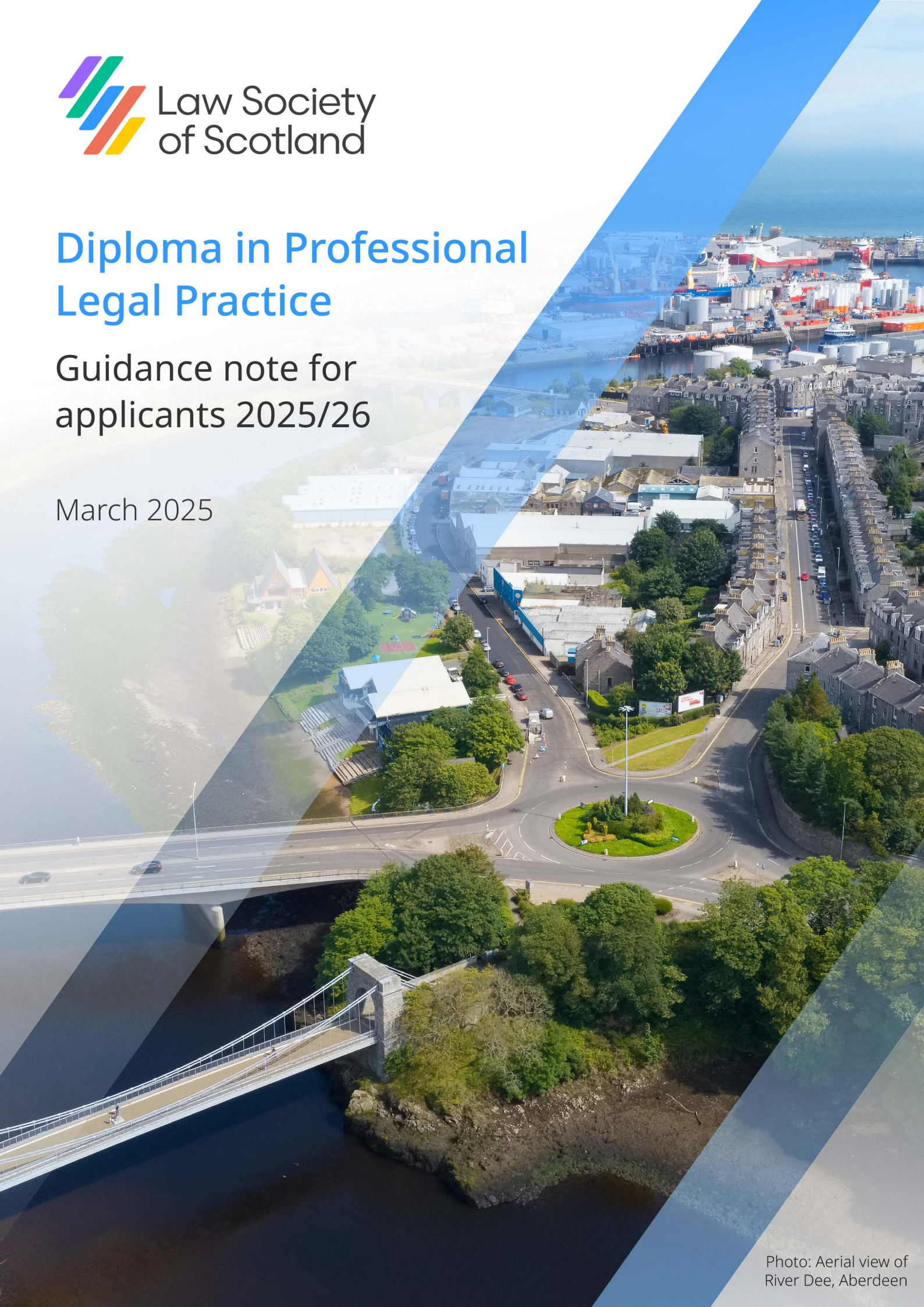


Diploma in Professional Legal Practice

Guidance note for
applicants 2025/26

March 2025



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Overview of Diploma in Professional Legal Practice

The Diploma in Legal Practice (Diploma) is the postgraduate stage of the route to qualification as a solicitor in Scotland. This guidance is designed for students who are thinking about applying for the 2025/26 course. At the Law Society of Scotland, we encourage all prospective applicants to carefully consider their position before embarking upon the course, particularly in relation to funding arrangements, the admission criteria for entrance and the traineeship job market. This guidance note will cover:



Diploma providers

- Differences between providers
- Spaces per course and criteria for admission
- Course fees



Application process

- Please note that for 2025/26 entry each provider will provide their own individual application process.
- We advise to read each of these processes thoroughly before applying.



Considerations before applying

- Diploma validity
- Funding and extra financial support for Diploma students
- The traineeship employment market
- Fitness and properness
- Special considerations for international students

Diploma providers

There are six Diploma providers. These are as follows:

- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Strathclyde
- Robert Gordon University

The number of spaces they have available for session 25/26, both full-time and part time are outlined below. Where part time places say “available”, that provider distributes full and part time places based on demand.

Diploma Provider	Full Time Places 25/26	Part Time Places 25/26
University of Aberdeen	115	Unavailable
University of Dundee	86	1
University of Edinburgh	144	Available
University of Glasgow	234	10
University of Strathclyde	192	12
Robert Gordon University	110	Available

We advise that students who are considering both full-time and part-time options research the Diploma providers of their choice, prior to completing the application form. The admissions criteria for each university varies slightly and there are also significant differences between providers in terms of course structures, teaching timetables and fee schedules, so it's important to be absolutely clear on all of these factors beforehand.

Full-time courses take approximately one academic year, whereas part-time courses are usually spread over two academic years.

Criteria for admission

In order to be admitted to the Diploma a candidate must:

1. have obtained an undergraduate law degree from a Scottish university (LLB), including passes in the required foundation subjects or;
2. have passed or obtained exemption from the professional examinations of the Law Society of Scotland in all subjects required under the Admission as Solicitor (Scotland) Regulations 2019.

Each university in Scotland meets the requirements of the Law Society of Scotland's Foundation Programme Learning Outcomes in different ways, so it is not possible to provide a list of the required courses/modules to suit all undergraduate institutions. Applicants should check with their LLB university law school to confirm what the correct subjects are for their institution.

In the previous academic session (2024/25), demand from applicants exceeded the number of spaces available on the course, meaning unfortunately some applicants were unsuccessful in securing a place on the 2024/25 Diploma course. In 2024/25:



800 (approx) spaces on courses were available



Over 1,100 (approx) students applied for a place on the course*

*this figure cannot be exactly accurate due to the fact that students make two applications.

Admissions processes are set by the individual Diploma providers and you should refer to their individual admissions policies for further detail.

If you have any specific questions after consulting the providers information about admission please contact them ahead of submitting your application.

Differences between providers

Each Diploma course has different structures, modules and electives and will vary in terms of your course options and timetables. Applicants can apply to up to two Diploma providers. We really recommend taking the time to research different universities offering the Diploma before making your application. You can do this on their websites below.

- [DPLP - Professional Legal Practice | Postgraduate Taught Subjects | The](#)

[University of Aberdeen](#)

- [Professional Legal Practice PGDip | University of Dundee, UK](#)
- [How to apply to the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice | Edinburgh Law School](#)
- [University of Glasgow - Postgraduate study - Taught degree programmes A-Z - Professional Legal Practice \(Diploma\)](#)
- [Diploma in Professional Legal Practice | University of Strathclyde](#)
- [Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice Course| RGU University – Aberdeen, Scotland, UK | RGU](#)

Sign up to our Virtual Diploma Fair

The Virtual Diploma Fair will take place this year on Wednesday 19 March 2025. The fair will take place online via Zoom.

The Virtual Diploma Fair Event is designed to give students applying to the Diploma full information on how to apply and an overview of the different universities who offer the course. All 6 providers will be in attendance so it is a great opportunity for you to do your research and establish the two providers you want to apply to.

Diploma course fees

The fees for the Diploma are set annually by each Diploma provider, not the Law Society of Scotland. These course fees and additional costs are set out below.

Each university has their own arrangement for the payment of fees. Visit our Virtual Diploma Fair or contact the universities directly to find out more about your options. Some universities may also offer an alumni discount.

All fees expressed below are for Home students. International/EU students should check fees directly with the provider.

Diploma Provider	Full Time Fees 25/26	Part Time Fees 25/26*
University of Aberdeen	£10,200	Unavailable
University of Dundee	£10,500	£5,250 p/a
University of Edinburgh	£10,735	£5,370 p/a
University of Glasgow	£11,820	£5,910 p/a
University of Strathclyde	£11,300	£5,650 p/a

Robert Gordon University	£8,500	£4,250 p/a
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*part-time fees are potentially subject to an annual increase in Year 2



Application process

When completing a Diploma application, you will be entitled to apply to up to two Diploma providers.

This will give students a greater chance of securing a place on the Diploma and we advise using this opportunity to apply to two providers and not limiting your chances by applying to just one provider. As you are not guaranteed to be offered a place with the provider you choose, it's essential you consider all providers in your research. **Please note that Diploma providers will take your preference into account when making offers. You should carefully consider which provider you select as your first choice, as first choice applicants will be prioritised,** in particular in the first round of offers when the majority of places are allocated.

Links to the application process/form can be found on the individual Diploma providers' websites. You must apply separately to each Diploma provider (i.e. you will make one or two separate applications). You may receive offers from either or both Diploma providers, regardless of preference. However, please note that Diploma providers will take your preference into account when making offers.

How to make an Application can be found on the providers websites as follows:

- **University of Aberdeen:** [DPLP - Professional Legal Practice | Postgraduate Taught Subjects | The University of Aberdeen](#)
- **University of Dundee:** [Professional Legal Practice PGDip | University of Dundee, UK](#)
- **University of Edinburgh:** [How to apply to the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice | Edinburgh Law School](#)
- **University of Glasgow:** [University of Glasgow - Postgraduate study - Taught degree programmes A-Z - Professional Legal Practice \(Diploma\)](#)
- **University of Strathclyde:** [Diploma in Professional Legal Practice | University of Strathclyde](#)
- **Robert Gordon University:** [Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice Course | RGU University – Aberdeen, Scotland, UK | RGU](#)

Application period 2025

21 March 2025: Applications for the Diploma OPEN

9 May 2025: Applications for the Diploma CLOSE

Applications must be submitted by 12 noon. No late applications will be accepted.

Round 1 offers

9 July 2025: Round 1 offers to be made to successful applicants

16 July 2025: Deadline for acceptance of Round 1 offers

Should you receive more than one offer from one of your chosen Diploma providers, you must accept only one offer and decline the other. Failure to do so could result in your offers being withdrawn. Acceptances must be made by 12 noon.

Round 2 offers

23 July 2025: Round 2 offers will be intimated to remaining applicants

28 July 2025: Deadline for acceptance of Round 2 offers

For applicants that have not been successful in Round 1, you will fall into the round two offers. Here, Diploma providers that have available space on their course may offer you a place. Acceptances must be made by 12 noon.

Round 3 offers

4 August 2025: Round 3 offers will be intimated to remaining applicants

6 August 2025: Deadline for acceptance of Round 3 offers

For applicants that have not been successful in Round 2, you will fall into the round three offers. Here, Diploma providers that have available space on their course may offer you a place. Acceptances must be made by 12 noon.

Please note that Diploma providers will set individual, bespoke deadlines for any subsequent rounds (e.g. Round Four onwards).

Accepting an offer

If you are offered a place by two Diploma providers, you must choose only one to accept by the relevant deadline and decline the other offer.

If you accept both offers, both acceptances will be deemed invalid and you will lose both places. You will not be made any offers in subsequent rounds and will be removed from the Diploma application process for this academic session.

If you accept an offer, no further offer will be made by any Diploma provider in subsequent rounds. Therefore, please think carefully before accepting an offer.

If you neither accept nor decline an offer you have received by the relevant deadline, you will be deemed to have declined that offer and that offer will be withdrawn from you by the relevant Diploma provider. If you have applied to more than one Diploma provider, you will remain in the Diploma application process for this academic session and therefore may still receive an offer in a subsequent round from that other Diploma provider. The exception is where you applied to two Diploma providers and received offers from both. In that situation, if you neither accept nor decline either offer, you will not receive any subsequent offers and will be removed from the Diploma application process for this academic session.

Following the date for acceptances of each round's offers, Diploma providers will establish how many spaces they have available and may make offers in the following round by the appropriate deadline. Please note that you will not receive any offers in subsequent rounds if you have accepted an offer in a previous round (or if you have accepted or are deemed to have declined both offers in a previous round and have therefore been removed from the Diploma application process for this academic session).

If you have either (i) not been made an offer; or (ii) declined one offer made in a round, you will be entered into the following round automatically. The Diploma provider(s) to which you applied may make you an offer in the following round. Again, you may accept only one offer by the appropriate deadline for acceptances.

If you decide you no longer wish to undertake the Diploma, please ensure that you withdraw your application from any institution you applied to. It is **not** possible to defer an offer to the following year.

Examples of offers

Applicant A applies to two Diploma providers: (1) Aberdeen (first choice) and (2) Edinburgh (second choice).

Scenario 1

In round one, Applicant A receives an offer from Edinburgh and is neither made an offer by nor rejected from Aberdeen.

- If Applicant A accepts the offer from Edinburgh, Applicant A is removed from round two by Aberdeen.
- If Applicant A declines the offer from Edinburgh, Applicant A is entered into round two automatically and may or may not be made an offer by Aberdeen. Therefore, by declining the offer from Edinburgh, Applicant A runs the risk of receiving no further offers, meaning Applicant A would be unable to undertake the Diploma in this academic session.

Scenario 2

In round one, Applicant A receives no offers. Applicant A is progressed automatically to round two. In round two, Applicant A receives offers from both Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

- If Applicant A accepts both offers, then both offers are withdrawn and Applicant A cannot undertake the Diploma in this academic session.
- If Applicant A accepts the offer from Aberdeen and does not respond to Edinburgh, Applicant A's Edinburgh offer is deemed to be declined and Applicant A will undertake the Diploma at Aberdeen.

Deferral

It is **not** possible to defer the offer of a place until a later year.

If you have accepted a place and then find you cannot take it up for the year in question, you must let the relevant Diploma provider know immediately so your place can be offered to another applicant. In those circumstances, you will be obliged to apply afresh in any subsequent year.



Considerations before applying

Diploma validity

The LLB does not have a period of validity, but the Diploma does. A valid Diploma is required in order for a trainee to commence a training contract.



The Diploma is valid for five years from 31 December the year it is awarded and you must start a traineeship before that date

e.g. if the Diploma is awarded in June 2025, it will be valid until 31 December 2030

As a prospective Diploma student, you are encouraged to consider Diploma validity alongside the fact that the traineeship market is very competitive. You may find you are still looking for a traineeship after graduating.

More information, including the standard application form, can be found by searching 'Diploma validity' on our website.

Funding and extra financial support

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) loans

As of January 2025, for the 2025/26 session, a combined loan entitlement of up to £13,900 for all full-time, Scottish domiciled postgraduate students is available from SAAS. For more information we encourage you to contact SAAS directly.



Up to £7000 tuition
fees

Up to £6900 living costs

Note that submitting an application does not constitute an application for a loan. Loan applications must be made via SAAS. Loan eligibility has no bearing on the award of a Diploma

place.

Our understanding is for both the tuition fee and living cost loan, repayment will commence once the student has graduated, is in employment and is earning above the student loan repayment threshold. Please visit www.saas.gov.uk for more information.

Additional sources of funding

In addition to SAAS funding, eligible postgraduates may be able to access additional sources of funding. These include:

- University Discretionary Funds
- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Local bursaries

The traineeship employment market

We encourage you to research and understand your position in the traineeship market before committing to the course. Traineeships are very competitive, and students are not guaranteed to be successful in securing a role. Entrance onto the Diploma also does not guarantee a traineeship.

Every year we produce trainee statistics so you can understand the broad picture. Here are some of the headlines from 2022/23:



Most Diploma students will secure a traineeship well within the validity period of their Diploma.

Based on a 5-year average of our annual figures.



764 traineeships commenced in 2023/24

Which represented a very similar number compared to 2022/23.



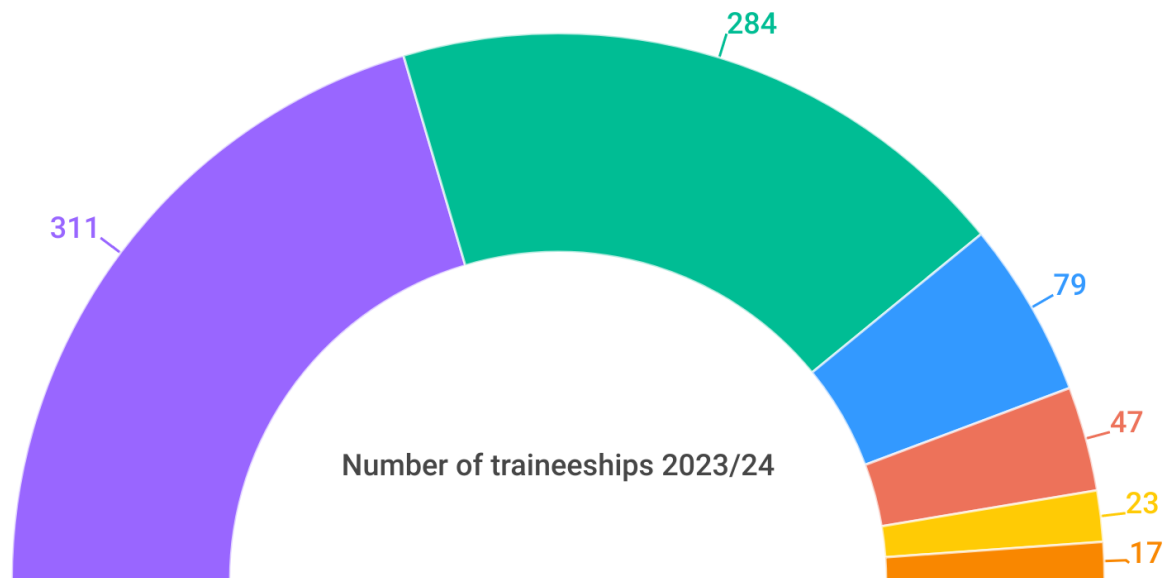
13% of traineeships were in-house

this shows an increase from 11% from the previous year.



33% of traineeships started at firms with 1-5 partners

With 33% commenced at firms with 31+ partners.



- Edinburgh & the Lothians
- Glasgow & Greater Glasgow
- Other Regions
- Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire
- Dundee & Angus
- Highlands & Islands

£23,675 is the recommended rate for 1st year trainee salaries



For 2nd year trainees, the recommended salary rises to £27,480. Recommended rates are reviewed annually with any increase in effect from the 1 June of that year. However it is at the discretion of the employer to set salaries.

As a minimum, all trainees must be paid at least the Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation.

Fitness and properness

A person cannot be admitted as a solicitor unless they are deemed to be a 'fit and proper person to be a solicitor'. Any person who practices as a solicitor in Scotland must be competent to do so and should not pose a risk to their clients, the public or other members of the profession.

Fitness and properness will be addressed for the first time when prospective trainees apply for an



entrance certificate, which you must be granted to enter into a training contract. The Law Society will have regard to a number of factors including, but not limited to:

- Criminal convictions
- Bankruptcy/ Trust deeds
- Plagiarism

When you apply to the Society for an Entrance Certificate, you will be asked to complete a form on which you are required to state, amongst other things, whether you have ever been convicted of any offence – no matter how trivial it may seem to you - and, also, whether you have ever been declared bankrupt. You will also be required to fill in an application form for a Standard Disclosure. The Society, as the governing body, then applies to Disclosure Scotland for a Disclosure Certificate. Accordingly, if you are in any doubt as to how seriously some past misdemeanour or difficulty may be viewed, you are advised to contact the Law Society NOW, before entering the Diploma. The Society will be able, at this stage, to offer guidance only as to how a particular matter might affect the issue of an Entrance Certificate, with any final decision being taken only when an application for an Entrance Certificate is made following completion of the Diploma.

For more information, see the fit and proper guidance on our [website](#). We advise that if you have any particular concerns, you get in touch with Louise Bradley at the Law Society.

The Dean of the Faculty of Advocates exercises a similar discretion over the admission of intending advocates, and the foregoing advice accordingly applies equally to those who may be considering a career at the Bar. Again, if you have any particular concerns, you can contact the Faculty via telephone (0131 260 5795) or email (admissions@advocates.org.uk)

Special considerations for international students

Overseas students studying with the intention of securing employment thereafter in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK are advised to make enquiries that they can satisfy any visa requirements.

The traineeship constitutes a period of work, rather than study, so students need to be aware of the change in their requirements prior to qualifying. For students that currently hold/ have held a Tier 4 visa for studying, when they undertake the traineeship and then work as a solicitor, they will need to apply for a Tier 2 visa.

If this affects you, please visit the UK Government's website for further information.



Need more advice or information?

Contact Careers@lawscot.org.uk ; or Visit our [Virtual Diploma Fair](#)