

Guidelines on monitoring periods of recognised training

September 2021

Candidates can only qualify through this route if they meet our transitional requirements.

If they do not meet these, they will need to qualify under the SQE.

Why monitor the training of trainee solicitors?

The time that trainee solicitors spend working in legal practice is a significant and important part of the overall training scheme. Organisations that are authorised as training providers employing trainees and the SRA are committed to ensuring that, during the period of recognised training, high standards of training are maintained and developed. The monitoring visits focus on the overall training provision, identifying good practice and giving guidance and advice where improvements could be made. Many training providers have found it a useful, constructive and positive exercise.

Selection for monitoring

When your organisation has been approved as a training provider, it may, at a future time, be selected for monitoring. Training providers are selected for various reasons, including:

- applications from the training provider for training-regulation waivers
- referrals
- training providers requiring trainees to opt out of the working-time directive.

The monitoring process

There are two stages to the monitoring process. The first is the completion of questionnaires by the training principal and trainees, giving details of the training provision - including recruitment and induction procedures, the way the training is organised, and supervision and appraisal of the trainees. Trainees are also asked to provide a summary of their training record, giving details of the type of work they have been doing and the skills they have used.

On receipt of the completed questionnaires, we will usually arrange for a visit to take place by a training monitor. The task of the monitor is to assess the range and depth of the training provision, to identify areas of good

practice and to give guidance on areas that could be improved. All of the monitors have significant experience of training and working with trainee solicitors.

The monitoring visit

Arranging a visit

When a monitoring visit is to be arranged, we will contact the training provider with the monitor's details. The training provider is asked to confirm that there is no conflict: for example, that the monitor is not known to the training principal or the trainees. Where there is a conflict, another monitor undertakes the visit.

When it has been established that there are no conflicts, the questionnaires are sent to the monitor; the information is used as the basis for meetings during the visit.

The monitor contacts the training principal directly to arrange a convenient time and date for the visit to take place.

To help the training provider plan for the visit, and to minimise any disruption before the visit, the monitor gives the training principal details of:

1. the visit format
2. approximately how long
 1. the visit is likely to last in total (this is normally around four to five hours, but depends on the number of trainees)
 2. the meeting with the training principal will last
 3. the meetings with the trainees will last
3. if there is more than one trainee
 1. the names of the trainees the monitor will talk to
 2. the order in which they will be seen
4. any other personnel involved in the training, such as supervisors, with whom they may wish to speak.

The conduct of the visit

At the start of the visit, the monitor meets with the training principal to gain an understanding of the background of the organisation and the way in which the training is organised.

The monitor will then interview the trainee or trainees. The number of trainees interviewed depends on the number of trainees at the training

provider. The monitor may also interview supervisors and other personnel.

During the visit the monitor will review whatever materials and processes considered necessary to confirm that the training meets the requirements of a period of recognised training. This may include review of the following documents:

- equal opportunities policy
- training records
- training plans
- appraisal documents

There is a follow up meeting with the training principal to discuss the monitor's findings, suggestions and/or recommendations.

We would be grateful if a room could be made available for the meetings and for the monitor to review the training documents.

Monitoring outcomes

The monitor's findings come under one or more of the following headings:

- **No concerns** – all of the required standards are being met or exceeded.
- **Suggestions for improvement** – training requirements are being met but some improvements could be made.
- **Recommendations and follow-up action** – not all of the requirements are being met, and recommendations are made to address the problems. The monitor will discuss an appropriate action plan with the training principal and a time-scale for implementing the recommendations, which might include submitting documentation to the SRA.
- **Follow-up visit** – not all of the requirements are being met, and the monitor considers a further visit should take place to assess whether the recommendations have been implemented.

Following the visit

Following the visit, the monitor submits a report to the SRA, summarising the discussions and giving an overview of the monitor's findings. A copy of the report is sent to the training principal. The training provider is asked to confirm that any recommendations will be implemented.

We regularly review the monitoring procedures and documentation.

Feedback from training providers on the process and how the system could be improved is welcomed.