there is not enough space, use another sheet and attach it to the form.

Please note as part of the assessment checks to grant an initial registration as a foreign lawyer the SRA carries out immigration status enquiries with the Home Office for all applicants practising from the UK.

9 Affiliate status

- As a RFL, if you are practising mainly from an office in E&W you will be entitled to free affiliate status, if desired.
- If you are a Scottish or Northern Irish solicitor you are entitled to full membership, rather than affiliate status.
- If you are based overseas and would like affiliate status please note that there is a £200 charge.
- Affiliate status gives a RFL access to the facilities of The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London and subscription of the Law Society Gazette and to participate in events of the Law Society and Law Society groups.

10 Declaration

Please consider the following when completing this section:

- You must complete, sign and date this section. Failure to do so will prevent your registration from being recorded and your form will be returned to you.
- The declaration relates to the whole form.

11 Fee calculation

The fee for initial registration as a foreign lawyer is £665.

The initial Compensation Fund contribution is £25.

12 Application checklist

To help us process your application quickly, please check the following:

- that the form has been completed correctly,
- that the form is signed and dated,
- that any additional sheets are clearly labelled and attached securely to the form,
- that the cheque is signed, dated and attached securely to the form; and
- that any relevant documentation is enclosed, including confirmation(s) as to home rules (if appropriate) and an original certificate of good standing.

We hope that these guidance notes will assist you to complete the form. If you need any further help please telephone our Contact Centre.

Work categories

You may select up to six categories each, in order of importance, from the following list:

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| A | Business Affair | AA | Financial & Investment Services |
| AB | Advocacy | AC | Children Law |
| AD | Military Law | AE | Pension Law |
| B | Charity Law | BB | Administrative & Public Law |
| C | Consumer Problems | CC | Agricultural Law |
| D | Conveyancing - Residential | DD | Aviation Law |
| E | Commercial Property | EE | Banking Law |
| F | Crime - General, Motoring, Juvenile | FF | Chancery |
| G | Debt & Money Advice | GG | Civil Liberties/Human Rights |
| H | Environmental Law | HH | Common Law |
| I | Employment | II | Mediation - Family |
| J | Family | JJ | Computer & IT Law |
| K | Landlord & Tenant - Residential | KK | Construction/Civil Engineering |
| L | Immigration Law | LL | Corporate Finance |
| M | Litigation - General | MM | Education Law |
| N | Litigation - Commercial | NN | Energy & Natural Resources |
| O | Medical Negligence | OO | Mediation - Civil/Commercial |
| P | Mental Health | PP | Fraud |
| Q | Neighbour Disputes | QQ | Insolvency & Bankruptcy |
| R | Personal Injury | RR | International Law (Non - EC) |
| S | Welfare Benefits | SS | Libel & Defamation |
| T | Wills & Probate | TT | Maritime/Shipping/Admiralty |
| U | Taxation | UU | Media/Entertainment Law |
| V | Trusts | VV | Mergers & Acquisitions |
| W | Liquor Licensing/Gaming | WW | Planning Law |
| X | Intellectual Property | XX | Professional Negligence |
| Y | Insurance | YY | Transport - Road & Rail |
| Z | European Community Law | ZZ | Travel & Tourism |

Languages

You may select up to six languages each, in order of importance, from the following list:

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| AFR | Afrikaans | LAT | Latin |
| ALB | Albanian | LIT | Lithuanian |
| AMH | Amharic | LTV | Latvian |
| ARA | Arabic | LUG | Luganda |
| ARM | Armenian | MAL | Malay |
| BAH | Bahasa | MAN | Mandarin |
| BEN | Bengali | MAR | Marathi |
| BOS | Bosnian | MIR | Mirpuri |
| BSL | British Sign Language | MLM | Malayalam |
| CAN | Cantonese | MSE | Maltese |
| CHA | Chichewa | NEP | Nepali |
| CHI | Chinese | NGE | Nigerian |
| CRE | Creole | NOR | Norwegian |
| CZE | Czech | PER | Persian (Same as Farsi) |
| DAN | Danish | POL | Polish |
| DUT | Dutch | POR | Portuguese |
| EDO | Edo | PUN | Punjabi |
| ENG | English | PUR | Purewal |
| ESP | Esperanto | PUS | Pushtu |
| FAN | Fanti | ROM | Romanian |
| FAR | Farsi (Persian) | RUS | Russian |
| FIN | Finnish | SCG | Gaelic (Scottish) |
| FLE | Flemish | SER | Serbo Croat |
| FRE | French | SIH | Sindhi |
| GA | Ga | SIN | Sinhalese |
| GER | German | SLO | Slovenian |
| GHA | Ghanian | SOM | Somali |
| GRE | Greek | SPA | Spanish |
| GUJ | Gujarati | SRB | Serbian |
| HAK | Hakka | SWA | Swahili |
| HEB | Hebrew | SWE | Swedish |
| HIN | Hindi | SWG | Swiss-German |
| HOK | Hokkien | SYC | Sycheti |
| HUN | Hungarian | TAG | Tagalog |
| IBO | Ibo | TAM | Tamil |
| ICE | Icelandic | TEL | Telugu |
| IND | Indonesian | TEO | Teochew |
| IRA | Iranian | THA | Thai |
| IRG | Gaelic (Irish) | TUR | Turkish |
| ITA | Italian | TWI | Twi |
| JAP | Japanese | UKA | Ukrainian |
| KAL | Kalabari | URD | Urdu |
| KEK | Kekchi | URH | Urhobo |
| KOR | Korean | VNM | Vietnamese |
| KSW | Kiswahili | WEL | Welsh |
| KUR | Kurdish | YID | Yiddish |