

LSC Training Contract Grants Scheme 2008

A guide to the Scheme

Working for Justice

Legal Aid – A great career opportunity



Just some of the trainees who have been helped by the Training Contract Grants Scheme so far attending the 'Legal Aid – The Next Generation' conference in Oxford with LSC Chief Executive Carolyn Regan.

What is the Training Contract Grants Scheme?

The Legal Services Commission's annual Training Contract Grants scheme helps support trainees by funding their training and development. Since the scheme started in 2002:

- around 600 legal aid solicitors have been supported by a Training Contract Grant and a further 150 will be supported under the 2008 scheme
- over £15 million has been invested in the next generation of legal aid solicitors with a further £3 million awarded under the 2008 scheme

The 2008 scheme provided 150 grants of up to £20,000, worth £3million are available for organisations committed to legal aid. This year 50% more grants are available than last year, so that more students and trainees can benefit from the support the scheme offers.

Each grant represents a commitment to support a student/trainee and an organisation for up to 4 years, through the LPC and training contract. Organisations also agree to support their trainee for a further two years post-training.

One of the many trainees who benefited from the scheme is Clare Denton. After graduating with a degree in Politics with Law at London Guildhall University, Clare went on to do a Masters in Public Policy at Queen Mary and Westfield, University of London. Clare attended the College of Law in London and completed the CPE (conversion course) and the Legal Practice Course. After completing her LPC, Clare began working as a Paralegal at Freedman Sharman and Company Solicitors in Hertfordshire.

Clare said: “I was attracted to the scheme as the financial aid of the grant allowed my firm to provide me with a training contract which would not have been possible otherwise. The scheme offers funding that enables training and career ladder gain.”

The scheme also provides you with the opportunity to attend LSC events during your training contract such as the recent trainee conference held in Oxford attended by LSC Chief Executive Carolyn Regan and minister Tom Jones.

How did my firm get the grant?

The LSC runs an annual application process through which legal aid providers must apply. To be eligible for a grant, the provider must hold a Unified contract or Unified Crime Contract with the Legal Services Commission and must demonstrate that they can meet both regional and national criteria that are set once a scheme has been approved.

What are the benefits of the grants?

The grant includes 60% payment of your LPC tuition fees where eligible *and /or* 100% payment of your Professional Studies Course. Once you've completed your training contract, you will have the security of knowing that you will continue to work for the same organisation for a further two more years. This is part of the Three-way agreement and is called the 'Commission period'. During that time you will spend a least 30% of your time on legal aid cases. You may be able to complete this two-year commission period with another legal aid organisation but you will need approval from the LSC.

The grant also pays the organisation 50% of the Solicitors Regulation Authority's minimum salary whilst you are on your training contract.

What are the conditions of the grant?

During your training contract you will spend at least 50% of your time working on publicly funded cases.

You must also agree to remain with the organisation for two years post-qualification and spend at least 30% of your time working on publicly funded cases. If you agree to these conditions but do not adhere to them then the LSC reserves the right to recover all or part of the grant paid.

Please ensure you read the Three Way Agreement thoroughly and are fully aware of your obligations under the scheme. A copy is enclosed in the pack for your records.

Am I eligible for LPC funding?

To receive LPC funding, you must have studied at least two electives which are relevant to legal aid and be studying during 2008/2009 academic year. Alternate routes to qualification should be clarified with the LSC.

LPC funding is available to full time or part time students who commenced the LPC in 2008. 60% of the full course fees will be reimbursed.

Part time students who commenced the 2nd year of the LPC in 2008 will receive 60% of the 2nd year fees.

Students studying the Exempting Law Degree at Northumbria University are also eligible for funding and will receive reimbursement of 60% of the 4th year LPC element of your fees. You must study at least 1 study option directly relevant to publicly funded work.

If you are taking the ILEX route into the profession, and you commenced your LPC in 2008, you will be eligible to apply for a 60% reimbursement of your LPC fees.

Why aren't all LPC fees paid?

If you have completed the LPC already, you will not be eligible for LPC funding. This is because, due to the limited funding available, funding cannot be backdated. This includes any training contract which have already been completed in part or in full which cannot receive funding under the scheme.

How do I claim my LPC fees?

A receipted invoice must be submitted by end of February in the first year. Failure to do this may result in the loss of the right to claim this part of the Grant, unless an extension has been requested in writing and agreed by the Commission. It is the responsibility of the Trainee to ensure the receipted invoice is submitted on time.

Further information

Included in this pack you will find further information about the Legal Services Commission (LSC) and working in legal aid. You will also find contact details for the LSC and organisation which can provide support during your training contract.

Furthermore you will find a Training Contract Grant certificate and an invitation to the LSC Training Contract Grants Award Ceremony.