



Legal Practice Course Outcomes 2019

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Legal Practice Course Outcomes 2019

Introduction

This document sets out the outcomes for the Legal Practice Course (the ‘course’). On successful completion of the course students will have reached a significant stage in the framework of their training towards becoming a solicitor. They will have begun to develop many of the areas of knowledge, skills and understanding expected of a newly qualified solicitor.

The Legal Practice Course comprises two stages. Students will need to pass both stages of the course to satisfy the requirements of the SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations.

Aims of the course

The aims of the course are to:

1. prepare students for work-based learning
2. provide a general foundation for practice.

Legal Practice Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, successful students should be able, under appropriate supervision, to:

1. research and apply knowledge of the law and legal practice accurately and effectively
2. identify the client's objectives and different means of achieving those objectives and be aware of
 - the financial, commercial and personal priorities and constraints to be taken into account
 - the costs, benefits and risks involved in transactions or courses of action
3. perform the tasks required to advance transactions or matters
4. understand the key ethical requirements contained in the SRA Principles of Regulation and Code of Conduct, understand where these may impact and be able to apply them in context
5. demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of:
 - Professional Conduct and Regulation

- the core practice areas of Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice, Litigation and the areas of wills and administration of estates and taxation
 - the course skills of Practical Legal Research, Writing, Drafting, Interviewing and Advising, and Advocacy. Students should also be able to transfer skills learnt in one context to another
6. demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in the three areas covered by their choice of electives
 7. reflect on their learning and identify their learning needs.

Note: Before starting the course, students will be expected to have a basic level of Preliminary Knowledge and Skills. See Appendix.

Stage 1

Stage 1 comprises of the follow:

- Professional Conduct and Regulation
- Wills and Administration of Estates
- Taxation
- the Core Practice Areas – Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice, Litigation
- Course Skills.

Professional Conduct and Regulation

On completion of Stage 1 students should be able to identify and act in accordance with the core duties of professional conduct and professional ethics which are relevant to the course.

A successful student should be familiar in general with the SRA Standards and Regulations as applied to the solicitors' profession. This will include knowledge of the requirements imposed by the Principles, Code of Conduct for Solicitors RELs and RFLs, Code of Conduct for Firms and the SRA Accounts Rules. Students should also be able to demonstrate an understanding of the SRA Enforcement Strategy which underpins the Standards and Regulations.

1. The Principles

These impose requirements on solicitors to act:

- in a way that upholds the constitutional principle of the rule of law, and the proper administration of justice (Principle 1)
- in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons (Principle 2)
- with independence (Principle 3)
- with honesty (Principle 4)
- with integrity (Principle 5)
- in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion (Principle 6)
- in the best interests of each client (Principle 7).

2. The Code of Conduct for Solicitors, Registered European Lawyers (RELS) and Registered Foreign Lawyers (RFLs)

By the end of Stage 1, a successful student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELS and RFLs. This sets out the duties and responsibilities owed to clients and others in relation to:

- maintaining trust and acting fairly
- dispute resolution and proceedings before courts, tribunals and inquiries

- service and competence
- client money and assets
- referrals, introductions and separate businesses
- other business requirements
- conflict of interests
- confidentiality and disclosure
- cooperation and accountability
- client identification
- complaints handling
- client information and publicity.

3. Code of Conduct for Firms

By the end of Stage 1, a successful student should understand the professional requirements of the Code of Conduct for Firms when providing legal services, particularly in relation to the obligations on:

- managers in SRA firms
- Compliance Officers

4. Money laundering

By the end of Stage 1, a successful student should:

1. be familiar with the legislation, including the international context
2. be able to recognise circumstances encountered in the course of practice where suspicion of money laundering should be reported in accordance with the legislation, with particular reference to those types of legal work covered by Stage 1.

5. Financial services

By the end of Stage 1, a successful student should:

1. understand the purpose and scope of financial services regulation
2. understand the financial services regulatory framework in general (including authorisation), and how it applies to solicitors' firms
3. recognise when relevant financial services issues arise
4. be able to apply financial services provisions to the types of work covered by the course
5. be able to identify and find appropriate sources of information on financial services.

6. SRA Accounts Rules

By the end of Stage 1, a successful student should have an understanding of the SRA Accounts Rules, in relation to:

- Client money: what constitutes client money and the requirements for managing and maintaining a client account.
- Client account: requirements for client account and ensuring that a client account is not used to provide banking facilities.
- Client money must be kept separate: the core requirements to keep client money safe and separate from money belonging to the authorised body.
- Withdrawals from client account: when and how withdrawals from client account can be made.
- Managing client money and using each client's money for that client matter only.
- Duty to correct breaches upon discovery: identification of SRA Accounts Rules breaches and the duty to correct breaches promptly upon discovery.
- Payment of interest: payment of interest including the arrangements for how and when interest must be paid.
- Client accounting systems and controls, including maintaining client and business ledgers for all receipts and payments of transactions including the requirement for reconciliations and a central record of bills.
- Operation of joint accounts.
- Operation of a client's own account.
- Third-party managed accounts.
- Obtaining and delivery of accountants' reports: dealing with accountant's reports. including the process for obtaining and delivery of accountants' reports.
- Storage and retention of accounting records which must be kept.
- Preparation of statement of accounts on completion of a matter.

Wills and Administration of Estates

On completion of Stage 1, students should have a general overview of the content, format and validity of wills, obtaining grants of representation and administration of an estate. They should be familiar with the purpose and general structure of the relevant documents and able to:

1. use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to the client
2. identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals
3. recognise conduct issues and act within the Codes of Conduct
4. identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service

Element 1: Pre-grant practice

Students should understand:

1. validity, revocation and alteration of wills and codicils
2. total and partial intestacy
3. identification of property passing by will, intestacy or outside of the estate
4. valuation of assets and liabilities and the taxable estate.

Element 2: Application for a grant of representation

Students should understand:

1. the necessity for and main types of a grant
2. the powers and duties of personal representatives and their protection
3. the main types of oath for executors or administrators.

Element 3: Post-grant practice

Students should understand:

1. collection and realisation of assets, and claims on the estate
2. raising funds and the payment of inheritance tax and debts
3. pecuniary legacies, vesting of gifted property in the beneficiaries entitled and distribution of the residuary estate.

Taxation

On completion of Stage 1, students should have a sufficient grasp of tax law to enable them to understand the impact of taxation on the areas covered by the course and should be able to:

- use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to the client;
- recognise conduct issues and act within the Codes of Conduct;
- identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

Element 1: Income Tax

On completion of Stage 1, students should:

1. understand the main features of the income tax system , including total income; personal allowances; calculation of Income Tax liability
2. understand the distinctions between taxation at source and direct assessment and the taxation of income from investments and interest
3. appreciate the existence of anti-avoidance legislation such as the rules relating to gifts and settlements.

Element 2: Capital Gains Tax

On completion of Stage 1, students should understand:

1. the main principles of capital gains tax, including the charge on the disposal or deemed disposal of assets and the calculation of chargeable gains
2. the main exemptions and reliefs from Capital Gains Tax.

Element 3: Inheritance Tax

On completion of Stage 1, students should:

1. understand the principles relating to the charge to tax on death on immediately chargeable lifetime transfers; in relation to potentially exempt transfers; on gifts with the reservation of benefit
2. be familiar with payment of tax due; exemptions and reliefs; the principle of cumulation; valuation; accountability and burden; anti-avoidance provisions.

Element 4: Corporation Tax

On completion of Stage 1, students should understand the principles relating to the charge to tax and charges on income.

Element 5: VAT

On completion of Stage 1, students should understand the basic principles of VAT including: registration of taxable persons; taxable supplies; input and output tax; standard and zero rating; exemptions.

Core practice areas

On completion of Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course, a successful student, under appropriate supervision, should be able to progress basic transactions or matters in the context of:

- the core practice areas of Business Law and Practice, Litigation and Property Law and Practice including elements added by the provider to a core practice area which are in addition to the minimum requirements specified for the core practice area
- elements included by the provider in Stage 1 which are in addition to the minimum requirements specified in these outcomes for Wills & Administration of Estates or Taxation.

Students should be able, in relation to transactions and matters which they undertake, to:

1. use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to each client and each transaction matter
2. identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals
3. investigate and identify the relevant facts, research and identify the relevant legal issues, and advise the client on the legal consequences
4. identify the overall nature of the transaction or matter, then plan and progress that transaction or matter through a series of steps and decisions including, where appropriate, drafting documentation
5. recognise conduct issues and act within the Codes of Conduct.

Business Law and Practice

On completion of this core practice area, students should:

1. understand the nature and structure of the different business media and be able to select an appropriate medium and structure to meet the client's commercial requirements and to advise on the legal and taxation implications
2. be able to progress basic business transactions arising during the life and development of a business
3. understand the interests of different parties involved in the business including directors, shareholders and creditors of a business.

Students should also be able to:

1. interpret and apply primary source materials, constitutional documents and other relevant agreements

2. identify conduct and regulation issues, such as conflicts of interest and Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, as they arise in the context of relevant transactions and act within the Codes of Conduct
3. draft the relevant documentation and prepare the appropriate forms and filings.

Element 1: Business media

Students should:

1. be able to advise the client as to the advantages and disadvantages of different business media including sole traders, partnership and companies
2. be able to advise on form and legal structure and on the cost, procedures, formalities and taxation implications of setting up and running the business
3. be familiar with the procedures required to incorporate a company and/or form a partnership and understand the approvals, filings and procedures to enable the business to commence operating
4. be familiar with the roles, rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the participants
5. understand the procedures to alter the constitution of a company and to appoint and remove the officers of a company
6. understand how to allot, issue and transfer shares.

Element 2: On-going operations and common transactions

Students should be able to:

1. progress common business transactions and advise and take steps relating to the business's on-going operations
2. advise on entering into contracts on behalf of the business, including issues arising from contracts in which directors have an interest
3. advise on steps to protect the assets of the business
4. advise on issues arising from basic finance and lending
5. draft notices, agendas and minutes of meetings and complete and file routine statutory forms and maintain and up-date statutory books
6. advise on taxation of profits (income and capital) generated and distributed by the business
7. demonstrate an appreciation of the continuing duties, obligations and liabilities of the business and of its partners, directors and shareholders

8. advise on the options for and claims arising on insolvency, eg bankruptcy, winding up and administration
9. draft and review documentation to give effect to transactions.

Element 3: Stakeholders

Students should:

1. understand the different interests of parties involved in the business including the company, directors, shareholders and creditors of the business
2. be aware of potential conflicts between the different parties
3. understand the importance of knowing the client.

Element 4: Business accounts

Students should understand the basic principles of business accounting and should be aware of the need to interpret business accounts to make sure clients are appropriately advised. In particular, students should:

1. understand the terms used and basic accounting concepts
2. be familiar with how accounting data is used to prepare a profit and loss account and a balance sheet
3. understand the construction of and be able to analyse and interpret a simple balance sheet and profit and loss account of a sole trader, partnership and limited company
4. understand the nature of shareholders' funds.

Property Law and Practice

On completion of this core practice area, students should, in the context of domestic or commercial transactions or both, and in relation to freehold and leasehold property:

1. appreciate the nature of a property transaction
2. be able to identify and perform the critical steps in a transaction
3. be aware of conflicts of interest that may arise when acting for more than one party in a property transaction
4. understand the requirements of lenders and the need to consider money laundering issues
5. have a sufficient grasp of the tax aspects of a property transaction, including Stamp Duty Land Tax.

Element 1: Pre-contract stage

Students should be able to:

1. take preliminary instructions
2. identify the steps needed to raise and the issues arising from pre-contract enquiries and pre-contract searches
3. deduce and investigate title as appropriate to the transaction
4. report on the transaction to the client
5. decide, with the client where appropriate, what action needs to be taken and identify what action (if any) the client has to take
6. analyse and draft a contract (and constituent clauses).

Element 2: Binding contract

Students should understand when the contract becomes binding and should appreciate the need to:

1. advise the client on the terms of any offer of finance and ensure that adequate finance is available before committing the buyer to the contract
2. select a method of making the contract binding appropriate to the transaction.

Element 3: After the contract becomes binding

Students should be able to:

1. deal appropriately with the deposit, obtaining undertakings and insurances
2. prepare appropriate, clear and precise undertakings
3. draft document(s) (whether paper-based or electronic) necessary to transfer the legal estate
4. report on the title to the lender
5. prepare the mortgage documentation
6. prepare for completion and select a method appropriate to the transaction
7. carry out the completion and the relevant post-completion steps
8. complete the mortgage and protect the lender's security
9. discharge any existing mortgage over the property.

Litigation

On completion of this core practice area, students should:

1. understand the nature of civil and criminal litigation
2. be able to identify the critical steps in the process of litigation.

Element 1: Case analysis

Students should be able to analyse factual material, identify the legal context in which factual issues arise, relate the central legal and factual issues to each other and be able to:

1. identify the elements of selected causes of action and criminal charges
2. identify, analyse and, if necessary, research the propositions of fact going to the elements and be able to identify, analyse, secure and preserve evidence to support propositions of fact
3. identify, analyse and advise on the admissibility and relevance of evidence and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each side's case including, where appropriate, the opponent's evidence.

Element 2: Courses of action and funding

Students should be able to:

1. identify possible courses of action, demonstrate an awareness of the legal and nonlegal consequences of selecting a course of action and advise the client on the attendant costs, benefits and risks
2. advise the client on the different ways of funding litigation, including the availability of public funding.

Element 3: Procedure

Students should be able to identify the steps and strategies that need to be taken in the preparation and conduct of litigation.

Element 4: Civil Litigation and Dispute Resolution

Students should be able to:

1. identify the appropriate forum for the resolution of the dispute, including appropriate methods of alternative dispute resolution
2. identify possible cost consequences of different outcomes, the effect of the different costs rules and the impact of the likely costs orders on the conduct of litigation

3. demonstrate an understanding of the Civil Procedure Rules, the overriding objective, and their application
4. demonstrate an understanding of the court's role in the litigation process, in particular the court's case management powers and duties
5. identify steps to be taken prior to commencement and be able to issue, serve and respond to claim forms
6. advise on interim applications, prepare and conduct applications to the master or district judge
7. understand the steps needed to prepare the case for trial and the procedure and evidential issues arising from expert witnesses, witnesses of fact and disclosure, and demonstrate an awareness of the basic elements of trial procedure
8. demonstrate an awareness of the mechanisms which are available to enforce and appeal a judgment
9. prepare the appropriate documentation and draft claim forms, particulars of claim, defences, application notices, orders and witness statements.

Element 5: Criminal Law and Practice

Students should be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the Criminal Procedure Rules, their overriding objective, and their application
2. demonstrate an understanding of the court's role in the litigation process, in particular the court's case management powers and duties
3. demonstrate an awareness of police station representative accreditation schemes, and the court duty solicitor scheme
4. explain the custody, review and detention limits under Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the role of the custody officer
5. identify the steps involved in making an application for a representation order
6. identify the steps involved in making or contesting a bail application
7. identify the practical and tactical considerations involved in determining the mode of trial, including an awareness of the range of sentences available, and advise the client accordingly
8. assist in the preparation and conduct of a summary trial, committal proceedings and a trial on indictment.

Course skills

On completion of Stage 1, a successful student should have a basic competence in the course skills and be able to use them effectively under supervision and should:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the principles and criteria that underpin good performance in these skills
2. be familiar with methods of communication and able to choose and tailor the communication form and style to suit the purpose of the communication and needs of different recipients
3. be able to communicate orally and in writing and draft and amend documents in a form, style and tone appropriate for the recipients and the context
4. demonstrate attention to detail
5. be aware of the practical, commercial and personal considerations which should be taken into account
6. recognise conduct issues and act within the Codes of Conduct
7. demonstrate sensitivity to issues of culture, diversity and disability in communication with clients, colleagues and others
8. be able to use the skills in combination where appropriate.

Practical Legal Research

On completion of this area, students should:

1. understand the need for thorough investigation of all relevant factual and legal issues involved in a transaction or matter
2. be able to undertake systematic and comprehensive legal research
3. be able to present the results of their research.

Element 1: Legal and factual issues

Students should be able to investigate legal and factual issues and:

1. determine the scope and identify the objectives of the research
2. determine whether additional information is required and identify appropriate sources for factual investigation
3. identify the legal context(s) and analyse the legal issues
4. address all relevant legal and factual issues.

Element 2: Research

Students should be able to undertake systematic and comprehensive research and:

1. identify and apply current case law, statute law, statutory instruments, regulations and rules to the research problem
2. identify, prioritise and use relevant primary and secondary sources
3. locate and update cases and statutes, and use indices and citators
4. use periodicals, digests and standard practitioner texts
5. select and use appropriate paper and electronic research tools.

Element 3: Presentation of results

Students should be able to:

1. keep a methodical, accurate and complete record of the research undertaken
2. draw clear conclusions and identify courses of action

3. present the results of their investigation and research in a way which meets the Course Skills outcomes.

Writing

On completion of this area, students should be able to communicate effectively in writing and should:

1. understand and be able to choose the appropriate method of communication
2. understand and be able to apply the principles of good writing.

Element 1: Appropriate use of media

Students should:

1. understand the appropriate uses of emails, letters, memoranda and other forms of written communication
2. be able to choose the appropriate medium, form and style
3. be able to tailor the written communication to suit the purpose of the communication and the needs of different clients or recipients.

Element 2: Writing style

Students should be able to produce written work which is appropriate for the chosen medium and the recipient and which:

1. uses accurate, straightforward and modern language
2. uses correct spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation
3. has a clear, logical, consistent and appropriate structure and format
4. has been checked and edited.

Element 3: Content

Students should be able to produce written work which:

1. forms a coherent whole and, where appropriate, advances the matter;
2. addresses accurately and correctly all the relevant legal and factual issues and, where appropriate, identifies practical options including the costs, benefits and risks of those options
3. identifies clearly clients' objectives and priorities, addresses their concerns and carries out their instructions

4. accurately and systematically records a meeting or presentation and its outcomes.

Drafting

On completion of this area, students should:

1. understand the content and requirements of formal legal documents in the core practice areas
2. understand the principles of good drafting and editing
3. be able to explain their own and others' drafting.

Element 1: Drafting and amending documents

Students should be able to draft and amend basic documents or provisions that:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the relevant legal, factual and procedural issues
2. meet all formal legal or other requirements
3. demonstrate a considered choice, use and adaptation of templates or precedents
4. are in prescribed or generally accepted form.

Element 2: Style of drafting and amending

Students should be able to draft and amend documents that:

1. use accurate, straightforward and modern language
2. use correct spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation
3. are easy to follow, internally consistent and free of ambiguity
4. use recitals, definitions and boilerplate correctly and appropriately
5. have a clear, logical, consistent and appropriate structure, layout and use of numbering and schedules.

Element 3: Explaining and editing

Students should be able to:

1. explain in clear and simple terms the meaning and effect of basic documents and the possible implications for the client

2. review and edit their own and others' drafting to identify and correct omissions, errors and unnecessary provisions.

Interviewing and advising

On completion of this area, students should demonstrate an understanding of the principles and techniques of the skills of interviewing and advising.

Element 1: Interviewing

Students should:

1. be able to choose an appropriate way to obtain relevant information
2. be able to plan, prepare for and identify the objectives of an interview
3. understand how to conduct an effective interview that elicits the relevant information, allows the client to explain any concerns, anticipates the client's questions and has clear outcomes
4. be able to listen actively and use appropriate questioning techniques
5. be able to establish a professional relationship.

Element 2: Advice and follow up

Students should be able to:

1. advise the client taking into account the client's objectives, priorities and constraints and addressing all relevant factual, practical and legal issues
2. identify possible courses of action, the legal and non-legal consequences of a course of action (including the costs, benefits and risks) and assist the client in reaching a decision
3. identify any further decisions to be made or steps to be taken and manage the client's expectations including likely outcomes and timescales
4. accurately record an interview, advice given orally, decisions made by the client and follow-up steps and, where appropriate, confirm instructions in each case in accordance with the outcomes for writing
5. identify the circumstances in which to take instructions or seek advice from a supervising solicitor.

Advocacy

On completion of this area, students should:

1. understand the importance of preparation and the best way to undertake it
2. understand the basic skills in the presentation of cases before courts and tribunals
3. be able to formulate and present a coherent submission based upon facts, general principles and legal authority in a structured, concise and persuasive manner.

Element 1: Case analysis and preparation

Students should be able to:

1. identify and analyse the relevant facts, the legal context in which the factual issues arise, and how they relate to each other
2. summarise the strengths and weakness of the case from each party's perspective
3. prepare the legal framework of the case, and a simple narrative outline of the facts
4. prepare the submission as a series of propositions based on the evidence
5. identify, analyse and assess the purpose and tactics of examination, cross-examination and re-examination to adduce, rebut and clarify evidence.

Element 2: Oral presentations

Students should be able to:

1. identify, analyse and assess the specific communication skills and techniques employed by a presenting advocate
2. demonstrate an understanding of the ethics, etiquette and conventions of advocacy.

Stage 2

Stage 2 comprises of three vocational electives.

Vocational electives

Introduction

This part sets out the outcomes for Stage 2 of the Legal Practice Course: Vocational Electives (the vocational electives). On successful completion of Stage 1 and Stage 2, students will have completed the Legal Practice Course which is part of the vocational stage of training towards becoming a solicitor.

In order to complete Stage 2, a student must successfully complete three distinct vocational electives. The vocational electives can be undertaken at the same provider as Stage 1, or at one or more different providers.

Legal Practice Course elective outcomes

At the end of an elective, successful students, under appropriate supervision, should be able in the context of the area(s) of law and practice studied on the elective to:

1. demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and employ the applicable skills in the elective's area(s) of law and practice
2. use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to each client and each transaction or matter
3. identify the overall nature of the transaction, then plan and progress that transaction or matter through a series of steps and decisions including, where appropriate, drafting documentation
4. identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals
5. investigate and identify the relevant facts, research and identify the relevant legal issues, and advise the client on the legal consequences
6. recognise conduct issues and act within the Codes of Conduct
7. identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

Statement of Outcomes

The provider will produce, for approval by the SRA, a statement of outcomes for each vocational elective using the model of the Core Practice Areas for Stage 1. The statement of outcomes must:

1. explain how the Legal Practice Course Outcomes (page 1) and the vocational elective outcomes will be met in the elective
2. identify the learning objectives of the elective
3. specify the elements of law and practice which will be covered on the elective
4. identify the ethical and professional conduct issues that will be addressed on the elective and act within the Codes of Conduct
5. describe how the Course Skills, where appropriate, will be employed by students on the elective
6. where appropriate, explain how the elective will develop the knowledge and understanding developed through Stage 1.

Appendix

Preliminary knowledge

Before starting a Legal Practice Course students will be expected to have a basic knowledge of the seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge as identified in the Joint Announcement¹.

In particular, students will be expected to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

1. the principal EC institutions, sources and interpretation of Community law, the relationship between Community law and National law, and relevant human rights conventions and legislation
2. formation of contracts, formalities of written contracts, general principles concerning implied terms, misrepresentation, discharge and remedies for breach of contract
3. the nature of legal estates and interests, equitable interests, easements, covenants, mortgages, joint ownership, registered and unregistered land (including the registration of charges)
4. the nature of fiduciary relationships and the duties of fiduciaries; the powers and duties of trustees
5. the basic structure of the civil and criminal courts
6. the elements of common offences and causes of action (contractual and tortious), issues affecting who should be the appropriate parties to litigation (e.g. vicarious liability) and common defences to proceedings.

Students will need to have developed oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, and the skills of legal analysis and research to a level that will enable them successfully to embark upon the course.

Teaching and Learning requirements

A minimum of 1,100 notional learning hours should be devoted to the study of Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course and a further 300 hours to the study of Stage 2, the vocational electives (100 hours each).¹

1. Notional learning hours

The terminology of ‘notional learning hours’ has been adopted for determining the course study requirements because it is widely used and understood in higher education.

The standard requirement for an undergraduate year is 1,200 hours; the higher overall requirement of 1,400 hours for this programme reflects the additional expectations for a professional, graduate-entry course.

Notional learning hours are the learning hours that each course provider estimates that diligent students will need to devote to their studies to achieve the Legal Practice Course outcomes on the provider’s course(s). Notional learning hours are not the actual time that any particular student needs to spend in order to achieve the outcomes. The actual time will vary according to the student’s capability, degree of prior experiential or other learning and the mode of learning.

Notional learning hours include:

- class contact hours
- preparing for class contact
- private study
- e-learning, including on-line teaching sessions and discussion groups
- preparation for formative assessments.

2. Face-to-face teaching and learning

For Stage 1 a minimum of 110 hours must be allocated to face-to-face teaching and learning. For Stage 2 a minimum of 10 hours must be allocated to face-to-face teaching and learning for each vocational elective.

Face-to-face teaching and learning requires interaction among students and between students and tutors. Tutors must provide feedback to students on the activities undertaken

¹ ¹ The Joint Statement sets out the conditions for undergraduate law degrees recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board as satisfying the academic stage of training

during the session, to confirm and/or enhance students' understanding of the topics being developed.

We do not wish to inhibit providers' opportunities to develop a range of course structures and to utilise different teaching and learning methods. A minimum face-to-face requirement has been set in order to make sure that all students have some opportunity to meet with each other and their tutors and to undertake activities to develop their team working and communication skills, their ability to relate to other professionals and appropriate attitudes to professional conduct.

We anticipate that many courses will incorporate significantly more face-to-face learning than the minimum required. To provide the maximum flexibility, we will not prescribe when within each stage of the course face-to-face learning is to be undertaken. For the avoidance of doubt, virtual or e-contact will not satisfy this particular requirement.

3. Allocation of notional learning hours: minimum requirements

Of the minimum notional learning hours devoted to Stage 1:

Core Practice Areas

- At least 60% of notional learning hours for Stage 1 must be attributed to the Core Practice Areas of Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice and Litigation.
- Providers have flexibility to apportion notional learning hours between Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice and Litigation, provided that each attracts at least 15% of the overall notional learning hours.
- There are no specified learning hours for Wills and Administration of Estates and Tax.

Course Skills

- At least 15% of notional learning hours for Stage 1 must be attributed to the Course Skills.
- Providers have flexibility to apportion notional learning hours between the Course Skills as they see fit.

Professional Conduct and Regulation

- Providers will be expected to demonstrate that at least 8% of notional learning hours relate to Professional Conduct and Regulation.
- Providers have flexibility to provide a foundation in the Solicitors' Codes of Conduct but must fully integrate conduct in all relevant aspects of the course.

4. Allocation of notional learning hours and flexibility

The Stage 1 Outcomes set out the essentials for every Legal Practice Course but are not exhaustive and do not prescribe the structure of the course. Providers have flexibility within and between the core practice areas and the skills and may contextualise the course for specific kinds of legal practice or markets.

83% of the notional learning hours for Stage 1 are covered by the above specifications with considerable flexibility within and between the core practice areas and the skills. The balance of the notional learning hours may be allocated at the provider's discretion. A course may include additional learning outcomes and elements, that is, subject areas or topics and emphasize one or more aspects, so long as the provider can demonstrate the pedagogic justification for the overall content of the course and use and balance of notional learning and class contact time. (Examples follow)

Example 1:

220 notional learning hours (20%) to Business Law and Practice

165 notional learning hours (15%) to Property Law and Practice

330 notional learning hours (30%) to Litigation

220 notional learning hours (20%) to the Course Skills

165 notional learning hours (15%) to Conduct, Wills and Administration of Estates and foundation Tax.

Example 2:

330 notional learning hours (30%) to Business Law and Practice

165 notional learning hours (15%) to Property Law and Practice

220 notional learning hours (20%) to Litigation

253 notional learning hours (23%) to the Course Skills

132 notional learning hours (12%) to Conduct, Wills and Administration of Estates and foundation Tax.

Providers will be expected to demonstrate and track how each course apportions its notional learning and face-to-face time and will need to provide strong justification for any deviation from these provisions.