

Training trainee solicitors

Guidelines for recognising previous experience (time to count)

Education and Training

As a training establishment your organisation may, at your discretion, recognise significant legal experience gained outside of a training contract as time to count to reduce the duration of the training contract.

Basis for granting a reduction

Time to count may be granted where you are satisfied

that the experience

- is equivalent to that gained in a training contract
- was in English law, and in one or more legal topics
- was gained in the three years immediately preceding the start of the training contract

and that, during the experience, the applicant

- achieved or acquired one or more of the training contract skills standards
- was adequately supervised
- was appraised
- worked either full time or not less than two and a half days per week part time

Considering applications

It is emphasised that you have no obligation to accept previous experience and it is entirely at your discretion whether to grant time to count.

When considering applications you should ensure that the trainee, prospective trainee or applicant for a training contract completes a time to count application form for each organisation where the experience was gained, including your organisation if applicable, signed by the supervisor at that organisation. A copy of the training contract skills standards should be provided to the supervisor.

Page 6 of the completed application form must be sent to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). Completed forms may be reviewed as part of the monitoring of training contract arrangements.

For alternative formats, email info.services@sra.org.uk or telephone 0870 606 2555.

Placements during the academic stage

When considering a time to count application from a trainee who completed a sandwich placement during the academic stage of training, you should also take the following into account

- only placements at level 3 or above should normally be considered
- the placement should have been for at least three months
- whether the placement was with an authorised training establishment
- whether the trainee was paid a reasonable salary during the placement, taking account of the national minimum wage and the SRA minimum salary for trainees
- whether the level of work was commensurate with work undertaken during a training contract
- whether the trainee satisfactorily completed the placement and was awarded the degree

Period of reduction

You can grant a reduction of not less than one month (30 days) and no more than six months (183 days) in the length of the training contract.

Full-time experience is granted at half equivalent, i.e. a minimum of 12 months of experience is granted a maximum of six months' time to count.

Part-time experience is calculated pro rata on a half equivalent basis, i.e. a trainee who worked two-and-a-half days per week for 12 months could be granted three months' time to count.

Notification to the Solicitors Regulation Authority

You must notify the SRA of any time to count that you have granted. You can do this either on the form when you register the training contract or, after registration, by writing to

Customer Applications Team
Solicitors Regulation Authority
Ipsley Court
Berrington Close
Redditch
B98 0TD

If you have a query regarding time to count, please contact Information Services on 0870 606 2555. Our lines are open 9.00–17.00, 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 email at info.services@sra.org.uk.