

Authorisation and validation requirements

19 October 2022

Part 1 - Applications to become an authorised LPC provider

Criteria

Before authorising a provider to deliver LPCs the SRA will need to be satisfied that: The provider's structure, its core business and its governance arrangements will support and resource:

- The delivery of a course that is central to the professional formation of solicitors and in which stakeholders will have confidence.
- A fair, robust and reliable assessment process.
- On-going arrangements to review and maintain the quality of courses.
- A learning experience appropriate to the needs of the target cohort of graduate students.
- Equality of opportunity and diversity within the study body.
- And that the provider is familiar with, and will have regard to, good practice in assuring academic quality and standards for higher education level courses and assessments.

To enable the panel to determine whether the criteria for authorisation are met, the following evidence and information must be submitted with the application.

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Section 1: Provider information and contact details

The provider must include details of the following in its application:

- The name of the provider seeking authorisation to deliver LPCs,
- The main nature of the provider's business,
- The provider's legal status and governance arrangements
- The name, email, postal address and phone number of a key contact within the provider.

Section 2: The provider's delivery of professional courses

The provider must include details of the following in its application:

- Any experience within the provider of delivering courses that form part of a professional qualification and how this experience has been used to inform the design and planned delivery of the LPC,
- Evidence that will support stakeholders' confidence in the provider's ability to deliver the LPC,
- Its understanding of the aims and objectives of the LPC, the solicitors profession and the role of the SRA.

Section 3: The provider's approach to assessment

The provider must include details of the following in its application:

- The volume and nature of the provider's experience of assessing students,
- Regulations and guidance used by the provider that illustrate the provider's (existing or planned) approach to setting, conducting and marking assessments,
- Its approach to the accreditation of prior learning.

Section 4: The provider's approach to approach to assuring quality and standards

The provider must include details of the following in its application:

- The way in which responsibility for assuring the quality of courses and the academic standards of awards is allocated within the provider,
- The policies and procedures that support its quality assurance arrangements,
- Any external scrutiny of the provider's arrangements for assuring quality and maintaining standards,
- How the provider has assured itself that the course(s) put forward to the SRA for validation meet its own requirements e.g. with regard to the award of academic credits and qualifications,
- The provider's approach to the allocation of resources to support and sustain the courses,
- Staff recruitment, induction and development policies.

Section 5: The provider's approach to supporting the student experience

The provider must include details of the following in its application:

- The provider's experience of delivering courses to graduate students,
- The provider's understanding of LPC students, their needs and expectations,
- Any strategic mission or objectives that identify the type of student experience the provider aims to deliver,
- The provider's policies on student complaints and appeals.

Section 6: Equality and diversity

The provider must include details of the following within its application:

- Its equal opportunities policy,
- Race, gender and disability policies and plans,
- Evidence of its commitment to promoting equality and diversity at all levels of its organisation and activities and of its understanding of its duties to all students.
- Providers should make clear in their application whether and, if so, how, any organisational policies and practices have been amended to accommodate particular requirements of LPCs.

Section 7: Conditions of authorisation

Providers will be required to accept the following conditions on authorisation:

- To admit to their courses only students who meet the SRA's requirements for entry to an LPC,
- To co-operate fully with the SRA's monitoring requirements, including, but not limited to, external examining, the submission of an annual report, the publication of a standard information set and any requests made by the SRA for visits to be made by its staff or representatives,
- To issue students with transcripts containing the minimum information specified by the SRA,
- To comply with statutory provisions,
- To notify the SRA of any changes to the management arrangement for its course(s),
- To notify the SRA of any changes to its key contacts,



- To assist the SRA to communicate with students,
- To notify the SRA of any material changes to the course structure, course resources, including staffing, and to any expected or actual adverse publicity about the course.

Specific conditions may be placed on a provider in addition to these general conditions.

Part 2 - Applications for the validation of courses

Criteria

The SRA will need to be satisfied for each of the courses for which validation is sought that:

- The learning outcomes and the specific SRA requirements for LPCs underpin and are fully incorporated into the design of the course(s).
- The course(s) will provide a coherent learning experience for students and will enable diligent students to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes.
- The professional nature of LPCs is reflected in the course ethos and design.
- The assessment arrangements will be robust, consistent, fair and secure and ensure that the academic standard will at least meet the threshold set by the SRA.
- The course(s) will be adequately managed and resourced.
- The course(s) will be monitored and reviewed by the provider to ensure any weaknesses within the course are identified and addressed at an early stage and that feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders informs the quality assurance arrangements.
- The admissions arrangements will be transparent, take due account of applicants' potential to succeed on the course and are lawful.
- There will be equality of opportunity for all students on the course.
- Academic and pastoral services will support diligent students to achieve their potential to succeed on the course.

The application

The course(s)

The provider must set out in its application:

- The nature of the course or courses for which validation is sought eg. Stage 1 and Stage 2, full-time and part-time;
- The key contacts for each course including their email address and phone number and any overall contact for use by the SRA.

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Section 1: The learning outcomes and the design of the course

The provider must include within its application:

- Evidence that the learning outcomes for the LPC underpin, and have been fully incorporated into the design of, the course;
- An explanation of the chosen emphasis for the course and the way this is reflected in the course design and structure;
- A profile of the students and the type of practice that the course is designed to suit;
- The teaching and learning strategy for the course;

The course curriculum;

- Evidence that the teaching and learning strategy and the design of the course has been informed by some or all of the following: experience, staff expertise, research, accepted good practice, student feedback, an understanding of professional requirements and external input;
- Details of the allocation of notional learning hours and to-face-face learning to the different elements of the course (see Notional learning hours [#annex2] for a summary of the requirements) and the rationale for any deviation from the minimum requirements;
- An overview and examples of the information that will be provided to students to support their understanding of the course and the requirements on them.

Section 2: The professional nature of the course

The provider must include within its application:

- Evidence that the design of the course has been informed by, and will promote students' understanding of, professional practice;
- Evidence that the course has been designed to develop a culture of appropriate professional behaviour;

- Any policy and supporting guidance on required student behaviour that will be used to develop and reinforce appropriate professional attitudes.

Section 3: Assessment

The provider must include within its application:

- The assessment strategy for the course, which describes the balance between formative and summative assessments, any integration or combination of skills assessments and the rationale for the choice and range of assessment methods;
- Evidence showing how the SRA's assessment requirements, including the general principles, have been incorporated into the assessment strategy;
- Evidence that the approach to assessment has been informed by: QAA, organisational and/or staff experiences, research, accepted good practice and/or student feedback;
- The relationship between the SRA's assessment requirements and the provider's general assessment regulations, details of any discrepancies and the way in which these have been addressed;
- Responsibilities within the provider and the course team for the design and approval of assessments;
- The use of moderation and other safeguards to ensure marking is fair and consistent;
- The information to be given to students about the assessment arrangements generally and assessment criteria specifically;
- Arrangements to safeguard the security and integrity of the assessment process;
- The constitution, role and responsibilities of examination boards;
- The role of external examiners – with particular reference to the SRA's requirements for external examining;
- The identification and consideration of requests for reasonable adjustments to be made to assessments and arrangements for implementing and monitoring agreed adjustments;
- The safeguards in place to avoid instances of academic misconduct including information to be given to students on the nature and consequences of academic misconduct and how any such instances will be identified, investigated and dealt with.

Section 4: Management of the course and teaching and learning resources

The provider must include within its application:

- Course management arrangements and the allocation of responsibilities within the course team
- The expertise and experience of the team designing and delivering the course and assessing students, including cvs,
- The planned student : teaching staff ratio, and evidence that the ratio will be adequate,
- Arrangements for the induction and development of new teaching staff
- Information about past, continuing and future interaction between the course team and professional practice,
- The teaching and learning accommodation that will be available for the course and its planned utilisation by the course team and students,
- The IT support that will be available to support teaching and learning,
- The technical and administrative support available to the course,
- The library allocation for the course, updating arrangements and its accessibility to students,
- The minimum number of students needed for the course to be viable (both initial and projected numbers for each year of validation),
- The target number for recruitment (both initial and projected numbers for each year of validation),
- The maximum number of students who will be enrolled on to the course (both initial and projected numbers for each year of validation).

Section 5: Assuring quality and standards

The provider must include within its application:

- Details of the approach to be adopted for the routine and on-going monitoring of the course quality and standards, including arrangements to collect and analyse feedback from students,
- Arrangements to ensure that academic standards at least meet the threshold set by the SRA,
- An explanation of the use that will be made of feedback from students, staff, employers and external examiners to assure quality and standards,
- QA arrangements should include arrangements for appointing external examiners,
- How student progress will be monitored and any trends identified and analysed,



- Arrangements for dealing with student complaints, including copies of policy and procedural documents,
- Periodic review arrangements.

Section 6: Admissions arrangements

The provider must include within its application:

- The admissions policy for the course – including the approach for ensuring that the student has completed the academic stage
- The target cohort for the course, e.g. whether it is aimed at a particular segment of the student market,
- Policies on accepting students to study on only Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the course (as applicable) and on the accreditation of prior learning,
- How students potential to succeed on the course will be identified during the admissions process,
- The approach to the receipt of late applications from students to join the course,
- Any arrangements with employers or other bodies that affect the admissions policy,
- Evidence that it is satisfied its admissions policy and practice will be lawful.

Section 7: Promoting equality and diversity

The provider must include within its application:

- Its equal opportunities statement/policy,
- Details of its approach to the promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity for students and potential students with regard to all dimensions of diversity,
- The approach to identifying the needs of students with disabilities,
- The resources in place to support students with disabilities,
- How any statutory duties to students with disabilities will be identified, monitored and fulfilled.

Section 8: Pastoral and academic support

The provider must include within its application:

- The pastoral support that will be available to students and how this will be tailored to meet the needs of the particular student cohort,

- The careers and guidance services that will be available to students,
- Any personal tutoring arrangements or similar that will be in place.

Validation of additional vocational electives

An authorised provider that seeks validation for additional Stage 2 vocational electives will need to submit a statement of outcomes for each elective, in accordance with the outcomes document.

They will also need to demonstrate that:

- The course will provide a coherent learning experience for students and will enable diligent students to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes;
- The assessment arrangements will be robust, consistent, fair and secure and ensure that the academic standard will at least meet the threshold set by the SRA;
- The course will be adequately managed and resourced;
- The course will be monitored and reviewed by the provider to ensure any weaknesses within the course are identified and addressed at an early stage and that feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders informs the quality assurance arrangements;
- The admissions arrangements will be transparent, take due account of applicants potential to succeed on the course and are lawful.