

Continuing professional development Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requirements

Education & Training Unit
Version 1

All solicitors and registered European lawyers (REs) in practice in England and Wales are required to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

The CPD year runs from 1 November to 31 October. The requirements are outlined below.

Requirements in hours

For newly qualified solicitors and REs:

- one hour for each complete month worked from date of admission/registration to 31 October (Those admitted/registered on 1 November will go straight into their first CPD year.)

For all solicitors and REs in their first CPD year and in each subsequent year:

- 16 hours

Please note

- All solicitors must undertake the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Management Course Stage 1 between the date of admission and the end of the third CPD year. The seven hours that the course attracts count towards the CPD requirement.
- Solicitors who work **part time** should refer to Continuing professional development: Information for solicitors working part time.
- Solicitors who qualified by undertaking the Law Society Finals Examination, which was phased out in 1994, or the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test (QLTT) have a requirement to attend the Financial and Business Skills (not the exam) and the Client Care and Professional Standards modules of the Professional Skills Course (PSC) during their first CPD year. The hours gained from attending these modules will count towards a solicitor's first-year CPD requirement. No hours can be claimed for undertaking the modules prior to admission. The following are exempt from the requirement to attend the two PSC modules:

- solicitors who undertook the Legal Practice Course and PSC prior to admission
- solicitors who sat the Professional Conduct and Accounts heads of QLTT
- solicitors transferring from Scotland via QLTT

Earning CPD credit by attending accredited courses

At least 25 per cent of the requirement must be met by participating in courses that are offered by providers authorised by the SRA and which require attendance for one hour or more.

"Participation" includes preparing, delivering and/or attending accredited courses.

"Attendance" means attendance at the complete course. Part attendance does not count at all.

"Course" includes

- face-to-face sessions forming part of a course, including those delivered by an authorised distance-learning provider
- a course wholly provided by distance learning that involves assessment by dissertation and written examination
- structured coaching sessions, delivered face to face, of one hour or more, which have written aims and objectives, are documented showing an outcome, and are accredited under an authorisation agreement
- structured mentoring sessions involving professional development, of one hour or more, delivered face to face, which have written aims and objectives, are documented showing an outcome, and are accredited under an authorisation agreement

Earning CPD credit by undertaking other activities

The remaining 75 per cent of the CPD requirement, too, may be met by participating in activities as described above. However, it may also be met by undertaking a wide range of other activities, outlined below.

Activity	Explanation/comments
Participation in accredited courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing, delivering, and/or attending complete courses of more than 30 minutes but less than 60 minutes in length • Actual time may be claimed.
Participation in non-accredited courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing, delivering, and/or attending courses that are of particular relevance and benefit to an individual's area of work, and are of more than 30 minutes in length • Actual time may be claimed.
Coaching and mentoring sessions of less than one hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured coaching sessions and structured mentoring sessions involving professional development, delivered face to face, of between 30 minutes and 60 minutes in length, and which have written aims and objectives, are documented showing an outcome, and are accredited under an authorisation agreement • Actual time may be claimed.

Activity	Explanation/comments
Coaching and mentoring sessions delivered from a distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured coaching sessions and structured mentoring sessions involving professional development, delivered from a distance (eg by telephone, e-mail or fax), of 30 minutes or more in length, and which have written aims and objectives, are documented showing an outcome, and are accredited under an authorisation agreement • Actual time may be claimed.
Writing on law or practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, law books, journals, publications for clients, clients' own publications, newspapers and magazines (whether legal publications or not), on the internet • Topics may include, for example, law practice, issues arising from transactions, clients, markets, industries, products. • Actual time may be claimed.
Work shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in structured work shadowing schemes with clear aims and objectives and requiring feedback or reflection on the shadowing activity. • Actual time may be claimed.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research that relates to legal topics or has relevance to the practice/organisation and which results in some form of written document, precedent, memorandum, questionnaire/survey, etc • Actual time may be claimed.
Production of a dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for or production of a dissertation counting towards a qualification recognised by the SRA. • Actual time may be claimed.
Listening to / watching audio/visual material offered by authorised providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual time may be claimed.
Distance-learning courses where there is provision for the answering of enquiries or for discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance-learning courses may be delivered by correspondence, video and audio cassettes, television or radio broadcasts and computer-based learning programmes. • Actual time may be claimed.
Preparation and delivery of training courses forming part of the process of qualification or post-admission training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual time may be claimed.

Activity	Explanation/comments
Work towards the Training and Development lead body Units D32, D33 and D34 relating to assessing and verifying the achievement of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual time spent building a portfolio of evidence and/or attending lectures, workshops, etc may be claimed.
Participating in the development of specialist areas of law and practice by attending meetings of specialist committees and/or working parties of relevant professional or other competent bodies charged with such work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual time spent at meetings may be claimed.
Work towards the achievement of an NVQ in any business-related area and at any level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual time spent building a portfolio of evidence and/or attending lectures, workshops etc may be claimed.
Study towards professional qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination must be taken to claim time for study and examination itself. • Actual time spent in study and examination may be claimed.

Please note

To count towards meeting CPD requirements, the activity should be at an appropriate level and contribute to a solicitor's general professional skill and knowledge, and not merely advance a particular fee-earning matter.