

Proposed amendments to the Standards and Regulations for Higher Rights of Audience assessments

Amendments to the SRA Education, Training and Assessment Provider Regulations

Part 3: Requirements for higher rights of audience assessment providers

Higher rights of audience assessment providers

- ~~6.1 Only an organisation approved by the **SRA** may provide assessments in **higher courts** civil advocacy and **higher courts** criminal advocacy conferring a **higher courts advocacy qualification**.~~
- ~~6.2 An organisation may apply to the **SRA** in such manner as may be **prescribed** to be approved to provide such assessments.~~
- ~~6.3 The **SRA** may, in relation to an application for approval:~~
- ~~(a) grant the application, subject to such conditions as it considers appropriate; or~~
 - ~~(b) refuse the application.~~
- ~~6.4 The **SRA** shall issue guidelines and standards for the provision of competence assessments against which the competence of those applying for a **higher court advocacy qualification** must be assessed.~~
- ~~6.5 If the **SRA** considers that an assessment provider has failed to comply with any obligation placed on it under these regulations, the **SRA** may:~~
- ~~(a) revoke the provider's approval; or~~
 - ~~(b) make the approval subject to such conditions and for such period as it considers appropriate~~
- 6.1 Only an organisation appointed by the **SRA** may provide assessments in **higher courts** civil advocacy and **higher courts** criminal advocacy conferring a **higher courts advocacy qualifications**.
- 6.2 The appointed assessment provider must pay to the SRA such fee as may be prescribed for each candidate undertaking the **higher courts advocacy qualification**.
- 6.3 From 1 October 2025, only the appointed assessment provider may deliver assessments in **higher courts** civil advocacy and **higher courts** criminal advocacy conferring higher rights qualifications.

6.4 Any organisation that was previously approved to provide such assessments must, by no later than 1 April 2026, complete all outstanding administrative work relating to assessment delivered on or before 30 September 2025. This includes issuing results, processing appeals, and handling any other post-assessment obligations in accordance with the requirements in place at the time the assessment was conducted.

Amendments to the SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations

Higher rights of audience

- 9.10 If you are a **solicitor** or an **REL** you may exercise civil or criminal advocacy in the **higher courts** if the **SRA** is satisfied you have successfully and satisfactorily completed the appropriate **higher courts advocacy qualification** and that you have done so after the date of your admission as a **solicitor** or initial registration as an **REL**, or you are:
- (a) an **REL** or **lawyer** to whom the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2015 applies (to the extent that they continue to have effect in accordance with regulation 9 of The Services of Lawyers and Lawyer’s Practice (Revocation etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 and [The Professional Qualifications Act 2022 \(Commencement No. 3 and Savings and Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2023](#)) and you have applied for a qualification to exercise rights of audience in the **higher courts**, and you have undertaken any further steps as the **SRA** specifies in order to gain the qualification; or
 - (b) authorised by another **approved regulator** to exercise civil or criminal advocacy in the **higher courts**.

Amendments to the SRA Application, Notice, Review and Appeal Rules

Education, Training and Assessment providers

- ~~6. A decision made under regulation 6.3(b) to refuse to approve an organisation to provide higher rights of audience assessments.~~
- ~~7. A decision made under regulation 6.3(a) to grant the application of approval subject to such conditions as the **SRA** considers appropriate.~~
- ~~8. A decision made under regulation 6.5(a) to revoke the approval.~~
- ~~9. A decision made under regulation 6.5(b) to make the approval subject to such conditions as the **SRA** considers appropriate.~~

Amendments to the SRA Glossary

Higher courts advocacy qualification

means either:

- (a) Higher Courts (Civil Advocacy) Qualification which entitles the *solicitor* or *REL* to exercise rights of audience in all civil proceedings in the *higher courts*, including judicial review proceedings in any *court* arising from any ~~criminal~~ civil cause; or
- (b) Higher Courts (Criminal Advocacy) Qualification which entitles the *solicitor* or *REL* to exercise rights of audience in all criminal proceedings in the *higher courts* and judicial review proceedings in any *court* arising from any criminal cause