

SOLICITOR IN ENGLAND AND WALES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Solicitors act for and offer advice and guidance to their clients on the laws of England and Wales. Solicitors engage in a wide range of legal activities such as commercial law, probate, conveyancing, family law, criminal and civil litigation and arbitration. Solicitors have rights to practise exclusively in certain areas of the law.

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

To gain entry to the profession, a person should usually possess a law degree. Subsequently, the person needs to pass the one-year full-time or two-year part time Legal Practice Course, complete a two-year training contract (with a Law Society approved training establishment) and complete the Professional Skills Course. They may then apply to the Law Society for admission to the roll of solicitors.

Before a person with a degree in a non-law subject can take the Legal Practice Course they must first achieve one of the following, pass the Common Professional Examination, obtain a senior status law degree or acquire a graduate diploma in law.

If a person is a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives, they can be exempted from these requirements, if they have passed equivalent academic stage papers within the ILEX qualification process. However, they must undertake the Legal Practice Course and Professional Skills Course.

Further information can be found at www.training.lawsociety.org.uk.

REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL BODY

Workers must be entered on the roll of solicitors of England and Wales and hold a current Law Society practising certificate in order to legally practise as a solicitor. To check whether an individual solicitor is registered with the Law Society, there is an online registration checker available on the Law Society web site at <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/findasolicitor.law>.

Conversion/Adaptation Training

Lawyers from a number of jurisdictions, including Hong Kong and Singapore may qualify for admission as solicitors of England and Wales without the need for conversion/adaptation training if the Law Society is content with the workers qualifications and experience.

The Law Society issues certificates of eligibility to some overseas lawyers who wish to qualify as solicitors in England and Wales. These are valid for 3 years and allow a person to undertake conversion and adaptation training in England and Wales. Following conversion/adaptation training, the worker may apply for admission to the roll of solicitors and for a practising certificate.

WORK PERMITS (UK) TREATMENT

B&C: The job meets the skills criteria. Workers wishing to train in order to gain admission to the roll and a practising certificate whilst being employed, also meet the skills criteria due to the entry requirements of the profession.

TWES Training: This occupation is suitable for training where the worker is to undertake their training in a post that is additional to an employers normal staffing.

TWES Work Experience: This occupation is suitable for work experience.

Lawyers not admitted in England and Wales but who are required to be based in England or Wales: Applications may be received to employ workers who are recognised as legal practitioners in their own country of origin. These workers may be employed by solicitors to offer advice on the law of their country of origin and on English law. However, they cannot practise as solicitors or appear in open court. Nor can they undertake any other work reserved under the law for solicitors unless they do so at the direction and under the supervision of their solicitor employer.

EU/EAA/Swiss lawyers who are EU/EAA/Swiss nationals and who wish to practise as a lawyer under their home jurisdiction title in England and Wales on a permanent basis must register with a competent authority. These would either be the Law Society or the General Council of the Bar.

Overseas lawyers may work in partnership with English or Welsh solicitors in England and Wales. However, they must be registered with the Law Society as "registered foreign lawyer" i.e. registered under section 89 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990.

SALARY

The Law Society recently reviewed salaries for trainee solicitors and the minimum salary for training contracts entered into after the 1 August 2004 is for outside of central London is £14,200 (the Law Society recommend £14,870 and for inner London the salary is £15,900 (the Law Society recommend £16,680). Newly qualified solicitors can earn upwards of £30,000 a year with City of London solicitors. However salaries in smaller firms and firms outside of London may be considerably less.

ADVERTISING

Advertising in a relevant section of the National press or in the specialist legal press such as the Law Society Gazette (www.lawgazette.co.uk), Legal Week (<http://www.legalweek.co.uk/>) or the Lawyer (www.thelawyer.com/) is appropriate. Posts may also be advertised on the Law Society website (www.lawsociety.org.uk).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1PL, Tel: 0207 2421222, Fax: 0207 8310344, E Mail: info.services@lawsociety.org.uk, Web site: www.lawsociety.org.uk.