

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting
Monday 15 June 16:30-17:30, by Webex**

Present (Committee members):

Edward Brown (EB)
Peter Carrick (PC)
Lindsay Gerrand (LG)
Caroline Janes (CJ)
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)

CLLS Representative

Kevin Hart (for first 15 minutes)

Apologies:

Greg Lascelles
Hannah Kozlova Lindsay

The chairman opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of 29 April 2020 meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. LPC and other exams for future joiners - confirming SRA position

The SRA's decision to allow the LPC exams to be taken remotely means that the 2019/2020 nine month LPC course is about to finish and the February 2020 short LPC course is due to finish this summer. It was noted that the USA Bars have taken a different approach and have not allowed remote exams, with consequent disruption.

It is understood that LPC providers are likely to start their autumn 2020 LPC courses online, possibly continuing online (at least as an option) for the entire course. Providers are mindful that to bring students into the classroom partway through the course would require many to rent accommodation in London either for a period of less than a year (which is difficult to secure) or for a full year (which would be economically disadvantageous if needed for part only of a year).

BP noted that online study may have visa implications: a study visa will not be required for a period in which training is only provided online and it will not be possible to apply for a study visa partway through a course if/when classroom teaching is available. Further, subsequent work visa applications (for training contracts) will be more cumbersome to obtain for foreign based trainees who have not had a previous UK study visa.

It was noted that most firms represented on the Committee are not deferring the start of training contracts due to commence in autumn 2020.

3. Response to Junior lawyer division – request on timing of SQE 2

EB and LMDC confirmed that they had sent a letter to the JLD incorporating comments from other members of the Committee. No response has been received. PM thanked EB and LMDC for meeting with the JLD and preparing the letter.

It was noted that the JLD's view that SQE2 should be required to be assessed during the period of qualifying work experience has been referred to in the legal press recently but there has been no mention that this Committee disagrees.

4. SRA SQE:

a. SQE 2 pilot results – members' thoughts and

b. [SQE approval](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/sqe/sqe-final-design/) (https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/sqe/sqe-final-design/)- members' thoughts

Items (a) and (b) were discussed together. It was noted that the SRA has decided that SQE1 will contain no skills assessment and that SQE2 will use a uniform assessment.

Reference was made to the SRA's webinar that afternoon (15 June) and to the publication by the SRA of a draft final SQE2 assessment specification, together with a survey seeking feedback by 28 June. See:

- (i) Link to the 15 June webinar: [available on YouTube](#).
- (ii) Link to the draft final SQE2 assessment specification:
<https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE2-draft>

It was agreed that, for City firms not practising in many of the reserved activities, the SRA's approach in relation to SQE2 is likely to mean firms will want their trainee solicitors to sit their SQE2 assessments as soon as possible after their SEQ1 assessments (as SQE2 will test the same areas of legal knowledge).

Concern was expressed that some of the SQE2 assessments in the final draft assessment specification expect a lot of candidates (eg to undertake research and produce a note in 60 minutes).

c. SQE Equality Diversity and Inclusion risk assessment survey

Few Committee members had been aware of the existence of this survey whilst it was open for comment. One member firm that had submitted a response had agreed that the SRA had identified the correct areas of risk but had identified a number of specific risks which had not been raised by the SRA.

d. SQE transitional arrangements for non-law graduates

BP referred to an email from one of the training providers which he had previously circulated to Committee members. This indicates that the SRA has changed its stance on the transitional rules which will apply to non-law graduates. It had been understood that non-law graduates could qualify under the existing (pre-SQE) route to qualification provided they had, before 1 September 2021, accepted a training contract offer or had accepted a place to study the GDL. The SRA has now confirmed that the transitional arrangements will apply to anyone who, before 1 September 2021, has completed, started, accepted an offer of a place or paid a non-refundable deposit for a qualifying law degree, the CPE/ GDL, exempting law degree, LPC or a period of recognised training (training contract). Anyone who falls within this group ('transitional cohort') will have until 31 December 2032 to qualify as a solicitor under the existing routes. Transitional cohort

candidates who accepted an offer of a training contract by 1st September 2021 may start a CPE/ GDL programme on or before 31 August 2022. Transitional cohort candidates who have accepted an offer of a place on the CPE / GDL before 1st September 2021 must otherwise start the programme on or before 31 December 2021. Committee members did not believe that this change would have a significant practical impact for their firms.

5. CLLS website: confirmation that list of this committee's members is updated

PM reported that Hannah Kozlova Lindsay is retiring as a Committee member. PM will ensure that this change, and other necessary updates, will be made to the list of Committee members on the CLLS website.

6. Year planner 2020

Reference was made to the year planner.

7. Thought leadership piece 1 - update from FM, CM and CJ and request for assistance

FM, CM and CJ proposed the following, which was agreed:

- i. They will circulate a note to Committee members, asking for observations on six themes which they have identified. *Timing: note to be circulated by 19 June.*
- ii. Responses will be shared with Project Associates who will use the data from the responses to help prepare an article. *Timing: by beginning of July.*
- iii. Project Associates will seek interest in the article from publishers.
- iv. Project Associates will also help prepare a report for the Summer Workshop.

8. Summer workshop– update from LG and PM and request for assistance

PM shared a draft outline for a 90 minute workshop put together by PM and LG. Committee members thought this looked very good. PM will circulate the outline to Committee members. He and LG hope to finalise speakers by 26 June. The workshop will be held in mid-July; the date currently being considered is 16 July. The precise date will be confirmed shortly.

9. Company Trainee Solicitor Essay Prize – summary

PM reported that 29 entries had been received (a substantial increase on previous years' entries). Some interesting themes had emerged which PM will share with Committee members.

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

PM will liaise with the LETG with two aims:

- i. To ensure there is no unwitting overlap, such as events on similar topics at similar times.
- ii. To explore possibilities for collaboration.

Any other business

There continues to be some confusion about the situation where a person who is a qualified solicitor is employed by a law firm in a non-solicitor role, typically as a paralegal. The Committee is aware that this issue will become more pertinent for law firms if paralegals qualify via the SQE route and wish to continue to work as paralegals. The Committee will explore this issue further.