

Becoming an Education Provider Q & A

Updated 25 November 2019

During the coronavirus outbreak, we will be flexible about our teaching and learning requirements, particularly our requirements for face-face-teaching. However, we cannot agree any changes to our current assessment requirements which may affect the security or integrity of the assessment. This means current requirements for supervised assessments remain in place for the Legal Practice Course.

We do not specify the form that assessments must take for Qualifying Law Degree and Graduate Diploma in Law courses or that they are taken under supervised conditions. However, we do require some form of assessment for Foundations of Legal Knowledge (FLK) subjects, this could be online, open book or remote assessments, but providers should not cancel assessments altogether.

We are also content if you wish to postpone assessment of subjects into later academic years. However, by the time your students graduate, they must be properly assessed in all FLK subjects.

If you are a course provider, please contact us [\[/contactus\]](#) if you wish to make any changes to either teaching or assessment arrangements which are outside the conditions of your authorisation.

If you are a student or candidate, please speak to your course provider.

Open all [\[#\]](#)

Q1. How do I become an approved QLD provider?

An organisation should apply to us directly to become an approved education provider.

The organisation will be required to self-certify compliance with the Joint Statement [\[/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-joint-statement-bsb-law-society/\]](#).

Q2. What are the requirements for a QLD?

To be approved as a QLD provider, the provider's quality assurance and enhancement processes must be regulated by QAA (or QAA Scotland) and meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code.

The programme must also meet the requirements of the Joint Statement issued by the Law Society and the General Council of the Bar on the completion of the academic stage of training.

Details about the specific requirements can be found in the Academic Stage Handbook (PDF 46 pages, 415K) [\[/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf?version=4a1ac3\]](#).

Q3. Is there a fee for becoming an approved QLD provider?

No.

Q4. Is there an annual fee for being recognised as a QLD

provider?

There is an annual fee of £200 paid per academic year.

Q5. What is the process for accepting students from other organisations into a QLD programme?

Organisations should apply their admissions policies and regulations in order to consider enrolling applicants and recognising academic credit achieved in previous study elsewhere – or in another programme at their own organisation.

Q6. What is the process for granting extensions of time to students?

There is a time limit of six years for students to complete the QLD, irrespective of the normal time limit set by an organisation. This six years applies to all modes of attendance.

If an organisation receives medical or other evidence of exceptional circumstances that will lead to a student being unable to complete their programme of study within the time limit, they should apply their assessment policy and regulations in order to consider granting an extension of time. The grounds for granting any extension should be recorded in the relevant exam board minutes.

Q7. What is the difference between the CPE and a Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL).

The Common Professional Examination (CPE) is the title given by the regulatory bodies, and is the professional name of the course. However, organisations are permitted to embed this within their academic award frameworks by giving it a academic title. Many organisations choose to use the title Graduate Diploma in Law, but this is a discretionary decision for each organisation.

Q8. How do I become an approved CPE provider?

An organisation should apply to us directly to become an approved education provider.

The process will involve submitting full documentation relevant both to the status of the organisation and the course that the organisation seeks to be validated as satisfying the requirements of the academic stage of training for those wishing to become solicitors or barristers in England and Wales. The organisation will be required to self-certify compliance with the Joint Statement [[/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-joint-statement-bsb-law-society/](#)].

Q9. How do I become an approved CPE provider?

To be approved as a CPE provider, the provider's quality assurance and enhancement processes must meet the expectations of QAA (or QAA Scotland) as set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The programme must also meet the requirements of the Joint Statement issued by the Law Society and the General Council of the Bar on the completion of the academic stage of training.

Details about the specific requirements can be found in the Academic Stage Handbook (PDF 46 pages, 415K) [[/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf?version=4a1ac3](#)].

Q10. Is there a fee for becoming an approved CPE provider?

No.

Q11. Is there an annual fee for being recognised as a CPE provider?

There is an annual fee of £200 paid per academic year.

Q12. Can students obtain exemptions from the CPE, and if so, what is the process?

If students have graduated from a programme that, while not a QLD, may have subjects which form a part of the required curriculum in a QLD, they may be eligible for credit for the subjects already taken.

They may also be entitled to credit for other prior certified or experiential learning which may entitle them to exemption from assessment in some subjects required by the Joint Statement [[/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-joint-statement-bsb-law-society](#)].

Applications for partial exemption for credit for prior learning should be made to you to consider in accordance with your policies and procedures for accreditation of prior learning.

Applications for full exemption from study on the CPE should be directed to the SRA.

Q13. If the SRA refuses full CPE exemption to an applicant for a CPE course, can the organisation nevertheless assess this application themselves?

If, having assessed an application, we refuse full CPE exemption, but determine that partial exemption could be granted, we will notify the applicant of this fact. Applicants can then share this with a provider, and the provider may use this as a basis for granting credit via their APL process.

Q14. If an applicant for a CPE course does not have an undergraduate degree, can they be considered?

The Authorisation of Individuals Regulations [[/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations](#)] allows us to recognise that the knowledge and skills outcomes (and the standard at which they must be acquired) may have been achieved by an individual through other assessed learning and supervised work-based learning. Where this is the case, we may grant exemption from some stage or part of the academic or vocational stages. We call this assessed learning and supervised work-based learning 'Equivalent Means'.

This provision of Equivalent Means includes applications from Chartered Legal Executives, graduates of CILEx, Justices' Clerks' Assistants, mature applicants and Morgenbesser applicants.

Details about these Equivalent Means can be found in our Equivalent Means guidance [[/students/resources/equivalent-means-information-pack](#)].

Q15. What are the requirements of the LPC?

Details for LPC providers and the requirements of the LPC can be found in the LPC information pack.

Read the LPC information pack [\[students/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/\]](#)

Q16. How do I become an authorised LPC provider?

Applications for authorisation as a provider and for the validation of specific courses will be considered by a panel appointed by the SRA. Applications will be considered against published criteria.

For further information go to the LPC information pack [\[students/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/\]](#).

Q17. Is there a fee for becoming an authorised LPC provider?

The organisation will be charged a fee for authorisation and validation. This fee will be determined from time to time by us.

Q18. Is there an annual fee for being authorised as an LPC provider?

There is an annual registration fee for each student enrolled on the LPC, the registration fee is £15 per student enrolled on the LPC.

Q19. Do we need to confirm to the SRA which students have successfully achieved the LPC?

At the close of every academic year, you should submit to us a 'Pass List' that records all students who successfully completed the LPC.

Q20. Can students obtain exemptions from the LPC, and if so, what is the process?

Graduates of either the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) or the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) are permitted exemptions from attendance and assessment. LPC providers are not required to grant exemptions.

Successful BVC graduates may, if the LPC provider determines, be granted exemption from attendance and assessment in the following areas of the LPC:

- Stage 1 – Litigation, advocacy, drafting, practical legal research
- Stage 2 – Two vocational electives

Successful graduates of the BPTC may, if the LPC provider determines, be granted exemption from attendance and assessment in the following areas:

- Stage 1 – Litigation, advocacy, drafting
- Stage 2 – Two vocational electives

Graduates should have successfully completed the BVC/BPTC not more than five years prior to their enrolment on the LPC.

Q21. How would we know that applicants have successfully completed the academic stage?

To ascertain whether or not an award is a qualifying law degree (QLD) or CPE, access the

SRA's definitive records of current QLD providers and programmes or CPE providers.

Read QLD providers and programmes [[/students/courses/qualifying-law-degree-providers/](#)] or CPE providers [[/students/courses/cpe-gdl-course-providers/](#)]

Note that these SRA records are of current providers and programmes. Because providers occasionally stop running certain programmes, or radically revise them, resulting in new award titles, it is possible that an applicant may have a QLD / CPE that is no longer provided. It will therefore not be listed in the current record. If an applicant is claiming that this is the case, or if you suspect that it may be the case, contact us [[/home/contact-us/](#)] for advice on the historical record.

There are a number of ways to verify that an applicant has achieved a QLD. LPC providers can ask to see the original transcript, diploma supplement or a letter from the awarding institution confirming the award. We are aware that there is some uncertainty as to what constitutes a qualifying law degree (QLD), and we will provide a checklist against which they can assess the transcript.

Q22. If an applicant for an LPC graduated with a QLD / CPE over 10 years ago, can we still consider this, or is it stale?

Decisions as to the significance of a period of elapsed time between the completion of a QLD / CPE and enrolment on the LPC are made at the discretion of the LPC provider.

Q23. If a BVC / BPTC graduate who completed the programme over five years ago, seeks exemptions from the LPC, can they be granted?

If the provider's accreditation of prior learning policy permits this time frame, exemptions may be granted by the provider.

Q24. Can students who have already taken some Stage 1 assessments with one provider be enrolled to complete Stage 1 with another LPC provider?

If the provider's accreditation of prior learning policy permits this time frame, exemptions may be granted by the provider.

All Stage 1 assessments should be completed with the same LPC provider.

Q25. Can a student commence the Professional Skills Course (PSC) before completing the LPC?

The PSC assumes knowledge from the LPC, and therefore students should be advised to commence it after completing the LPC.

Q26. Are we liable in any way if we admit a student to our LPC, but discover after they have completed the LPC that they did not in fact successfully complete the academic stage of training?

The obligation to provide evidence that the academic stage of training has been successfully completed rests with the student. However, there is a requirement that the LPC provider verifies the authenticity of the evidence provided.

Q27. Do we need to advise students about character and suitability issues?

We will not check the character and suitability of a student before they enrol on the LPC, because it is not a requirement for enrolment. We do however require students to disclose to us issues relating to character and suitability when applying for admission as a solicitor.

We appreciate that students who have character and suitability issues may want an early assessment before they embark on the LPC and/or a period of recognised training,

They can have their character and suitability assessment assessed at any time by completing the screening process [\[trainees/admission/dbs-check/\]](#) and submitting the character and suitability form [\[trainees/admission/admission-forms/\]](#).

Q28. What are the requirements of the PSC?

Details for PSC providers and the requirements of the PSC can be found in the Professional Skills Course information pack.

Professional Skills Course information pack [\[trainees/resources/professional-skills-course-information-pack/\]](#).

We appreciate that students who have character and suitability issues may want an early assessment before they embark on the LPC, and we have retained the power to undertake these early assessments.

Q29. Can a student commence the PSC before completing the LPC?

The PSC assumes knowledge from the LPC, and therefore students should be advised to commence it after completing the LPC.

Q30. Can a trainee be exempt from the PSC?

Yes, if they can demonstrate that the knowledge and skills outcomes (and the standard at which they must be acquired) have been achieved through other assessed learning and supervised work-based learning. Where this is the case, we may grant exemption from some of the modules on the PSC.