

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting
Wednesday 29 April 16:30-18:00, by Webex**

Present (Committee members):

Edward Brown (EB)
Peter Carrick
Lindsay Gerrand (LG)
Caroline Janes (CJ)
Hannah Kozlova Lindsay
Greg Lascelles
Patrick McCann (chair) (PM)
Louisa Mendes Da Costa (LMDC)
Frances Moore (FM)
Catherine Moss (CM)
Ben Perry (BP)
Stephanie Tidball (ST)
Sabina Clark (clerk to committee)

In attendance for SRA agenda items only:

Julie Brannan, SRA (JB)
Nick Eastwell, SRA

The chairman opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of 12 February 2020 meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Training Committee draft terms of reference

Discussion of comments received from ST. PM will update draft terms of reference and re-circulate to the Committee.

3. Year planner review

Review of period May to July. Further Committee meeting to be scheduled for June.

4. Summer workshop

LG and PM will lead on build of summer workshop, scheduled for 16 July 2020, to be by Webex.

5. Thought leadership piece 1

CM, FM and CJ will write thought leadership piece to be published in June. PM will introduce Project Associates to CM and FM for this purpose.

6. Junior lawyer division – SQE implementation concerns

PM received a letter from the Junior lawyer division setting out their SQE implementation concerns and requesting a call. EB and LMDC will engage with Junior lawyer division. The

Committee discussed not being able to advocate a particular position, this being a matter for individual firms.

7. Invitation to speak at Westminster Legal Policy Forum – seminar on future of legal education and training

BP received invitation on behalf of Committee. BP will confirm date (which changed from 9 September 2020) and is happy to speak at the event, subject to his availability.

In connection with the above, BP will forward a link to the SRA webinar series on SQE (on YouTube) for circulation to the Committee.

8. Co-ordination with Legal Education and Training Group (LETG)

PM reported that he has yet to co-ordinate with the LETG.

9. Training contracts – Covid-19

Committee discussed impact of home working, a reluctance to delegate to first seaters, and prospectively social distancing in the office (where learning by observation becomes challenging) on trainees' development and development support for them.

Firms were requesting training principals to actively keep in touch with their trainees, encouraging video calls over emails, creating trainee-containing whatsapp groups, soliciting contributions from trainees in group meetings, monitoring "pushdown" of appropriate work to trainees, scheduling trainee social get-togethers and in some case offering training for supervisors/principals, coaching and small group training to trainees. Also thinking about how to deal with the summer 2020 incoming trainee cohort and how to run vac schemes.

10. Impact of Covid-19 – committee members reporting

PM asked members to circulate bullet points around changes, challenges, ideas to the Committee after the meeting. BP raised the issue of vacation schemes- where these may need to be postponed or delivered virtually.

SRA agenda items

JB and Nick Eastwell joined the meeting.

1. Covid-19 matters

JB reported that LPC providers were putting in place remote proctoring arrangements for assessments and that supervisory requirements will be relaxed. This will enable candidates to complete their LPC as planned (where they have a home environment that allows them to take the LPC assessments).

JB reported that training contract supervisor meetings may be remote.

JB reported that the SRA is keeping the SQE start date of September 2021 under review and was still aiming for autumn 2021. JB asked the Committee if it anticipated any problems- none were foreseen by the Committee.

2. SQE 2 pilot – update

JB reported the SQE 2 pilot went well, it was a good test of operational processes, and the SRA had yet to analyse all the data. The SRA would need to take care with analysing the small data sets but the data was valuable and the SRA would draw on experts to interpret it.

The core design question was whether to have a ‘uniform’ exam or allow different contexts (candidate choice) for skills assessments. The pilot explored three different models. The conclusion was that there were challenges around using the ‘common core’ to standardise and correlate performance in the ‘options/specialist areas’- due to variable performance by candidates.

Another question that was being considered was whether there was any evidence of skills being generic across practice areas. The indicative conclusion was that skills were not necessarily transferable (from the ‘common core’ to ‘specialist areas’).

JB reported that the SRA therefore had a difficult decision to take around having a uniform exam or not, to make sure the assessment is fair to all candidates. The SRA recognised that in regulatory terms a uniform exam is best (given the broad licence to practice) yet in practice lawyers not being asked to demonstrate skills across all reserved activities.

JB asked the Committee whether it would suggest any uniform exam mitigations (beyond open book exams, guidance around legal technical knowledge not being tested within the skills assessments). LMDC and ST raised questions around weighting of knowledge and skills within SQE (50/50).

PM raised the SRA survey on the mitigations question and JB raised the webinar on the SRA website outlining the above findings. PM asked the Committee to watch the webinar and respond to the survey before it closed (10 May).

3. SQE 2 – transition/timing

JB confirmed that if a candidate accepts a training contract offer before the regulations come into force the transitional arrangements will apply so that candidate can take the QLTS / GDL even though the SQE is available.

JB asked the Committee whether any firms are now offering training contracts with the GDL to start in September 2021 – general consensus was that the GDL as it currently stands would not be used past September 2021 with all incoming trainees starting the SQE route from summer/autumn 2022.

JB confirmed that law schools were adapting their courses to support this transition process.

The chairman closed the meeting.