

Becoming an in-house CPD provider

Guidance on applying for authorisation

Education & Training Unit
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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming an in-house continuing professional development (CPD) course provider.

This document contains details of the procedures for authorisation by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) as an in-house provider of CPD courses, including the requirements and criteria CPD courses must meet and the terms and conditions of authorisation.

You can download and complete an [application form](#) to become an authorised in-house course provider for CPD purposes.

Please download the [application form](#), and send the completed form, together with a cheque for £200 made payable to “The Law Society,” to

The Finance Department
The Solicitors Regulation Authority
Ipsley Court
Berrington Close
Redditch
Worcs B98 0TD

DX19114 Redditch

Requirements and procedures of in-house CPD authorisation

Procedure of authorisation

In-house authorisation allows solicitors' firms, in-house legal departments or other organisations **which employ solicitors** to allocate CPD credit to courses organised for their own staff, non-fee-paying guests (although costs may be recovered for room hire and refreshments) and clients. Sole practitioners and/or small local firms may join together to form a consortium to offer in-house courses as above. The provider may self-accredit courses that meet the criteria. (NB. Barristers' Chambers require external CPD authorisation.)

An authorisation fee of £200 is payable with the application. This may be reduced if your firm has achieved Investors in People (IIP) and/or the Solicitors Regulation Authority's Lexcel award. The authorisation period is for three years and becomes valid on the first day of the month following the date of the letter of approval.

Once authorised, course providers may self-accredit suitable courses. For example, the courses may be

- prepared/presented by own staff
- based on approved training videos or training programmes, or
- prepared/presented by external speakers (The speaker does not need to have authorisation in their own right to do this.)

It is not necessary to provide details of courses to the SRA.

Separate applications

Authorisation does not include the following types of courses, and providers of such courses should make separate application to the SRA and pay the appropriate fee:

- compulsory courses, ie the management course stage one
- other courses that may be designated by the SRA from time to time

Requirements of authorisation

Providers are required to

- **calculate the number of CPD hours for each course and notify solicitors of the number**
The number of hours is calculated by adding up the number of hours of tuition time, excluding lunch, tea and coffee breaks. It is not necessary to round the time up or down, as courses may be credited with hours and minutes.
- **notify solicitors of the Solicitors Regulation Authority reference**
All providers are allocated a unique reference, which should be notified to solicitors when they register their attendance.

- **keep records of solicitors who attend courses**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority does not keep records of solicitors' course attendance. Solicitors are required to keep their own [record of training](#), which may be requested and checked by the SRA at any time. Providers are required to keep attendance records for two years from the date of each course for confirmation purposes.

Authorisation is subject to satisfactory routine monitoring and continued compliance with the [terms and conditions](#). The SRA may request feedback, or sight of course materials from time to time. Any information supplied to the SRA will be treated as confidential.

Please contact the Validation and Monitoring team on 0870 606 2555 if you have any further queries.

Criteria for authorisation as a CPD course provider

Course details

Providers should demonstrate that their courses and administration meet the criteria outlined below. For the purposes of authorisation, 'a course' is a training session that is relevant to the work of a solicitor, accredited for CPD, and lasts for one hour or longer. Sessions lasting between 30 minutes and an hour will count for a maximum of 75 per cent of the CPD requirement.

Aims and intended learning outcomes

The course aims and intended learning outcomes should be clearly set out and should include

- the course content and its purpose
- who the course is designed for and the level of prior knowledge/experience assumed
- the level of knowledge/understanding that should be achieved on completion of the course
- whether the subject would be taught in depth or dealt with as an overview
- what delegates should be able to do on completion of the course

Content

The content should meet the intended learning outcomes and should therefore be

- relevant and suitable to the work of a solicitor
- set at the correct level for the intended delegates
- up-to-date and factually correct
- concise and clearly set out.

Course presentation

The method of presentation used should be

- appropriate to meet the course aims and intended learning outcomes
- relevant to the needs of the delegates
- properly thought out
- set at the correct level
- where possible, varied to encourage learning

Course materials

All accredited courses of one hour or more must include supporting course materials.

It should be made clear how the materials will be used – for example, to be worked through, as background material, or as a source of reference for use afterwards.

The course materials should be

- clearly organised
- up-to-date

- cover the aims and intended learning outcomes
- well presented
- accurate
- comprehensive

They should include

- a course programme/timetable indicating the length of the course and time that will be spent on each section
- relevant cases and legislation where appropriate
- details of method of presentation, including, where appropriate,
 - role plays
 - exercises
 - workshops
 - case studies

The course materials should not infringe copyright or contain any defamatory material.

Course tutors/speakers

The course tutors/speakers should have

- relevant qualifications/experience in the subject area
- the necessary practical skills/experience to present the course effectively
- the necessary skill to lead a group discussion when using approved videos (at least two years in the subject matter)

Course venue and accommodation

The course venue and accommodation should be

- free from interruptions
- where possible, easily accessible with facilities for the disabled
- well ventilated and temperature controlled
- as soundproof as possible with good acoustics

It should also have

- where possible, natural daylight with blinds/curtains
- writing surfaces for the delegates
- comfortable seating
- if required, good audio-visual/sound equipment
- a supply of refreshments

The room layout should be appropriate for the number of delegates and method of presentation to be used.

Administrative arrangements and support services

Course providers should ensure there are appropriate and effective administrative arrangements and support services for delegates.

These should include

- a nominated person(s), or a system to deal with enquiries from delegates
- the provision of advice for prospective delegates on the most appropriate course(s) to meet their needs
- appropriate and effective record keeping of delegates' attendance at courses
- allocation of the relevant CPD credit for accredited courses
- notification of the Solicitors Regulation Authority CPD reference to delegates
- details of the cancellation policy

Assessment

Please note that this criterion refers to assessment of the course work – for example, by examination, completion of a project, assignments, multiple-choice questions, etc, which the provider is responsible for assessing. Examples of such courses are LLMs, Post Graduate Diplomas and distance-learning courses.

The arrangements and methods of assessment should be appropriate, clearly set out and easy to understand.

Evaluation

Providers must have a system in place for evaluation by the delegates of the quality of each course. This should include

- a method of obtaining feedback from delegates of whether the course(s) met the standards set out above (download a sample [delegate questionnaire](#))
- analysis of the feedback received, over each 12-month period, which would be made available to the SRA on request

Administrative arrangements for monitoring individual courses may be delegated.

Administration

Providers should nominate a person who will take responsibility for ensuring that courses/seminars will comply with the [terms and conditions of authorisation](#). This person should be a partner, senior manager or senior officer of the organisation, although the day-to-day running of the courses may be delegated.

Termination of authorisation

Providers may terminate their authorisation at any time by notification in writing to the Validation and Monitoring team.

The SRA may terminate the authorisation if

- the SRA considers that continuation of the authorisation would be detrimental to the interests of the profession or those who attend courses, or

- there is evidence of a poor standard of administration by the provider, or
- there is evidence that the provision of courses is below a standard that is acceptable to the SRA, or
- a bankruptcy order or voluntary arrangement is made in respect of the provider or the provider is entered into administration, receivership or liquidation or is dissolved or has a receiving order made against it or enters into an arrangement with creditors, or
- the renewal fee is not paid

Terms and conditions of authorisation

The provider should undertake to

- pay the appropriate authorisation fee
- only accredit qualifying courses that meet the criteria laid down by the SRA
- maintain a record of the names of those solicitors who wish to claim CPD credit for their attendance at courses and submit copies of the attendance records to the SRA on request
- for the purposes of monitoring, on request, make available details of forthcoming courses and, without charge, co-operate with the SRA in the monitoring of courses
- where the SRA is investigating a complaint, provide course materials and all relevant details as requested
- notify the Validation and Monitoring team, in writing, of any changes to the business address or the nominated contact person

The SRA may change the criteria for accreditation of courses upon three months' notice.

Enquiries

All enquiries about these arrangements should be addressed to

Contact Centre
The Solicitors Regulation Authority
Ipsley Court,
Berrington Close, Redditch,
Worcestershire, B98 0TD

or

DX 19114 Redditch

Telephone 0870 606 2555, or if calling from overseas please telephone +44 (0) 1527 504450. Lines are open 09.00 hours – 17.00 hours, Monday-Friday.

Waivers from routine CPD requirements

Solicitors in firms holding Investors in People / Lexcel

Investor in People is a national quality standard award.

[Lexcel](#) is the Solicitors Regulation Authority's practice management quality mark, written specifically for the legal profession. The Lexcel quality mark is evidence of a well-managed practice committed to a quality of service. Organisations that achieve the award have demonstrated that they have a properly structured approach to the identification of training needs, effective delivery of training, and development and evaluation of training provision.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority has decided that organisations that have achieved either, Lexcel or Investor in People awards may be exempt from certain regulatory requirements in respect of training provision: The details are set out below

- Organisations wishing to run in-house CPD courses will not be required to submit details of courses, course tutors and/or group discussion leaders. Nor will they be subject to the routine monitoring of in-house CPD courses.
- Solicitors employed by these firms/organisations will not be asked to submit their training records for routine monitoring of their CPD requirements. However, they will still be asked to confirm their compliance on the practising certificate application form.
- With regard to authorisation to run in-house courses, the SRA reserves the right to monitor in the event of reported difficulties, complaints or concerns about the adequacy of provision.
- Organisations that have been granted an award are asked to give an undertaking to notify the SRA should the award be withdrawn.