

Useful information

In this section you can find out more about this approach, your regulatory obligations and how to use this resource. [\[#info-video\]](#)

Ensuring your ongoing competence: what you need to do

For solicitors

Principle 5 of the SRA Handbook requires you to provide a proper standard of service to your client. For a solicitor, meeting the competences set out in the Competence Statement forms an integral part of the requirement to provide a proper standard of service.

To do this, you will need to undertake regular learning and development so your skills and knowledge remain up to date. We expect you to:

- reflect on the quality of your practice by reference to our Competence Statement to identify your learning and development needs. The Competence Statement is generic and so solicitors will need to apply it to their practice. Find out more about the Competence Statement and other ways to identify learning and development needs [\[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/identify-learning-development/\]](#).
- plan and address your learning and development needs [\[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/address-learning-development/\]](#).
- record the above information so that, if we need to engage with you on a regulatory matter or where we have evidence of a competence risk, you can demonstrate to us that you have taken steps to ensure your ongoing competence. You can find more information on how to do this at how to plan [\[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/planning-learning-development/\]](#) and how to record and evaluate [\[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/evaluating-learning-development/\]](#). Failure to demonstrate that you have reflected on the quality of your practice and addressed any learning and development needs, may be an aggravating factor in action we may take.
- make an annual declaration [\[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/resources/annual-declaration/\]](#) to confirm you have completed the above. You can find more information on how to complete the annual declaration here.

Employers

Employers are responsible for delivering a proper standard of service to their clients and for training their staff to maintain a level of competence appropriate to their work and level of responsibility. You may want to consider how this resource aligns with your current approach to learning and development so that you continue to meet this obligation.

Key messages for you to remember about our approach

- This is not a soft option to learning and development: you will need to think seriously about whether the quality of your practice meets your obligation to provide a proper standard of service. To do this successfully requires you to think about your strengths, weaknesses, what you can do better, and what you need to do to keep your skills and knowledge up to date.
- Any approach to learning and development is valid as long as you can demonstrate it contributes to how you remain competent to deliver a proper standard of service.

- How you access the learning and development activity you believe is required is a matter for you and your employer. View examples of cost effective approaches to learning and development [[solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/address-learning-development](#)] .
- Learning and development is about you and the role you are expected to perform. Senior lawyers who are expected to manage complex transactions without supervision need to be competent to do that. Newly qualified solicitors do not. The question is always about your learning and development needs in relation to our Competence Statement [[solicitors/competence-statement](#)] .
- All solicitors will need to reflect on the quality of their practice. If after you have reflected, you believe you are competent to provide a proper standard of service, then in principle you do not need to do any learning and development. However, you will need to demonstrate to us, if required, how you arrived at this conclusion.

Using our resources

Our resources are aimed at solicitors and their employers. They will help you:

- identify your learning and development needs;
- plan your learning and development;
- address learning and development needs;
- record any learning and development undertaken;
- evaluate whether activity has addressed your learning and development needs.

The tools are not mandatory. They are suggestions to help you focus, structure and implement our requirements. It is up to you whether you choose to follow our suggestions or not; you may have existing systems or ideas of your own as to how you ensure your competence.

Our resources will not tell you how much learning and development you should do, nor the type of activity you need to do to address your learning and development needs. This is a matter for you. It will depend on your role, your area of practice, your clients' needs, your experience and your own learning and development needs.

Video: More information