



A summary of the Police Station Representatives Accreditation Scheme External Examiner's annual report

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This report

This report summarises the findings of a review of the current arrangements for the training and accreditation of police station representatives under the Police Station Representatives Accreditation Scheme [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/accreditation/police-station-representative-accreditation-scheme/>] (PSRAS), and the processes adopted Cardiff University and Datalaw who deliver the assessment.

The Police Station Representatives Accreditation Scheme

PSRAS is a compulsory qualification for solicitors and non-solicitors who provide legal advice at the police station on a legally aided basis.

We have responsibility for monitoring the PSRAS qualification including oversight of the two assessment providers, Cardiff University via Cardiff Professional Legal Studies and Datalaw.

There are three parts to the assessment:

- Portfolio [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/accreditation/police-station-representative-accreditation-scheme/#portfolio>]
- Critical Incidents Test [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/accreditation/police-station-representative-accreditation-scheme/#critical-incidents-test>]
- Written examination [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/accreditation/police-station-representative-accreditation-scheme/#written-examination>]

Solicitors may, as an alternative, complete the Police Station Qualification as part of the Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) to meet this requirement. CLAS is managed by the Law Society [<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/career-advice/individual-accreditations/criminal-litigation-accreditation/>].

Open all [#]



The External Examiner's report – by Diana Kirsch

My role as the PSRAS external examiner is to provide independent scrutiny to make sure the assessment is robust, set at the appropriate standard, consistently delivered across the two assessment organisations and to check that there are appropriate quality assurance arrangements in place. To help achieve this I carry out regular monitoring visits, review operational and delivery processes and review samples of assessments.

I also produce an annual report on my findings, a summary of which follows below.

In preparing for this report, I had meetings with representatives from Cardiff University and Datalaw. I also considered and reviewed a range of documents relating to the administration and delivery of the assessment from each assessment organisation as well as material that underpins the scheme, for example, assessment standards.

I would like to thank all those that supported my review for their time and making documents available to review.

Key findings

I found that the assessments delivered by Cardiff University and Datalaw were sufficiently robust, there was evidence of good practice and appropriate quality assurance processes were in place.

Positive findings include:

- Marking is carried out to a consistent and high standard within and across each provider.
- Moderation processes adopted by both Cardiff University and Datalaw increase the scrutiny of marking.
- Robust training of new assessment assessors is in place within each assessment organisation.
- Good complaints and appeals procedures exist within each assessment organisation.

I also recommend how Cardiff University and Datalaw can continue to improve the delivery and administration of the assessment by:

- Continuing to review the content of the assessments so they reflect the changing knowledge and skills required for competent police station representation.
- Enhancing the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training of assessors.



- Improving the collection of data and monitoring performance by protected characteristics.
- Encouraging applications from a wider pool of assessors where required.
- Making candidate policies about the assessment more widely available.
- Exploring the introduction of annual calibration meetings to discuss assessments and share best practice.

I also recommend that the SRA takes steps to further enhance the robustness of the assessment. These include introducing new assessment standards to better reflect police station practice, requiring providers to submit regular annual reports to the SRA, and publishing guidelines which clearly set out the requirements for the delivery of the assessment.

A Response – by the Solicitors Regulation Authority

We welcome this report from the external examiner.

We have met with Cardiff University and Datalaw to share the detailed findings from the report. Each provider has agreed to implement the recommendations outlined in this summary. We will monitor their progress through our continuing oversight and the work of our external examiner.

We agree with the external examiner's recommendations on how we can improve the assessment and our oversight of it. We have already taken steps to revise existing assessment standards and developed assessment guidelines. We will consult on these in the summer 2022 to obtain the views of wider stakeholders, alongside regulations to improve our regulatory oversight of assessment providers.

Who is the external examiner

The role of PSRAS external examiner is currently held by Diana Kirsch, Associate Dean Enterprise and Director of Pro Bono at Hertfordshire Law School [https://www.herts.ac.uk/search?collection=herts-meta&query=%20Diana%20Kirsch&start_rank=1&sort=relevance] . Before becoming an academic, Diana worked as a partner at Moss and Co solicitors specialising in criminal defence work. She has extensive experience of defending suspects at the police station, qualifying as a police station accredited representative in 1998 and as a duty solicitor in 2000.