



Licensing Criteria

Criteria for becoming a Licensed Paralegal

The following key areas must be met:

Knowledge

An applicant must be able to show an adequate knowledge and understanding of both substantive law and procedure. Evidence of any of the following would satisfy this criterion:

- (1) The Association's Level 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies comprising passing both Modules - General Principles of Law (5 units) and Procedural Law (5 Units).
- (2) Any other qualification of similar level, such as ILEX Level 6; an HND, LLB, BA(Law), CPE/PGDipLaw or NVQ 4 in legal studies, plus the Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice, LPC or other procedural law qualification.
- (3) Any professional qualification, qualifications or a combination of them, which includes a substantial law element which, in the opinion of the Association's Licensing Board is acceptable either in itself or in conjunction with the Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice, LPC or other procedural law qualification and/or experience; "Other procedural law qualification" can be the Procedural Law Module of the Association's Level 4 Diploma or any other procedural law qualification acceptable to the Association.
- (4) A formal qualification may be dispensed with, at the discretion of the said Licensing Board, for Paralegals who have appropriate qualifying experience (see below).

Competence

Each applicant for a Licence must show a necessary period of qualifying experience (defined as work within a solicitor's office, barristers chambers or legal department of an industrial or commercial firm, company or corporation or within the public sector or any other environment which in all the individual circumstances is approved by the said Licensing Board), as follows:

Such work must be either:

- (1) At least 50% of employed time as a 'fee earner' with direct responsibility for their own clients and/or workload and minimum supervision or

(2) Assisting and being responsible to a qualified solicitor, barrister, legal executive or paralegal and undertaking at least 75% of employed time in directly contributing in the pursuit of goals and the implementing of procedures (excluding purely secretarial and office administrative matters).

The requisite period of qualifying experience will be:

(1) Not less than two years immediately preceding the application for a Licence if the applicant has the necessary qualification, or (ii) An aggregate total of six years within the seven year period preceding the date of application for a Licence if the applicant has no such qualifications (subject to the provision set out in paragraph (2) of this section), or (iii) A combination of qualifications and/or qualifying experience which in individual circumstances shall be approved by the said Licensing Board

(2) Any applicant seeking a Licence under Paragraph 1 (ii) of this section will have a period of two years from the date of the first Licence to obtain, through the Association, The English Legal System plus either The Law of Contract, The Law of Tort or Criminal Law, plus either Civil Litigation, Criminal Practice, Matrimonial Disputes, Conveyancing or Succession or some such other qualifications that in individual circumstances shall be approved by the said Licensing Board.

Dedication

Applicants will show dedication to the profession by signing a prescribed formal undertaking with the Association to perform and observe the Codes and Rules of the Association (copies of which may be obtained from the Association on request).



Character Requirements

Applicants will not be eligible for a Licence unless they can satisfy the Licensing Board as to their good character. On application for a Licence and upon any application for the renewal thereof, the Applicant will seek confirmation of good standing from the Applicant's employer or (if appropriate) previous employer.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It is just as important that Paralegals keep abreast of law and practice as any other branch of the legal profession. On any application for the renewal of a Licence, the Applicant will show evidence that during the preceding period of two years he or she has undertaken at least 10 hours of CPD per year. These can take the form of lectures, seminars, workshops, courses and further qualifications as are approved by the Association.

The Licence will be renewable annually upon re-satisfying the criteria regarding character and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Advantages to the system of self-regulation and licensing:

For the Paralegal, it shows a commitment to professionalism. It also shows that the Licensed Paralegal has attained laid down, identifiable, standards and is committed to progress his or her career by maintaining this professionalism by mandatory continuing professional development.

For the Employer and the Client, Paralegals can show that they fulfill the Licensing criteria and that they will keep abreast of changes in the law and procedure through CPD.

Law firms can show clients that their un-admitted staff are qualified and regulated professionals internally supervised and externally regulated.

A Law firms client will know that any complaint against a Licensed Paralegal could be taken up with the Association as well as with the firm.

On the granting of a Licence and during the continuance thereof the Applicant will be entitled to be called and use the title of 'Licensed Paralegal' which will be a title of professional standing.