

SRA Update

SRA Update Issue 91 April 2021

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Welcome to the latest issue of SRA Update. As we all look ahead to how we transition back into the workplace and what learning we will take with us, please do take time to respond to our survey on the current and future use of technology and innovation within the legal services sector. Also in this issue, we want to hear from you if you could be affected by new rules that restrict fees in financial services mis-selling cases and we'll soon be asking for your views on Standards and Regulations a year after we introduced them. Finally, a reminder to us all about some of the current risks and the scam emails purporting to be from law firms, others you may have business with and indeed from the SRA.

Have your say on adapting in the legal sector [\[sra/news/press/tech-innovation-research/\]](#)

We emailed all law firms in March inviting you to take part in independent research into the current and future use of technology and innovation within the legal services sector. To make sure every firm has the opportunity to have its say, we have extended the deadline for responding to Friday 16 April. If you want to send us have your views, please speak to the Authorised Signatory and make sure your firm's voice is heard.

Read more about: Have your say on adapting in the legal sector [\[sra/news/press/tech-innovation-research/\]](#)

Our new rules – one year on [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-star-research/\]](#)

Just over one year on from the introduction of our new Standards and Regulations, we are keen to find out from you how you have found working within the new rules; have they reduced burdens? What practical benefits or challenges have they brought? Have they helped you work differently? We will soon be contacting you to gather your feedback via a short anonymous survey. Please look out for the questionnaire and let us know what you think.

Read more about: Our new rules – one year on [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-star-research/\]](#)

Restricting fees – are you affected? [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-fee-capping/\]](#)

Restricting fees is a duty brought about by the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018. Following the publication of proposals by the Financial Conduct Authority, we will be consulting on proposals to restrict fees for work related to mis-sold financial products and services. If you work this area and want to have a say on any potential changes, please get in touch with us and register your interest.

Read more about: Restricting fees – are you affected? [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-fee-capping/\]](#)

Continuing competence research [\[https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/Competence-SRA\]](https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/Competence-SRA)

Tell us how you keep your knowledge and skills up to date and remain competent to practice by taking our short survey. We're also interested to find out what additional guidance and

resources you would find helpful and what impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on your continuing competence. Deadline is Friday 30 April.

Read more about: Continuing competence research [<https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/Competence-SRA>]

Changes to Higher Rights of Audience assessment

[\[/solicitors/resources/cpd/accreditation/higher-rights-of-audience/\]](#)

Following approval by the Legal Services Board, only admitted solicitors will take the Higher Rights of Audience (HRA) assessment, a change that comes into effect on 1 April. Candidates will also be assessed against revised criminal and civil HRA standards. Those who have not been admitted as a solicitor and want to take the criminal and/or civil HRA assessments before qualifying must complete the assessment before 1 April.

Read more about: Changes to Higher Rights of Audience assessment [[/solicitors/resources/cpd/accreditation/higher-rights-of-audience/](#)]

Further scam emails in our name [[/sra/news/sra-update-91-scams/](#)]

We have seen a number of both new and familiar scams reported to us in recent weeks. These include fraudsters pretending to be from us, related organisations or law firms

Read more about: Further scam emails in our name [[/sra/news/sra-update-91-scams/](#)]

Cybercrime during lockdown [[/sra/news/cyber-security-qa/](#)]

Cybercrime remains a big problem as lockdown continues. KPMG's latest CEO pulse survey found that cyber security issues remained the biggest risk to growth over the next three years according to business leaders. You can help keep yourself safer during the pandemic by looking at our cyber advice.

Read more about: Cybercrime during lockdown [[/sra/news/cyber-security-qa/](#)]

Qualifying work experience registration now available [[/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/registering-qualifying-work-experience/](#)]

Candidates only need to register their two years' qualifying work experience (QWE) by the time they apply for admission as a solicitor. However, if they need to a candidate can now register any completed QWE. This might be because they are due to leave a role shortly or because they want to use a past role as QWE.

Read more about: Qualifying work experience registration now available [[/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/registering-qualifying-work-experience/](#)]

Applying for an equivalent to a degree [[/become-solicitor/sqe/degree-equivalent/equivalence-to-a-degree/](#)]

SQE candidates can now apply to have their work experience and/or education recognised as equivalent to a UK degree. There is helpful information on our website about how to apply and

what kind of evidence candidates will need to give us.

Read more about: Applying for an equivalent to a degree [[/become-solicitor/sqe/degree-equivalent/equivalence-to-a-degree/](#)]

SQE assessment exemptions for qualified lawyer [[/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/qualified-lawyers/](#)]

Qualified lawyers can now apply for SQE assessment exemptions. These can be based on either those we've already agreed for some legal professional qualifications and/or their own additional qualifications and/or professional legal work experience. Only a qualified lawyer who holds a legal professional qualification which allows them to practise in England and Wales or another jurisdiction can apply for an SQE assessment exemption.

Read more about: SQE assessment exemptions for qualified lawyer [[/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/qualified-lawyers/](#)]

Webinar – Apprenticeships and what law firms need to know [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/524/home>]

Join us on 19 April to find out about apprenticeships and how they might benefit your firm, or what you need to know if you've decided to take them on. We'll be joined by guest speakers, including from the Government's Education and Skills Agency, to deliver practical advice.

Read more about: Webinar – Apprenticeships and what law firms need to know [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/524/home>]

Webinar – AML due diligence and technology [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/526/home>]

Social distancing has challenged all of us, particularly when it comes to carrying out proper due diligence on clients. Our webinar on 26 April will explain how to remain compliant with your anti-money laundering obligations when using new technology.

Read more about: Webinar – AML due diligence and technology [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/526/home>]

Webinar – Assessing the SQE, trainers and providers [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/528/home>]

Trainers and providers can find out our expectations when it comes to assessing those taking the new SQE, such as timings and exemptions, at our webinar on 17 May. We will be joined by experts from our SQE assessor Kaplan to answer any queries you might have.

Read more about: Webinar – Assessing the SQE, trainers and providers [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/528/home>]

Webinar – Candidate information for SQE [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/529/home>]

A webinar on 17 May will discuss the details of how you can qualify as a solicitor through the SQE route when it's introduced in September. Your training options, what you can expect and timings for assessments will all be laid out.

Read more about: Webinar – Candidate information for SQE [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/529/home>]

Webinar – AML matter risk assessments

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/527/home>]

We're holding a webinar on 24 May to look at how matters are assessed for anti-money laundering issues. This webinar explores the importance of risk assessments, and discusses the requirements of AML regulations, the ways in which assessments can help protect your practice, and relevant observations from our inspection of firms' controls.

Read more about: Webinar – AML matter risk assessments [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/527/home>]

Your health, your career [</solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/>]

Are you worried about your health affecting your work? Life as a solicitor can be challenging and the demands and pressures can easily build up. We can signpost you to sources of help and make adjustments for you if you are in difficulty.

Read more about: Your health, your career [</solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/>]

Welcome to the compliance section of the latest issue of SRA Update. As we all look ahead to how we transition back into the workplace and what learning we will take with us, do make sure your firm is having its say on the current and future use of technology and innovation within the legal services sector. An email with our survey has been sent to your Authorised Signatory – please encourage them to respond firm's behalf. Also in this issue, take time out to remind yourselves of our current advice on compliance during the pandemic, and look out for the return of the serious scam known as vendor fraud.

Have your say on adapting in the legal sector [</sra/news/press/tech-innovation-research/>]

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AML website updated [</solicitors/resources/money-laundering/>]

Keeping money launderers out of the profession is a priority for us all. To help you comply with your legal obligations, we have revamped the anti-money laundering pages of our website.

Read more about: AML website updated [\[solicitors/resources/money-laundering/\]](#)

Covid-19 and our rules [\[sra/news/coronavirus-qa/\]](#)

While lockdown rules are slowly easing, we know that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to pose day-to-day challenges for many over how you run your business and service your clients. We originally published advice on staying compliant with our rules in these difficult times in March 2020 and continue to revise and update the content to make sure they remain relevant to any new or emerging issues.

Read more about: Covid-19 and our rules [\[sra/news/coronavirus-qa/\]](#)

House sale fraud reminder [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-house-fraud/\]](#)

At the end of last year we became aware of the return of vendor fraud. This concerns properties, usually residential, being targeted by fraudsters and offered for sale without the consent or knowledge of the genuine owners. If you carry out property conveyancing work on behalf of sellers or buyers, you might be at risk of being involved in this.

Read more about: House sale fraud reminder [\[sra/news/sra-update-91-house-fraud/\]](#)

Brexit and the effects on your business [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-brexit/\]](#)

Now that we have officially left the EU, there are some changes that could affect the way you work. You can find out about some of these on our Brexit pages. We continue to update the pages as new information about how you might be affected comes to light.

Read more about: Brexit and the effects on your business [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-brexit/\]](#)

Changes to your phone systems [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-telephony-upgrade/\]](#)

With BT Openreach set to make significant upgrades to the UK's telephone network over the next four years, Ofcom are urging businesses in all sectors to consider what impact these changes may have on your own systems and networks.

Read more about: Changes to your phone systems [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-telephony-upgrade/\]](#)

Subscription

If you are regulated by the SRA

As a regulated individual, please **simply ensure that the SRA has your current contact email address on record.**

To ensure we have your current email address, log in to mySRA [\[mySRA\]](#) and check your profile.

No subscription request is required.

We recommend that you ask your network administrator to ensure that bulk email with "SRA Update" in the subject line is not filtered as spam.

If you do not wish to receive SRA Update, please unsubscribe [\[sra/news/sra-update/unsubscribe\]](#).

If you are not regulated by the SRA

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Editorial comment

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