



Solicitors
Regulation
Authority

SRA Renewals
Registered Foreign Lawyers (RFL) Guide
October 2018

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1. About registered foreign lawyer (RFL) status

An individual who is a member of a profession approved for RFL registration, and intends to be a manager, member or interest holder of an authorised body, must register as an RFL.

For the list of professions approved for RFL status, please see our website [here](#).

1.1 Establishment of Lawyers Directive 98/5/EC

Where an individual is qualified as a member of an Establishment Directive profession, they may not need to register as an RFL. If an individual meets the criteria for registration as a Registered European Lawyer (REL), there will need to register as such and cannot register as an RFL. For guidance on registration as a European lawyer, please see our separate REL guide.

Where an individual is qualified as a member of an Establishment Directive profession and will be based entirely at an office outside England & Wales, the individual can either register as an RFL or as an Exempt European Lawyer. To be approved as an Exempt European Lawyer (EEL), we will only need to receive an approval form (FA2). The FA2 form can be found on our website [here](#).

1.2 Employee of an authorised body

Please note, registration as an RFL is only required if you intend to be a manager, member or interest holder. You can still register if you intend to practise as an employee (see Rule 3 of the [SRA Practice Framework Rules 2011](#)); however, this is not necessary.

Further, in accordance with Rule 3, an individual can only practise as an RFL while they are working for an authorised body or an authorised non-SRA firm. An RFL cannot practise as such while working in-house or if working for a company which is not authorised.

1.3 How do I apply?

An application to be an RFL is made through mySRA. The relevant regulations for an RFL application are: Regulation 2.4 of the [SRA Practising Regulations 2011](#) and Rule 3 of the SRA Practice Framework Rules 2011. We will need to receive with the application a certificate of good standing from the bar association or law society you are regulated by.

For a renewal application, the fee is £368. For an initial application, the fee is pro-rated throughout the practising year. However, if an individual is based outside

England & Wales the fee is £190 regardless of whether they are renewing or applying initially. For more information on pro-rated fees, please see our [Fee Policy](#).

We aim to review and make a decision on 95% of applications within 30 days of receipt.

If we require further information we will contact you. If we do not require further information you will only receive an automated email confirming your registration.

If you have queries regarding whether you need to register, please email the Registration team at registration@sra.org.uk.

2. The form

If you are submitting an initial application, please make sure you have completed the following steps before completing the form:

- you have checked that you are able to register and that your profession has been approved (please see the list of approved professions here)
- you have received a copy of your certificate of good standing
- you have updated your mySRA account with your personal and professional details (nb: this should include your jurisdiction, as well as the authorised body/authorised non-SRA firm you will be working for).

If you are submitting a renewal application you do not need to provide a certificate of good standing, unless you have qualified in a new jurisdiction.

2.1 Regulation in England and Wales

If any of the questions listed in this section of the application form apply to you, you must indicate this:

- Are you admitted as a solicitor of England and Wales?
- Are you a barrister called to the Bar of England and Wales?
- Have you previously applied for registration as a foreign lawyer?
- Have you ever been struck off the register of foreign lawyers?
- Has your registration ever been suspended by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal?
- Has the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal ever prohibited your restoration to the register?

2.2 Organisation details

We will expect you to indicate yes to at least one of the following questions:

- Do you intend to become a manager of an authorised body?
- Do you intend to become an employee of an authorised body?
- Do you intend to become an interest holder of an authorised body?
- Do you intend to become a manager of an authorised non-SRA firm?
- Do you intend to become an employee of an authorised non-SRA firm?
- Do you intend to become an interest holder of an authorised non-SRA firm?

Please also make sure your mySRA account is updated with the details of the authorised body/authorised non-SRA firm you intend to work for.

2.3 Details of home jurisdiction(s)

We will expect you to indicate yes to the following questions:

- Are you a member of a legal profession approved for RFL registration?
- Are you entitled to practise as a member of that profession?

If you are prohibited by the rules of your profession from practising as a manager of a recognised body, please answer this question accordingly and provide more information.

2.4 Certificate of good standing

Please select whether you have uploaded a copy of your certificate or posted it directly to us.

A certificate of good standing should be a certificate from your bar association or law society which confirms you are:

- admitted as a member of your profession;
- entitled to practise as a member;
- of good standing (ie no disciplinary actions have been taken against you).

The certificate must be dated within the last 3 months.

2.5 Regulation 3 of the SRA Practising Regulations 2011

Please make sure you have read and understood Regulation 3 of the [SRA Practising Regulations 2011](#) (Regulation 3).

If any of the events or circumstances in Regulation 3 apply to you, please indicate this on the application form.

If you have a licence or practising certificate which is subject to a condition (for instance, you need to undertake a course in order to be a manager), we will need to make a decision on your application under Regulation 3.1(h). This means we will request more information from you, such as a copy of your practising certificate.

We aim to make decision on application within 120 days of receipt.

2.6 Reduced registration fees

If you are based at an overseas office, a reduced fee is payable. For more information on fees, please see our Fee Policy [here](#).

3. Further guidance

3.1 Certificates of good standing

What do you mean by a certificate of good standing?

A certificate of good standing should be a certificate from your bar association or law society which confirms you are:

- admitted as a member of your profession;
- entitled to practise as a member;
- of good standing (ie no disciplinary actions have been taken against you).

The certificate must be dated within the last 3 months.

3.2 Authorised bodies and authorised non-SRA firms

What is an authorised body/authorised non-SRA firm?

An authorised body is a firm which is regulated by the SRA. An authorised non-SRA firm is a firm which is regulated by another approved regulator under the Legal Services Act 2007. If you are not sure if the business you are working for is either an authorised body or authorised non-SRA firm, please contact us before submitting an application at registration@sra.org.uk.

3.3 Approved professions for RFL status

What if my profession has not been approved for RFL status?

If your profession has not been approved, and you would like to apply for approval, please see the information on our website [here](#). Please be aware that applying for approval does take time and we cannot guarantee when a decision will be made by.

3.4 Entitlement to practise

What do you mean by 'entitled to practise'?

Entitled to practise means that you are able to practise as a member of your profession without any restrictions and hold the correct qualifications, registrations or licences.

If you must hold a licence or practising certificate in order to practise as a member of your profession, we will need you to maintain this while you are registered.

If your licence or practising certificate expires or is revoked while you are registered as an RFL, your RFL status will expire in accordance with Regulation 10.1(c)(ii) of the SRA Practising Regulations 2011.

Please note, if you do not hold a licence or practising certificate you must apply for one in order to register.

3.5 Applications in advance of securing employment

Can I apply if I am looking for work?

No. You must either be working for or have an offer of employment from an authorised body or authorised non-SRA firm. We may contact the firm to confirm you are employed by them as part of the application process.

3.6 Establishment Directive lawyers based entirely outside the UK

I'm qualified as a member of an Establishment Directive profession but will be a manager who is based entirely outside the UK, what should I apply as?

You can apply as an RFL and will pay the overseas fee of £190. If your application is granted without any conditions you will automatically be deemed approved as a manager under Rule 13.2 of the [SRA Authorisation Rules 2011](#).

However, you can also apply for approval as a manager as an exempt European lawyer. There is no fee for this and we will need to receive an approval application (FA2), which is available on our website [here](#).

3.7 Reasonable adjustments

How do I apply for a reasonable adjustment?

If you require a reasonable adjustment, please contact us by:

Email – renewals@sra.org.uk

Telephone – 0370 606 2555

Post – Renewals Team, Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN

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