

Accreditation FAQs

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- ***Application process***

What are the requirements to successfully receive a contribution towards the cost of my accreditation/ reaccreditation from the LSC?

The LSC will only accept a claim towards the cost of accreditation/ reaccreditation if:

- the provider holds a current LSC contract in the relevant category of law;
- the accredited individual undertakes legal aid work in the relevant category for the provider at the time of application;
- it is submitted within six months of the date of accreditation;
- it is for a successful accreditation/ reaccreditation;
- no LSC contribution has been previously been made towards the accredited individual's current membership of a different accreditation panel.

Together with their claim form, applicants must send the panel membership letter and certificate by the relevant accreditation body as evidence that they have successfully been accredited/ reaccredited.

What accreditation/ reaccreditation schemes does the LSC contribute towards?

The LSC contributes towards the following accreditation schemes:

Initial Accreditations	
Name of Accreditation Scheme	Accreditation Body
Family Law Panel	The Law Society
Family Law Advanced Panel	The Law Society
The Children Panel	The Law Society
Family Mediation Panel	The Law Society
Immigration Level 1	The Law Society
Immigration Level 2	The Law Society
Immigration Supervisor	The Law Society
Mental Health Panel	The Law Society
Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme	The Law Society

Police Station Representatives Accreditation Scheme	Solicitors Regulation Authority
Family Mediation Council	The Family Mediation Council
Resolution Specialist Accreditation scheme	Resolution
Reaccreditations	
Name of Accreditation Scheme	Accreditation Body
Family Law Panel	The Law Society
The Children Panel	The Law Society
Immigration Level 1	The Law Society
Immigration Level 2	The Law Society
Mental Health Panel	The Law Society
Resolution Specialist Accreditation scheme	Resolution

Further details can be found in the Documents section of our webpage: www.legalservices.gov.uk >CLS (or CDS)>Quality Standards>Accreditation

How much does the LSC contribute?

The contribution for each scheme is shown in Annex B in the Documents section of our webpage: www.legalservices.gov.uk >CLS (or CDS)>Quality Standards>Accreditation.

Will the LSC always pay a contribution when a valid claim is submitted?

Reimbursements are paid from a fixed annual budget. If funds run out before the end of a financial year, claims are put on hold and processed at the start of the following financial year if new funds become available.

Will the LSC increase the amount of accreditation/ reaccreditation contributions if accrediting bodies put up their prices?

No. The contribution scheme operates within a limited budget, and there is no provision for us to increase contributions if accrediting bodies decide to increase their prices.

How do I apply to receive a contribution?

Subject to the applicant meeting the requirements outlined in response to Q1, the applicant will need to download and complete the relevant claim form, which can be found on our website: www.legalservices.gov.uk >CLS (or CDS)>Quality Standards>Accreditation.

There are three forms:

- **CDS13** form - Crime accreditation/reaccreditation contributions
- **CIVIL 1** form - Civil accreditation/reaccreditation contributions
- **IAAS 1** form - Immigration accreditation/ reaccreditation contributions

Who do I send my claim form to?

Crime claims

Duty Performance Team
LSC Nottingham Office
Fothergill House
16 King Street,
Nottingham, NG1 2AS
DX 10035 NOTTINGHAM-1

Civil and Immigration claims

Central Commissioning
LSC Head Office
4th Floor - 4 Abbey Orchard Street
London SW1P 2BS
DX 328 London

Who can answer queries about my claim?

Civil and Immigration claims should be sent to Stephanie.curran@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk Crime claims should be sent to helen.missing@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk or carol.crabtree@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk.

Where can I send a general enquiry relating to accreditation/reaccreditation contributions?

These can be sent to: accreditation@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk. General queries about the accreditation schemes should be addressed to the relevant accreditation body.

I have exceeded the 6 months limit for submitting my claim because the accreditation body has only just sent me a letter confirming the date of accreditation. Can I still get a reimbursement?

No. The LSC will only pay claims that are received within 6 months of the date of accreditation. The only exception will be in cases where the LSC is at fault for a delay. Applicants may wish to contact the relevant accreditation body to raise a complaint.

Given that all my training and accreditation was done prior to 14 July 2010, is there any way I can claim on the old form and receive the higher contribution?

No. From 15 July 2010 for Crime and 15 November 2010 for Civil and Immigration, individuals must submit a claim for a contribution towards their accreditation costs within 6 months of the date of accreditation.

I have recently obtained accreditation to the Family Law Panel and also to the Resolution scheme. Can I claim for a contribution towards the cost of both?

No. You can only claim for one contribution e.g. either the Law Society's Family Law Panel scheme or Resolution's Panel scheme. The LSC will not pay for current membership of two accreditation panels.

I work as an external supervisor. As a non employee of a firm with a LSC contract, can I get an exemption in fees or be reimbursed?

No, external supervisors do not qualify for a contribution. The fees for accreditation are set by the accrediting organisations, and any questions regarding possible exemptions should be addressed to the relevant body.

One of our advisers passed an accreditation examination while this firm had a legal aid contract. However, we no longer have a legal aid contract in that category of law. Are we entitled to receive a contribution?

No. As the adviser will no longer be doing publicly funded work in the category of law relating to the accreditation scheme you wish to claim for, the claim is invalid.

I no longer work for the firm that employed me at the time of accreditation. As I paid for the accreditation myself and as I continue to practice legal aid work with my current employer, could you reimburse me directly?

No. The LSC do not reimburse individuals. Contributions are made via the BACS system into the account of the firm employing the applicant at the time of accreditation, provided the firm has an active legal aid contract in the relevant category of law and the applicant still delivers legal aid in the relevant category of law.

- **Immigration**

I would like to know the schedule of Immigration Accreditation exams and the cost of the exams. Also, what kind of exams are they?

Central Law Training runs the IAAS (Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme) and publishes exams schedules and costs on their website: www.clt.co.uk. The Law Society owns the scheme and more information can be obtained on their website: www.lawsociety.org.uk >promoting solicitors>accreditation schemes>immigration and asylum

- **Mediation Accreditation Scheme**

Please supply full details of Family Mediation Accreditation Scheme

The LSC's requirements regarding publicly funded mediators are set out in our mediation contract and in the Mediation Quality mark. Information on the Family Mediation requirements can be found in the '*Mediation Quality Mark (MQM) Standard for 2010*' which can be found in the Documents section of our website: www.legalservices.gov.uk>CLS>quality standards>quality mark.

The position on our requirements for demonstrating individual competence in order to undertake publicly funded work can be found at D5.1 of the MQM. In summary, advisers that wish to become mediators must firstly undertake a Family Mediation Foundation Course recognised by the Family Mediation Council (FMC). Then, in order to undertake publicly funded mediation the mediator must also be assessed as competent by one of the following routes:

- Successful completion of the competence assessment process managed by the membership organisations of the FMC. This is usually referred to as the completion of their 'portfolio' (documented work evidencing their competence) following assessment by the FMC.
- Practitioner membership of the Law Society Family Mediation Panel

For more information about specific requirements in relation to these routes, queries should be directed to the appropriate member organisation of the FMC. These are:

- Family Mediators Association (FMA)
- National Family Mediation (NFM)
- Resolution
- ADR Group
- College of Mediators
- The Law Society

These organisations can advise on approved courses, specific requirements and facilitate the allocation of a supervisor/professional practice consultant (PPC) who will provide support and guidance to the trainee throughout the process.

Providers can also contact the Family Mediation Council for further advice:

Email: info@familymediationcouncil.org.uk

Address: Family Mediation Council, PO Box 593, Exeter, EX1 9HG

Is the LSC currently awarding contracts to deliver Family Mediation services?

The LSC recently tendered for new 3 year contracts to deliver mediation services which were introduced in November 2010. Although the Legal Services Commission are not currently awarding additional contracts at this time, we are closely monitoring this situation to ensure that clients continue to have access to quality assured mediation services and will keep this position under review, particularly in light of the introduction of the Pre Application Protocol in April 2011 and the impending Legal Aid Reforms, which will increase demand for mediation services.

Therefore it is possible that there may be future windows of opportunity for providers to tender for a contract to deliver publicly funded mediation if we consider there is a need to increase the capacity of our existing mediation provider base. In order to be awarded a family mediation contract a service would need to meet the Mediation Quality Mark (MQM) Standard which can be found at the following link:

http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/how/quality_mark.asp

The key thing is that mediators will need to be appropriately competence assessed by one of the following routes:

- Full membership of a member organisation of the Family Mediation Council following successful completion of the competence assessment process; or
- Practitioner membership of the Law Society Family Mediation Panel.

Are any other qualifications required In addition to meeting the LSC criteria, such as a diploma, a degree or a course?

Under the Mediation Quality Mark Standard Mediators must be assessed as competent by one of the following routes in order to undertake publicly funded work:

- Successful completion of the competence assessment process managed by member organisations of the Family Mediation Council and approved by the LSC.
- Practitioner membership of the Law Society Family Mediation Panel
(This standard is managed by the Family Mediation Council on the LSC's behalf).

There are requirements that a person would need to meet in order to become a mediator. For example all disciplines must be educated to degree level or equivalent and hold a recognised qualification in order to be eligible to train as a mediator through a recognised body.

Anyone interested in training as a mediator should contact the Family Mediation Council at <http://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/> for more information on the requirements.

• Children Panel Accreditation

Is it necessary for a solicitor to have been a member of the Children Panel for 3 years before being appointed by a Court to represent a child in proceedings in which no Guardian has been appointed?

The Children Panel scheme is owned by the Law Society (TLS). Information on TLS' accreditation schemes can be found on its website:

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/accreditation/accreditationchildrenlaw.page> or send an e-mail to: accreditation@lawsociety.org.uk or call 0870 606 2566.

• Police Station Accredited Representative Scheme and Duty Solicitors Rota

I completed Part A of my portfolio and sent off my application for a probationary PIN but I have not received a response. Also, I have changed employers and have a new supervising solicitor, could you please advise me if I need to do anything else because of this.

All queries relating to Police Station Representative accreditation should contact dsc.enquiries@ventura-uk.com or call the Duty solicitor call centre on 0845 5 438 910.

I am about to gain my Higher Rights of audience. I am also Police Station Accredited. Is there any waiver for HR Advocates from the MSQ to enable me to join CLAS Stage 1?

The Criminal Litigation Accreditation scheme (CLAS) is administered by the Law Society, who have information on their website: *Law society>promoting solicitors>accreditation schemes* or send an e-mail accreditation@lawsociety.org.uk

Do Police Station Representatives have to fill a quota of police station attendances in order to maintain their accredited status?

The regulations of the Police Station Representative Accreditation Scheme state: to remain an Accredited Representative you must:

- Undertake a minimum of 25 police station attendances per annum
- Undertake 6 hours Continuous Professional Development training on issues relevant to criminal law (which may include internal courses).

Where can I find more information about the Police Station Accredited Representative Scheme?

The SRA is the owner of the scheme and should be the first source for enquiries about its structure and requirements. The LSC has outsourced the administration of the scheme to Ventura, which can be contacted at: dsc.enquiries@ventura-uk.com . More information can be obtained from the LSC's website:

www.legalservices.org.uk >CDS>Criminal areas of work>Police stations, under the Documents' sub-heading Police Station Representatives.

How do I get onto the Duty Solicitors Rotas?

You need to undertake the Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS), which is owned by The Law Society. Following this you need to undertake the Police Station Qualification (PSQ) and Magistrate Court Qualification (MCQ). The PSQ is made out of a Critical Incidents Test and a Portfolio of cases you undertake while supervised. The MSQ is a Portfolio and an Interview and Advocacy Test. Once you are CLAS accredited you can apply (as an employee of a contracted legal aid firm) for a slot on the Duty Solicitors Rotas. More information can be obtained by sending an e-mail to dutysolqueries@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk

Is it correct that the LSC will fund barristers (self-employed and employed by solicitors) to represent suspects and interviewees at police station if they pass the Police Station Representation qualification (run by the SRA)?

In order to join police station duty rotas a barrister must hold the Police Station Qualification (PSQ) and the Magistrates Court Qualification (MCQ), which are part of the Law Society's Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS). Solicitors who obtain the two qualifications are required to then apply to the Law Society for CLAS membership before they can join the rota. Since barristers are not permitted to join scheme, we accept applications from them without CLAS membership.

We are interested in registering barristers as Duty Solicitors but they will remain self employed.

Employed barristers can undertake duty solicitor work if they have passed the Police Station Qualification (PSQ) and may be duty solicitors. They do not have to undertake the MCQ (a Portfolio and an Interview and Advocacy Test) as they are considered to have the appropriate expertise and experience in that regard.

Self-employed barristers are currently prohibited by their code of conduct from delivering publicly funded legal services directly to clients and are not eligible to become duty solicitors.

What is the deadline for submitting a Duty Solicitor's Application?

Details of deadlines are published on the LSC website: www.legalservices.gov.uk Queries should be e-mailed to dutysolqueries@legalservices.gsi.gov.uk More information can be found on www.legalservices.gov.uk >CDS> *criminal areas of work >Police Stations> Defence Solicitors Call Centre (CSCC)*

- **Supervisors Requirements - Family**

Must individuals have passed the Part 1 (core assignment) of the Resolution Specialist Accreditation Scheme at the time of the tender?

No, individuals will need to have the appropriate accreditation by the time that we verify successful tenders (so post tender deadline).