

3 October 2023

## UPDATED NOTICE ON NEW ADMISSION REGIME

Explanation: The Institute issued a notice on the new admission regime on 7 November 2022. Feedback has been received from industry stakeholders that more time is needed to adjust to the changes recommended by the Committee for the Professional Training of Lawyers (CPTL), to take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking this feedback into careful consideration, the implementation of the recommendations has been deferred to apply from the 2024 session of Part B of the Singapore Bar Examination onwards. This is an updated notice to reflect the changes to the key implementation dates.

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 Koh<sup>1</sup> 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).

---

<sup>1</sup> Mr Koh is the Managing Partner of Allen & Gledhill LLP.

## The New Part B Bar Course

4. The new Part B Bar Course will aim to equip candidates with broad-based knowledge of Singapore law and legal practice. It has been developed taking into consideration the changing landscape of legal practice, including advances in technology, emerging practice areas and the increasing importance of disciplines such as conflict of laws and comparative law. 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 legal roles.
5. The new Part B Bar Course comprises six compulsory modules:
  - 5.1. **Ethics and Professional Responsibility;**
  - 5.2. **Corporate and Commercial Practice** (incorporating topics such as: Banking & Fundraising, Corporate Governance, Insolvency & Corporate Restructuring, Intellectual Property, Mergers & Acquisitions, Competition Law, Taxation and Admiralty);
  - 5.3. **Dispute Resolution Practice** (incorporating topics such as: Civil Litigation, Arbitration, Mediation Advocacy, Written Advocacy, Litigation Technology (Electronic Evidence Management));
  - 5.4. **Private Client Practice** (incorporating topics such as: Criminal Litigation Practice & Procedures, Family Law Practice (inclusive of Muslim Law), Probate & Succession Planning, Real Estate Practice (Conveyancing), Employment Law and Personal Injury & Property Damage);
  - 5.5. **Contemporary Legal Knowledge & Practice** (incorporating topics such as Comparative Laws, Conflict of Laws, Data Protection & Cyber Regulation, Law & Technology, Law & Society, Professional & Personal Sustainability); and
  - 5.6. **Professional Skills** (incorporating topics such as: Developing a Commercial Mindset, Understanding Financial Information, Communicating Effectively and Networking & Personal Branding).
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. SILE introduced the new Part B Bar Course in July 2023, but the standard and stringency of the Examinations will only be raised from the 2024 Part B Bar Examinations onwards. Candidates of the 2024 and later Part B Bar Examinations will fall under the new regime. Upon passing the 2024 or later Part B Bar Examinations, these candidates may be admitted as Lawyers (Non-Practitioner) and will have to undertake a 12-month practice training period in order to be admitted as Advocates and Solicitors. Starting in 2025, the Part B Bar Course and Examinations will be conducted twice a year.

## **New Practice Training Framework**

8. **The new practice training framework will commence in January 2025.** 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. PTP will be undertaken after completing the new Part B Bar Course and Examinations. During the 12-month PTP:
  - 8.1. **Each practice trainee must be rotated through an Advocate-Seat and a Solicitor-Seat.**
  - 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.
11. A law practice which can only expose its practice trainee to an Advocate-Seat can arrange for the practice trainee to be exposed to a Solicitor-Seat in another Singapore law practice, and vice versa.

### ***Core Seat and Secondary Seat***

12. **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.
13. 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 Singapore law practice.
14. 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***

15. **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.

16. For a start, the following Practice Areas are expected to be introduced:
  - 16.1. Arbitration (Advocate-Seat)
  - 16.2. Civil Litigation (Advocate-Seat)
  - 16.3. Competition and Antitrust (Solicitor-Seat)
  - 16.4. Corporate/Commercial<sup>2</sup> (Solicitor-Seat)
  - 16.5. Criminal Litigation (Advocate-Seat)
  - 16.6. Family (Advocate-Seat/Solicitor-Seat<sup>3</sup>)
  - 16.7. Intellectual Property (Advocate-Seat/Solicitor-Seat)
  - 16.8. Real Estate (Solicitor-Seat)
  - 16.9. Technology (Solicitor-Seat)
  - 16.10. Working in an in-house legal department (Solicitor-Seat)<sup>4</sup>
17. 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 a qualifying in-house legal department.

### ***Putting It Together***

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

---

<sup>2</sup> Subject to the development of appropriate checklists, Practice Areas such as Financial Services, etc., may also be introduced.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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)

19. 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 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

20. The new admission regime recognises that the 12-month PTP can be completed through working as a Judicial or Legal Service Officer, or through working under the supervision of a Qualifying Relevant Legal Officer. The appropriate training programmes will be worked out by the Legal Service Commission or Judicial Service Commission and their officers, respectively.

*Registration*

21. Practice trainees will need to seek SILE's approval of the manner of serving their practice training period prior to commencement. Singapore law practices and qualifying in-house legal departments will each need to register with SILE their respective tranches of the practice trainee's practice training period. The first batch of practice trainees under the new training regime are expected to start their training in January 2025, following the conclusion of the new Part B Bar Examinations in December 2024.
22. Application for approval of the manner of serving the practice training period and registration of training contracts will commence in October 2024.

## Applicability of new admission regime

23. The applicability of the new admission regime has been discussed and determined by a multi-agency working group established to implement the CPTL's recommendations. The admission regimes will be implemented as follows:
- 23.1. A qualified person who passes the 2024 or later Part B Bar Examinations may be admitted as a Lawyer (Non-Practitioner) under the **new** admission regime.
  - 23.2. A qualified person who passes the 2023 or earlier Part B Bar Examinations will be admitted as an advocate and solicitor under the **current** admission regime (e.g., upon completing six months of practice training in a Singapore law practice). They will have to complete all the requirements for admission and apply for admission as advocates and solicitors by the commencement of the 2024 session of the Part B Course in July 2024.
  - 23.3. Notwithstanding paragraph 23.2, anyone who becomes a qualified person between 1 November 2023 and 31 January 2024, completes the six-month practice training period under the **current** admission regime before the commencement of the 2024 session of the Part B Course, takes the 2024 session of the Part B Course, passes the Part B Examinations and applies for admission as an advocate and solicitor by a prescribed date within the second half of 2025, may be admitted as an advocate and solicitor under the current admission regime.
  - 23.4. Further operational details, including the prescribed date referenced in paragraph 23.3 above, will be released in due course. All other cases that fall outside these scenarios should apply to the Ministry of Law for an exemption from the applicable requirements.
24. For enquiries, please write to us at [enquiries@sile.edu.sg](mailto: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

Ms Tan Ruyan Kristy, SC (Attorney-General's Chambers) (until 30 September 2023)

#### 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 Roy'yani Razak (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)

#### Singapore Institute of Legal Education Representatives

Ms Kala Anandarajah (Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP)  
Ms Lock Yin Mei (Venture Law LLC)  
A/Prof Eleanor Wong (Dean, SILE, *ex officio*)