



Pre-diploma Training

SHND in Legal Studies from a College of Further Education approved by the Council of the Law Society is acceptable, provided that the applicant also holds a pass in English at Higher grade at not less than B standard or its equivalent.

Intrants will also be entitled to enter pre-Diploma training if they are:-

- (i) graduates in a discipline other than law; or
- (ii) members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, or the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, or the Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants; or
- (iii) commissioned officers in the armed forces, where commission follows study at a Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force College.

2. Other Intrants

The entrance qualifications listed above may be relaxed for applicants with existing experience of legal work and evidence of some academic attainment.

appendix 2

Law Society Examinations

- ◆ Public Law and the Legal System
- ◆ Scots Private Law
- ◆ Scots Criminal Law
- ◆ Scots Commercial Law
- ◆ Conveyancing
- ◆ Evidence
- ◆ Taxation
- ◆ Accounting*
- ◆ Procedure*
- ◆ Professional Responsibility*
- ◆ European Community Law†

*These subjects are examined as part of the Diploma in Legal Practice course and it is therefore not necessary to obtain passes in them prior to admission to the Diploma.

†A pass in European Community Law is required prior to admission as a solicitor, but can be obtained during post-Diploma training.

Notes

1. The examinations should be passed within four years of the date on which the candidate first presents him/herself for examination.

2. The Law Society of Scotland holds two diets of examinations each year, usually in February

and August.

3. We would advise that, other than in exceptional circumstances, a candidate does not attempt more than two examinations at any one diet.

4. The examination syllabus and reading list are available on our website. Past papers can be obtained at a small charge from the Legal Education Department of the Law Society of Scotland.

5. The Law Society does not provide formal tuition for the examinations.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS LEAFLET IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT FROM THE LAW SOCIETY IF REQUIRED.



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a **law** degree
is NOW the
accepted
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pre-diploma training

A law degree is now the accepted means of entering the legal profession. However, it may not be possible for all intending lawyers to spend three or four years at university. As an alternative, it is possible to qualify for the solicitor branch of the legal profession by a combination of the Law Society's own examinations and the Diploma in Legal Practice.

In order to be eligible to sit the Law Society's examinations, a candidate must find full time employment as a pre-Diploma trainee with a qualified solicitor practising in Scotland. A pre-Diploma training contract lasts for three years and during that time the trainee must receive training in the three prescribed areas of conveyancing, litigation, and either trusts and executries or the legal work of a public authority. To be eligible to enter into a pre-Diploma training contract, an applicant must fulfil certain educational requirements as outlined in Appendix 1.

During the period of the training contract, the trainee will study for the Law Society's examinations, of which seven must be passed before proceeding to the Diploma in Legal Practice. A good examination record is important as it is taken into account by the universities when considering applications for places on the Diploma in Legal Practice. Details of the examinations appear in Appendix 2.

Many of those who qualify in this way already work in solicitors' firms in various capacities. Candidates who are not already employed by a firm of solicitors may experience difficulty in finding an employer willing to take them on under a pre-Diploma training contract. It may be worthwhile making a direct approach to local firms of solicitors or to firms with whom you already have an existing connection. Very few employers in the public sector engage pre-Diploma trainees.

On completing the three year pre-Diploma training contract and passing the examinations, the route to qualification merges with that of law graduates as all intending solicitors are required to obtain the Diploma in Legal Practice and undertake a two year post-Diploma training.

This route to qualification cannot be regarded as an easy option; strong motivation is required. You will be embarking on three years of full time employment combined with self study in your own time for demanding examinations.

appendix 1

Entrance Qualifications

1. Non-graduate Intrants

Passes in five subjects, with a total of not less than 6 points in SCE Highers, and 'O' grades or Standard grades at C standard or above. (SCE Higher at A standard = 3 points, B standard = 2 points and C standard = 1 point. GCE Advanced level at A standard = 4 points, B standard = 3 points, C standard = 2 points, D standard = 1 point).

In addition, there is the disadvantage of not acquiring a Law Degree which is a useful qualification in itself for purposes other than qualifying as a solicitor.

As mentioned, many of those undertaking this type of training have already worked in solicitors' offices and may therefore have a clear picture of the kind of work which interests them. They will also have an idea of the commitment involved. Candidates who qualify by this route often make very good solicitors.

Higher passes must include English at not lower than B standard and either Mathematics or an approved science subject or an approved language other than English. 'A' level passes must include English at not lower than C standard and Mathematics, an approved science subject or a language other than English.

'O' grade or Standard grade or 'O' level passes must include Mathematics, an approved science or language in whichever group has not been studied to Higher or 'A' level.