

Ireland (Law Society – Solicitors)

(Information provided by the Irish delegation to the CCBE, December 2011.)

Contact point

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A. General Information

1.	Legal basis	None
2.	Overview of procedural steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Applicant has to send application to the Education Committee of the Law Society. b. The Education Committee will carry out an Equivalence Assessment comparing relevant foreign and national qualifications and professional experiences: it decides whether the applicant will need to sit the Entrance Examination (as do all Irish nationals). c. The applicant will need to find a solicitor to act as a training solicitor. d. After successful completion of the Entrance Examination <i>FEI</i> (where applicable), the applicant, if necessary, will need to complete the required vocational stage (Professional Practice Course I – 8 months). e. Following the vocational stage, the applicant will do a 2-year traineeship (possibility of reduction) and complete the Professional Practice Course II (12 weeks). The Professional Practice Course II is counted as part of the traineeship. f. Upon successful completion of the traineeship/any relevant exams, the applicant is eligible to ask the Law Society to be registered as a solicitor.

B. Processing of Application

1.	Information and documents requested from the applicant	<p>The applicant has to enclose any relevant documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum vitae 2. Certified copy of degree(s) of higher education 3. Certified copy of Legal Practice Course (LPC) or equivalent certificate 4. Detailed content of all legal courses completed 5. References to supply details of any relevant legal experience 6. Certified copy of passport 7. Notarized translations of any documents not in the English language
2.	Submission of application	<p>Applications are to be submitted in English by written letter and by post to the Law Society. Catherine Byrne, Administrator for Foreign Qualified Lawyers The Law Society of Ireland, Education Department Blackhall Place, Dublin 7, Ireland. Tel.: + 353 1 672 49 47 (direct); e-mail: c.byrne@lawsociety.ie Website: http://www.lawsociety.ie/</p>
3.	Application fees	€350
4.	Expected duration of the application processing	<p>If an applicant's documentation is in order, the application will be placed before the next meeting of the Education Committee. The Education Committee sits at various times throughout the year, approximately at six week intervals. Details of the times and deadlines for submission of documents are available from the website. Results of the Committee's decision are sent by post to the applicant 2-3 days thereafter.</p>

C. Initial assessment of application and possible outcomes

1.	General requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a citizen of the EU 2. Completed a stage in legal training (examples include but are not limited to practical training in a law firm, an internship or a law degree in applicant's home jurisdiction)
2.	Equivalence of relevant knowledge and/or professional qualifications	<p>The competent authority will assess on a case-by-case basis qualifications and previous professional experience such as training or internships.</p>

3.	Outcome	<p>Depending on previous education and professional experience, the applicant either will be required to undertake:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrance examination (the Final Examination-First Part (FEI)), and / or 2. Professional Practice Courses (PPC I & PPC II) and / or 3. Traineeship. <p>The amount of courses and the duration of the traineeship will depend on previous education and professional experience.</p> <p>It should also be noted that in order to commence the PPCI, an applicant must have found in advance a suitable (practising) solicitor to act as a training solicitor.</p>
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D. Steps following initial assessment

1.	Entrance Examination	<p>Entrance examination (=Final Examination-First Part (FEI))¹</p> <p>Written examination (held twice a year, normally in spring and autumn) in the following mandatory subjects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Company Law 2. Constitutional Law 3. Law of Contract 4. Criminal Law 5. European Union Law 6. Equity 7. Real Property 8. Law of Tort <p>Exemptions from FE subjects are considered on an applicant's previous professional education and professional experience. All applications are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a time limit on exemptions granted from the Final Exam First-Part. They remain valid for five years from the date they are granted by the Education Committee. • The fee is €110 per FEI subject (but may be subject to variations) • The examining body consists of individual internal and external legal and non-legal professionals (lawyers, academics). • Applicants may apply for a re-check provided that the application for such a re-check is received in writing by the Society within 14 days following the declaration of results, accompanied by a re-check fee of €120 per examination to the FEI Examination Department. • The pass mark in each examination is 50%.
2.	Stage	After having passed the entrance examination, the applicant if necessary will need to complete the required vocational stage.

E. Normal route to qualify as a lawyer

1.	Academic stage	<p>Obtaining a Qualifying Law Degree; or</p> <p>Obtaining a Qualifying Degree² and successfully completing a Conversion Course.</p>
2.	Entrance examination	Entrance examination (=Final Examination-First Part (FEI))
3.	Find a solicitor	Found a suitable solicitor to act as a training solicitor
4.	Vocational stage = Professional Practice Course I (PPC I)	<p>The PPC I takes place annually, usually commencing in September, running through until April (8 months) with an examination at the end, in the following written mandatory subjects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundation Course 2. Applied Land Law

¹ As we require all Irish law graduates to sit our entrance exam, all EU law graduates would be similarly required. However, if the Committee was considering an applicant who was further advanced in their training process – such as an English trainee who had completed the LPC and spent a year in an office, it might reach the conclusion that it would be more appropriate to require that person to complete professional courses here rather than academic law exams. Once again though, it's a case by case assessment.

² A Qualifying Degree is a degree awarded by a University or establishment of equivalent level outside the UK which the Board accepts as equivalent to a degree of the required standard awarded by a University in the UK following a course of at least three years.

		<p>3. Probate & Tax</p> <p>4. Business Law</p> <p>5. Litigation (Civil & Criminal)</p> <p>6. Skills - Civil & Criminal Advocacy, Interviewing & Advising, Legal Research, Legal Presentation Skills, Legal Writing & Drafting, Negotiation & Professional Development.</p>
5.	Training contract and Professional Practice Course II (PPC II)	<p>Before being eligible to start the training programme, applicants must apply to the Law Society for consent to start training. Evidence of good character must be provided and any criminal convictions disclosed. The Law Society may interview applicants.</p> <p>A 'Consent to Enter into Indentures Form' is signed by the trainee and training solicitor.</p> <p>The training contract (2 years) commences 14 days after the completion of the last exam on the PPCI.</p> <p>Training solicitors are required to provide the trainee solicitor with experience, in Block 1 and Block 2 (below) AND in two of the remaining three Blocks (3, 4 and/or 5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block 1: Conveyancing and Landlord and Tenant Law • Block 2: Litigation • Block 3: Wills, Probate and Administration of Estates • Block 4: Commercial Law Corporate Law Insolvency Law • Block 5 Criminal Law and Procedure Employment Law European Union Law Family Law Intellectual Property Law Pensions Law Planning and Environmental Law Revenue and Taxation Law Other specialised area(s) or legal practice <p>After 11 months, the trainee returns to the Law School to undertake the PPC II (12 weeks, inclusive of examinations). It is counted as part of the 24-month training period and usually commences in April each year.</p> <p>Subjects include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Practice 2. Conduct and Management (compulsory) <p>In addition to a range of elective choices under the 3 headings of Business, Practice & Procedure, and Private Client.</p> <p>Having completed the PPC II, the trainee must return to the office of the training solicitor and complete the outstanding period of time - 10 months if the trainee has not gained credit for work done prior to PPC I, or 6 months if credit has been obtained.</p>
7.	Registration as a lawyer	After completing the traineeship, the trainee can apply to be placed on the Roll of Solicitors of the Republic of Ireland.
F. Statistics		
1.	Closed cases	<p>2010 - 2 successful applicants, 1 unsuccessful. (2 Irish, 1 British)</p> <p>2011 -3 successful applicants (1 British, 2 Irish)</p>
2.	Outstanding cases	2010 - 1 adjournment