

7 November 2022

NOTICE ON NEW ADMISSION REGIME

1. This notice sets out preliminary information on the implementation of the changes to the admission regime recommended by the Committee for the Professional Training of Lawyers (CPTL), which were accepted by the Ministry of Law.
2. The CPTL made three key structural recommendations:
 - 2.1. Uncouple admission to the Bar from the completion of a practice training contract;
 - 2.2. Raise the standard and stringency of Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations (“Part B”); and
 - 2.3. Lengthen the practice training period from six months to one year.

In the main, these recommendations translate into new Part B Bar Course and Examinations, and a new practice training framework, taking into consideration the extension of the practice training period.

3. The Singapore Institute of Legal Education (SILE) appointed a working group co-chaired by Deputy Attorney-General Mr Ang Cheng Hock, SC and Mr Jerry Koh¹ to implement the recommendations of the CPTL. The Working Group comprised representatives from the Attorney-General’s Chambers, the Law Society of Singapore, the Ministry of Law, the National University of Singapore Faculty of Law, the Singapore Academy of Law, the Singapore Corporate Counsel Association, the Singapore Management University Yong Pung How School of Law, the Singapore University of Social Sciences School of Law and SILE (see **Schedule** below).

The New Part B Bar Course 2023

4. The new Part B Bar Course will aim to equip candidates with broad-based knowledge of Singapore law and legal practice. It recognises that not all who pass the Part B Bar Examinations and become admitted as non-practising lawyers will go on to undertake the 12-month practice training period. Some may choose other legal careers that do not require a practising certificate, such as in-house counsel and professional support lawyer roles.

¹ Mr Koh is the Managing Partner of Allen & Gledhill LLP.

5. The new Part B Bar Course will comprise six compulsory modules:
 - 5.1. **Corporate and Commercial Practice** (incorporating topics such as Admiralty; Banking and Financial Services; Building and Construction; Competition; Corporate Governance, Insolvency and Corporate Restructuring; Intellectual Property; Taxation; and Trade and Cross-Border Transactions);
 - 5.2. **Dispute Resolution Practice** (incorporating topics such as Arbitration; Civil Litigation; Mediation Advocacy; and Written Advocacy and Introduction to Appellate Advocacy);
 - 5.3. **Private Client Practice** (incorporating topics such as Criminal Law; Employment Law; Family Law; Muslim Law; Personal Injury and Property Damage; Probate and Succession Planning; and Real Estate (Conveyancing));
 - 5.4. **Ethics and Professional Responsibility;**
 - 5.5. **Contemporary Legal Knowledge** (incorporating core legal knowledge² and other topics such as Civil Law Systems; Conflicts of Laws; Cybersecurity and Data Protection; Law and Technology; Mental Wellness, Workplace Issues; and Law and Society); and
 - 5.6. **Professional Skills** (incorporating topics such as Business Skills; Drafting; Negotiation; Professional Financial and Data Literacy; and Use of Technology in Practice).
6. Candidates will be tested using a combination of multiple-choice questions, short questions and hypothetical questions. In some papers, candidates may be required to draft pleadings or submissions.
7. The new Part B Bar Course and Examinations will be conducted twice a year, with the inaugural session starting in July 2023. Applications will open in April 2023.

New Practice Training Framework

8. The extension of the practice training period (“PTP”) from six months to 12 months will allow practice trainees more time to acquire the requisite skills and be eased into practice, and afford opportunities for meaningful exposure to different areas of practice. During the 12-month PTP:
 - 8.1. **Each practice trainee must be rotated through an Advocate-Seat and a Solicitor-Seat.**

² Administrative Law; Civil Procedure and Dispute Resolution; Company Law; Constitutional Law; Contract Law; Criminal Law and Procedure; Equity and Trusts; Ethics and Professional Responsibility; Evidence Law; Property Law; and Torts.

- 8.2. **Each practice trainee must complete a Core Seat and at least one Secondary Seat.**
- 8.3. **Each Seat must cover a different Practice Area.**

Advocate-Seat and Solicitor-Seat

9. **Each practice trainee must be rotated through an Advocate-Seat and a Solicitor-Seat.** The Advocate-Seat will expose the practice trainee to dispute resolution and contentious work. The Solicitor-Seat will expose the practice trainee to advisory, corporate or transactional work.
10. Rotation through these seats will ensure that a practice trainee is exposed to work as an advocate and solicitor.

Core Seat and Secondary Seat

11. **Each practice trainee must complete a Core Seat and at least one Secondary Seat.** The Core Seat can be viewed as the practice trainee's main area of interest or training, and lasts for at least six months. A Secondary Seat lasts for at least 3 months.
12. A law practice that cannot provide a Secondary Seat in a different Practice Area from the Core Seat can arrange for its practice trainee to be rotated to a Secondary Seat in another qualifying law practice.
13. Law practices that are able to should consider rotating their practice trainees to two Secondary Seats to expose them to different Practice Areas.

Practice Areas

14. **Each Seat must cover a different Practice Area.** A Practice Area represents a distinct type of legal work or practice. Completing a Practice Area will entail completing a checklist of work and scenarios typically encountered by a newly qualified lawyer in the first few years of practice.
15. For a start, the following Practice Areas are expected to be introduced:
 - 15.1. Arbitration (Advocate-Seat)
 - 15.2. Civil Litigation (Advocate-Seat)
 - 15.3. Competition and Antitrust (Solicitor-Seat)
 - 15.4. Corporate/Commercial³ (Solicitor-Seat)
 - 15.5. Criminal Litigation (Advocate-Seat)

³ Subject to the development of appropriate checklists, Practice Areas such as Financial Services, etc., may also be introduced.

- 15.6. Family (Advocate-Seat/Solicitor-Seat⁴)
 - 15.7. Intellectual Property (Advocate-Seat/Solicitor-Seat)
 - 15.8. Real Estate (Solicitor-Seat)
 - 15.9. Technology (Solicitor-Seat)
 - 15.10. Working in an in-house legal department (Solicitor-Seat)⁵
16. SILE will work with subject-matter experts and the relevant stakeholders to develop checklists for the Practice Areas to be introduced. SILE will also work with the Singapore Corporate Counsel Association to develop a checklist for serving the practice training period through working in an in-house legal department.

Putting It Together

17. A practice trainee may therefore complete the 12-month PTP through one of the following combinations:
- 17.1. Core Seat (between 6 to 9 months) + Secondary Seat (between 3 to 6 months); or
 - 17.2. Core Seat (6 months) + Secondary Seat (3 months) + Second Secondary Seat (3 months).

Examples of qualifying practice training periods:

- 9 months in Civil Litigation (Core Seat/Advocate-Seat) and 3 months in Corporate/Commercial (Secondary Seat/Solicitor-Seat)
- 8 months in Family (Core Seat/Solicitor-Seat) and 4 months in Criminal Litigation (Secondary Seat/Advocate-Seat)
- 9 months in Civil Litigation (Core Seat/Advocate-Seat) and 3 months through working in a qualifying in-house legal department (Secondary Seat/Solicitor-Seat).
- 6 months in Corporate/Commercial (Core Seat/Solicitor-Seat), 3 months in Arbitration (Secondary Seat/Advocate-Seat) and 3 months in Technology (2nd Secondary Seat/Solicitor-Seat)

18. Ideally, a practice trainee should spend at least 6 continuous months in a Core Seat, and 3 continuous months in a Secondary Seat. However, this may not be possible in a law practice that is unable to rotate a practice trainee through different seats. In

⁴ A practice trainee cannot complete both the Core and Secondary Seats in the same Practice Area unless they also complete another Secondary Seat in a different Practice Area.

⁵ Practice trainees who wish to gain exposure in an in-house legal department can do so for up to three months in a qualifying in-house legal department. The practice trainee must complete a Core Seat (i.e., at least six months) in an Advocate-Seat before serving the PTP in an in-house legal department.

such cases, the practice trainee may, with SILE's approval, concurrently undertake work under the two Seats and Practice Areas depending on the availability of work. The aggregate time spent on each Seat will need to meet the duration requirements of the Core and Secondary Seats, and the respective checklists will also have to be completed.

Judicial and Legal Service Officers

19. The new admission regime recognises that the 12-month PTP can be completed through working as a Judicial or Legal Service Officer. The respective agencies⁶ will be responsible for designing appropriate training programmes for their officers. Provisions will govern trainees who switch from working as Judicial or Legal Service Officers to private practice, and vice versa.

Registration

20. Practice trainees will need to seek SILE's approval of the manner of serving their practice training period prior to commencement. Law practices will also need to register the training contracts with SILE. The first batch of practice trainees under the new regime are expected to start their training in January 2024, following the conclusion of the new Part B Bar Examinations in December 2023.
21. Application for approval of the manner of serving the practice training period and registration of training contracts will commence in November 2023.

Transitional Arrangements

22. With the implementation of the new admission regime, the transitional arrangements for the following scenarios will apply:
 - 22.1. Only qualified persons who pass the 2023 or later Part B Bar Examinations may be admitted as Lawyers (Non-Practitioner) under the new regime. A qualified person who passes the 2022 or earlier Part B Bar Examinations is not eligible to be admitted as a Lawyer (Non-Practitioner).
 - 22.2. A qualified person who passes the 2022 or earlier Part B Bar Examinations will be admitted as an advocate and solicitor under the current admission framework (i.e., upon completing six months of practice training or through working as a Judicial or Legal Service Officer for 36 months). They will have to complete all the requirements for admission and be admitted before July 2031.
 - 22.3. A qualified person who completes the six-month practice training period under the current admission framework before the commencement of the new Part B Bar Course commencing in July 2023 may be admitted as an advocate and solicitor upon passing the new Part B Bar Examinations in 2023 or later. They will have to pass the new Part B Bar Examinations and be admitted before July 2031.

⁶ E.g., The Attorney-General's Chambers, the Supreme Court, the Family Justice Courts and the State Courts.

- 22.4. All other cases that fall outside these scenarios should apply to the Ministry of Law for an exemption from the applicable requirements.

Mailing List

23. More information will be made available progressively. If you wish to be notified when updates are available, please register your email address at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/newadm>. For enquiries, please write to us at enquiries@sile.edu.sg.

CPTL Secretariat
Singapore Institute of Legal Education

Schedule

Composition of the SILE Working Group to Implement CPTL Recommendations

Co-Chairpersons

Deputy Attorney-General Mr Ang Cheng Hock, SC (Attorney-General's Chambers)
Mr Jerry Koh (Allen & Gledhill LLP)

Attorney-General's Representative

Deputy Attorney-General Mr Hri Kumar Nair, SC (Attorney-General's Chambers)

Ministry of Law Representative

Ms Jessie Tan (Ministry of Law)

Law Society of Singapore Representatives

Mr Daniel Koh (Eldan Law LLP)
Mr Paul Tan (Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP)
Ms Rejini Raman (The Law Society of Singapore)

Singapore Academy of Law Representative

Mr Louis Chan (Citibank N.A.)

Singapore Corporate Counsel Association Representative

Mr Wan Kwong Weng (Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd)

Singapore Law Schools Representatives

A/Prof Sonita Jeyapathy (National University of Singapore Faculty of Law)
A/Prof Alvin See (Singapore Management University Yong Pung How School of Law)
A/Prof Darren Koh (Singapore University of Social Sciences School of Law)

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Ms Kala Anandarajah (Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP)
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A/Prof Eleanor Wong (Dean, SILE, *ex officio*)