



# Law Society of Northern Ireland

## SOLICITORS ADMISSION AND TRAINING REGULATIONS 1988 (as amended)

**Up to date as of 6 November 2024**

The Council of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, in exercise of the power conferred on it by Articles 6 and 74(1) of the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, and with the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, hereby makes the following Regulations:

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Solicitors Admission and Training Regulations 1988 and shall come into force forthwith.

2. (1) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 shall apply to the interpretation of these Regulations as it applies to a statutory instrument.

(2) (a) In these Regulations the following expressions have the following meanings respectively:-

“Certificate of Compliance” means a certificate issued to a person by the Society under Article 5(1) of the Order.

“the Committee” means the Education Committee constituted in accordance with Regulation 3.

“the Council” means the Council of the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

“the Institute” means the Institute of Professional Legal Studies of the Queen’s University of Belfast. <sup>1</sup>“the Graduate School” means the Graduate School of Professional Legal Education of the University of Ulster.

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<sup>1</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

“the Order” means the Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

“registered student” means a person who has been accepted as a registered student by the Society.

“the Society” means The Law Society of Northern Ireland.

- (b) Other expressions in these Regulations have the meaning assigned to them by the Order.

## **PART I** **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

3. (1) There shall be a Committee of the Council to be known as “the Education Committee” consisting of:-
- (a) the President and Vice-Presidents of the Society who shall be ex officio members, and
- (b) not less than five other members of the Society appointed by the Council at its first meeting after each Annual General Meeting of the Society.
- (2) The members of the Committee shall hold office until the appointment of their successors, and members of the Committee shall be eligible for re-appointment. Three members of the Committee shall form a quorum.
- (3) A vacancy in the Committee may be filled by the Council at any time.
- (4) The Council shall appoint one member of the Committee to be Chairman of the Committee. At any meeting of the Committee where the Chairman is not present after the elapse of ten minutes from the time for which the meeting has been convened the members present may appoint one of their number to act as Chairman at that meeting.
4. The Committee shall have such powers and duties, in addition to those conferred or imposed on it by these Regulations, as may be lawfully delegated to it by the Council.

## **PART II** **REGISTRATION AND SELECTION**

5. Subject to any statutory provision having a contrary effect, a person who intends to seek admission as a solicitor shall apply to the Society for registration as a student on the form obtainable from the Secretary of the Society.
6. The Secretary shall maintain a Register of Students and shall enter therein the names, and such further particulars as the Committee or the Council shall direct, of all registered students.

7. An applicant for registration shall before the 1st July in the relevant year, time in this respect to be of the essence, lodge with the Secretary
- (i) a Petition in such form as the Committee may by resolution lay down,
  - (ii) a certified copy of his entry of birth or other evidence satisfactory to the Committee of his age,
  - (iii) <sup>2</sup>Indentures of Apprenticeship between himself and a solicitor acceptable to the Committee (in form directed by the Committee) providing for such service (if any) and for such duration as shall have been directed by the Committee under these Regulations as being applicable to the applicant as an individual or to all applicants of the same class.
  - (iv) an affidavit verifying the facts set out in his Petition, and
  - (v) pay such fees as may be required by the Council from time to time.
8. An applicant who has complied with Regulation 7 shall be registered (subject to Regulation 9), but such registration shall be conditional upon the registered student producing proof to the satisfaction of the Society that he
- (1) (a) possesses a degree in law acceptable to the Committee and satisfies the Society by way of examination or otherwise that he has attained a level of knowledge acceptable to the Society, of the following subjects namely:-
    - Law of Evidence;
    - Company Law; and
  - (b) has been offered a place in the Institute or <sup>3</sup>the Graduate School;  
or
  - (2) (a) possesses a degree acceptable to the Committee in another discipline; and
  - (b) satisfies the Society by way of examination or otherwise that he has attained a level of knowledge acceptable to the Society, of the following subjects namely:-
    - Constitutional Law;
    - Law of Tort;
    - Law of Contract;

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<sup>2</sup> See also Solicitors Admission and Training (Qualification of Masters) (Amendment) Regulations 1992

<sup>3</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

Criminal Law;  
Equity;  
Land Law;  
Law of Evidence;  
Company Law; and

- (c) has been offered a place in the Institute or <sup>4</sup>the Graduate School;

5 (3)

- (4) <sup>6</sup>has been admitted as a solicitor or called to the Bar in any jurisdiction within the Commonwealth or in the Republic of Ireland and, in the case of a barrister, has procured himself to be disbarred; or
- (5) <sup>7</sup>has satisfied the Committee that, ~~<sup>8</sup>being a person of not less than 30 years of age,~~ he has acquired such special qualifications and/or experience as to render him suitable to be accepted as a registered student.

9. An applicant shall not be registered -

- (1) if (a) the applicant is an undischarged bankrupt; or
- (b) the applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence of such a nature as in the opinion of the Committee makes his registration undesirable; or
- (c) for any reason, the applicant fails to satisfy the Committee as to his fitness to be a solicitor.
- (2) unless the applicant shall have satisfied the Committee as to his suitability to be accepted as a registered student and for that purpose produce to the Committee such evidence, by affidavit or otherwise, as to his education, character and fitness as the Committee may require and, if so required by the Committee attend at the Society's premises to be interviewed by the Committee or an officer of the Society nominated by the Committee for that purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

<sup>5</sup> Revoked by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2015

<sup>6</sup> See also Solicitors Admission and Training (Requirements for N.I. Barristers) Regulations 1990

<sup>7</sup> Re George Burns; Re The Solicitors (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 [unreported NIQB 24 September 1999]

<sup>8</sup> Discontinued in 2012

**PART III**  
**CONTROL OF TRAINING OF STUDENTS**

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10 (1) All registered students to whom Regulation 8(1) or (2) applies:

- (a) shall serve to the satisfaction of the Committee under Indentures of Apprenticeship for a period of two years beginning on 1 September of the year in which they are registered, such period to include the time spent at the Institute or the Graduate School; and
- (b) shall attend such lectures or courses of study and present themselves for and achieve passes in such examinations in such additional subjects as the Society may from time to time determine.

(2) In the event of any registered student to whom 8(1) or 8(2) applies:

- (a) being unsuccessful in the main and supplementary examinations of the Institute or the Graduate School; and
- (b) being required or permitted by the review or appeal processes applicable from time to time to the Institute or the Graduate School, to re-attend the relevant course or any part thereof and, or in the alternative, to retake the final examinations or any part thereof;

such registered student shall serve to the satisfaction of the Committee under Indentures of Apprenticeship for such further period as the Committee may determine.

(3) All other registered students shall comply with such conditions as from time to time may be laid down by the Committee and in particular:

- (a) shall serve to the satisfaction of the Committee under Indentures of Apprenticeship for such period, (if any), not exceeding four years, as the Committee may in any individual case or in relation to any class of applicant under Regulation 8(3), (4) or (5) decide, upon such conditions as the Society may from time to time determine;
- (b) shall attend such courses of study and in such subjects as the Committee may in any individual case or in relation to any class of applicant under Regulation 8(3), (4) or (5) may require; and
- (c) shall present themselves for and achieve passes in such examinations and in such subjects as the Committee may in

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<sup>9</sup> Substituted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

any individual case or in relation to any class of applicant under Regulation 8(3), (4) or (5) may direct.

11. <sup>10</sup>
12. All Indentures of Apprenticeship (including those entered into by those students who have been awarded a place at the Institute <sup>11</sup>or the Graduate School shall
  - (1) be in the form laid down by the Committee;
  - (2) provide for payment by the master to the apprentice of a wage not less than that fixed by the Committee from time to time as being appropriate;
  - (3) be lodged with and enrolled by the Committee;
  - (4) not be assigned without written permission of the Committee.
13. No solicitor shall have more than one apprentice at any one time, and no solicitor who is employed as an assistant by or is a consultant to another solicitor shall have an apprentice.

<sup>12</sup>provided however that it shall be permissible for an individual solicitor to have two apprentices at any one time so long as

  - (a) both apprentices are registered students of the Society under Regulation 8(1)(a) or (b); and
  - (b) one of the said students is in the first year of his apprenticeship and the other is in the second year of his apprenticeship”.
14. During the currency of any apprenticeship both master and apprentice shall
  - (1) hold themselves available from time to time for interview with a representative of the Society appointed for the purpose to enable an assessment to be made of the quality of training provided and the progress of the apprentice in his training;
  - (2) shall comply with any requirement of the Committee that a master release an apprentice from Indentures or to assign or vary the same on such terms as the Committee may determine to enable the apprentice to complete his training; and
  - (3) supply such information as may be required by the Committee or its duly appointed representative.

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<sup>10</sup> Revoked by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 1994

<sup>11</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

<sup>12</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Qualification Of Masters) Regulations 1988

**PART IV**  
**ADMISSION**

15. A Certificate of Compliance shall be issued by the Society to any registered student who has
- (1) complied with these Regulations; and
  - <sup>13</sup>-(2) (a) In the case of students to whom Regulation 8(1) or (2) applies on production of a Certificate of Professional Legal Studies from the Institute or a <sup>14</sup>Post Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Graduate School together with evidence satisfactory to the Society that such other courses of study, lectures or examinations as may have been determined under the provisions of Regulation 10(1) (b) have been attended and passed.
  - (b) In the case of all other students such Certificates as may be required by the Society.
  - (3) has lodged an affidavit by his master averring that the student has complied with all the conditions of his Indentures; and
  - (4) has satisfied the Committee as to the adequacy of the training received during his apprenticeship; and
  - (5) has satisfied the Committee as to his character and fitness to be a solicitor; and
  - (6) has paid the required fees to the Society.
16. A person who has obtained a Certificate of Compliance shall be eligible to apply for admission to the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland.

**PART V**  
**CONDUCT**

17. The Society may take such action as it may consider proper in relation to the conduct of students and may refuse the issue of a Certificate of Compliance or revoke any such Certificate held by a registered student at any time prior to the registered student being admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland.

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<sup>13</sup> Substituted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 1994

<sup>14</sup> Inserted by Solicitors Admission and Training (Amendment) Regulations 2008

**PART VI**  
**MISCELLANEOUS AND GENERAL**

18. Without prejudice to any of the powers contained in these Regulations, the Council may, in any case (including a case of non-compliance with the Regulations) in which it considers that the circumstances justify such a course, relax or dispense with any particular requirement of these Regulations on such terms as they may deem appropriate.
19. All students shall be bound by such variations as may from time to time be duly made in these Regulations.
20. In exercising its functions under these Regulations the Council shall pay due regard to the opinions, views and recommendations of the Committee but shall not be obliged to follow them.
21. The Solicitors' Admission and Training Regulations 1986 are hereby revoked.