

Admissions and Licensing Committee Annual Report 2024

Chair's Foreword: Ann Thunhurst

The Admissions and Licensing Committee (ALC) remains stable and mature with an increasingly wide range of experience, enabling accurate, fair and rigorous decision making. Office staff continue to provide valuable support, as great reliance is placed on the office to draw attention to policy, guidelines and precedent. Several new Office colleagues have been welcomed and joined ALC meetings this year, this combined with the loss of a very experienced staff member places increased emphasis on the experience of the remaining long standing staff.

The majority of applications reaching the committee have been approved, some after multiple reviews, but eventually being successful, due in no small part to the detailed feedback provided with additional evidence sought and guided by the office.

However, additional evidence requirements slow down the approval process prompting comment from applicants expressing frustration as to the length of time approval can take.

It is pleasing to see the number of overseas qualified applicants and Supervisors appearing to be increasing, potentially signalling the esteem and credibility of CILEx accreditation. Many requests for supplementary application evidence pertains to supervisory suitability. Organisations whose main business is not focussed on legal activities, wish to support their e.g. one or two legal staff members in gaining CILEx accreditation, with the supervisory role occupied by individuals who have other professional qualifications. Applications such as these come to the Committee and usually queried, suggesting that application guidance could more explicitly provide suggestions to enable demonstrations of supervisory rigour in the first instance.

Reliance is also placed on portfolio assessment in the context of overseas applications. Whilst in principle an applicant may meet the QE requirements it is sometimes difficult to see how the portfolio evidence requirements can be met via English or Common Law, hence this responsibility falls firmly in the scope of Assessors.

Quality may be an area due for review and consideration, particularly after a report brought to the ALC by the Head of Education in relation to a training provider. The quality process appears to need work and the ALC would welcome sight of and involvement in quality outcomes if the Board felt this to be appropriate.

It is pleasing to experience closer contact with the Board; Helen was welcomed to an ALC meeting and I am looking forward to attending the Board meeting on 15th July.

I am also looking forward to meeting Board members and a closer working relationship for the forthcoming year.

Introduction

The Admissions and Licensing Committee has oversight responsibility for a range of individual authorisation functions as detailed below:

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- authorisation as a Chartered Legal Executive
- authorisation to practise reserved activity in one or more areas of specialism
- authorisation to practise advocacy in one or more areas of specialism

This report provides an analysis of the decision making of both the office and the committee in 2024 across the different areas of responsibility.

Six committee meetings were held in 2024. All meetings were held virtually.

Qualifying Experience and authorisation as a Chartered Legal Executive

Qualification as a Chartered Legal Executive is comprised of two parts:

- Two thousand three hundred hours of qualifying experience; and
- Assessment of competence through submission of a work-based learning portfolio

In 2024:

- **526** applications (584 in 2023) for qualifying experience assessment had received payment for processing **596** applications (659 in 2023) for authorisation as a Chartered Legal Executive via Work Based Learning had received payment for processing
- **74** applications (75 in 2023) for authorisation as a Chartered Legal Executive via the Chartered Legal Executive Apprenticeship were processed

Office decisions by application type	Approved	Refused	Total
Qualifying Experience	462 (41%)	0	462 (41%)
Fellowship via Work Based Learning	584 (52%)	2	586 (52%)
Fellowship via CLE Apprenticeship	74 (7%)	0	74 (7%)
Total	1,120	2	1,122

The office has delegated authority to decide applications. Where the office is unable to make a decision in relation to an application, it is referred to the committee.

Committee decisions by application type	Approved	Deferred	Refused	Total
Qualifying Experience	19 (76%)	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	24 (96%)
Fellowship via Work Based Learning	1 (16%)	0	0 (60%)	1 (4%)
Fellowship via CLE Apprenticeship	0	0	0	0
Total	20 (100%)	1 (100%)	4 (100%)	25 (100%)

- **25** (or 2%) of the **1,147** applications approved in 2024 were determined by the Committee
- **96%** of approval decisions made by the Committee in 2024 related to the assessment of work experience against the definition of qualifying experience, as outlined in the Application for Fellowship Rules.

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Recognition of qualification obtained outside of the United Kingdom

In November 2022, the Legal Services Board approved an application to allow CILEx Regulation (CRL) to extend the scope of its existing regulatory arrangements to accept applications to become authorised as a Chartered Legal Executive or a CILEX Practitioner from individuals who qualified in any jurisdiction outside of the UK, in compliance with the Professional Qualifications Act 2022.

In 2024:

- **34** new applications were received, with **17** applications authorised. One application was rejected, with the other applications awaiting further information as at the 31st December 2024.

Accreditation of training providers

The Committee did not approve any new training providers in 2024.

Bloomsbury continues to deliver Chartered Legal Executive pathways. The University of Law continues to deliver practice rights courses as an alternative to the portfolio route for Fellows. Barbri Altior continues to deliver Advocacy Skills courses for those who are undertaking practice rights with advocacy or those who want to become a Chartered Legal Executive Advocate. In 2024 6 advocacy skills courses were delivered with a 100% pass rate.

Authorisation to practise in one or more reserved activities

CRL authorises individuals to practise in one or more reserved activities, subject to applicants meeting the essential knowledge, skills, experience, and competence requirements.

There are multiple ways in which CRL can authorise individuals with practice rights which includes the following:

- Practice rights portfolio route or through a University of Law course depending on the area of practice and whether the applicants are CILEX Fellows or not;
- ACCA CILEX Practitioners through an online application and recognition of accounting and probate qualifications;
- Authorisation of conveyancing and probate practice rights through the authorisation of authorised person exemption and applications with the Council of Licensed Conveyancers.

In 2024 a total of **229** applicants across all schemes were authorised (compared to 159 in 2023) and these included:

<i>Office decisions by application type</i>	Approved	Re-sits	Total
Portfolio	60 (26%)	0	60 (26%)
University of Law course	107 (47%)	3*	107 (47%)
ACCA Registrations	6 (3%)	0	6 (3%)
ACCA Renewals	49 (21%)	0	49 (21%)

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Authorised Person Exemption Scheme	7 (3%)	0	7 (3%)
Total	229	3*	229

*Those applicants who undertake the University of Law courses have two attempts to re-sit assessments if they fail and they can also defer the resit, so it is difficult to determine less than two years into the delivery of the courses if anyone has failed. There is no timeline in the practitioner rules for passing either the portfolio route or the University of Law practice rights once an application has been submitted or assessment taken.

Authorisation to practise advocacy

CRL can authorise individuals to conduct advocacy in one or more of the following areas of practice; civil proceedings, criminal proceedings or family proceedings, subject to applicants meeting the essential knowledge, skills, experience and competence requirements.

There are two parts to the application process:

- initial assessment of knowledge, skills and experience which provides the applicant with a certificate of eligibility; and
- attendance at a six-day training course, at the end of which, the applicant is assessed for full competency in advocacy for the relevant proceedings.

In 2024, the following applications for authorisation as an advocate in one or more of the proceedings were processed:

	Civil	Criminal	Family	Total
New applications received	2	2	4	8
Advocacy courses held	2	1	3	6
New advocates admitted	0	0	2	2
Renewals processed	4	2	16	22

Analysis of equality and diversity data for 2024 applications

In 2024, CRL continued to redact applicant details from applications prior to their referral to the Admissions and Licensing Committee.

As part of this Annual Report, CRL has reviewed the diversity data for individual authorisation applications processed in 2024 in relation to gender, age and ethnicity. CRL has reflected on the overall impact of decision making on several groups with protected characteristics.

The data analysis for 2024 authorisation applications was very similar to that of previous years. It has been noted that the percentage of refused applications as a total of all applications received continues to be very small (0.5%) and therefore findings may not be statistically valid.

Some initial observations from the data analysis have been detailed below:

- It appears that the approvals and refusals by gender continue to reflect the male: female ratio for the CILEX membership.
- The majority of applications were received from applicants aged between 25 and 34 (57%).
- Applicants aged between 25-34 were most likely to be approved.

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As in previous years, the majority of applicants were white (88%).

Gender

<i>Gender approved applications for</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
Female	345 (75%)	440 (75%)	57 (77%)	131 (79%)	2 (100%)
Male	98 (21%)	131 (22%)	12 (16%)	32 (19%)	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
PNS/Not recorded	16 (3%)	12 (2%)	5 (7%)	2 (1%)	0
Total	459 (100%)	583 (100%)	74 (100%)	165 (100%)	2 (100%)

<i>Gender refused applications for</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
Female	2 (50%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Male	1 (25%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
PNS/Not recorded	1 (25%)	0	0	0	0
Total	4 (100%)	2 (100%)	0	0	0

Age

<i>Age for approved applications</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
< 25	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0
25-34	245 (53%)	315 (54%)	44 (59%)	33(20%)	0
35-44	113 (25%)	163 (28%)	18 (24%)	64 (39%)	2 (100%)
45-54	49 (11%)	57 (10%)	3 (4%)	39 (24%)	0
55-64	10 (2%)	11(2%)	3 (4%)	24 (15%)	0
>65	0	0	0	2 (1%)	0
PNS/Not recorded	35 (8%)	34 (6%)	5 (7%)	3 (2%)	0
Total	459 (100%)	583 (100%)	74 (100%)	165 (100%)	2 (100%)

<i>Age for refused applications</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
< 25	0	0	0	0	0
25-34	2 (50%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
35-44	0	0	0	0	0
45-54	0	1 (50%)	0	0	0
55-64	0	0	0	0	0
>65	0	0	0	0	0
PNS/Not recorded	2 (50%)	0	0	0	0
Total	4 (100%)	2 (100%)	0	0	0

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Ethnicity

<i>Ethnicity approved applications</i>	<i>for</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
Asian		60 (13%)	79 (14%)	2 (3%)	5 (3%)	0
Black		23 (5%)	28 (5%)	2 (3%)	3 (2%)	0
Mixed		16 (3%)	12 (2%)	0	8 (5%)	0
White		332 (72%)	438 (75)	64 (86%)	146 (88%)	2 (100%)
Other		6 (1%)	4 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	0
PNS/Not recorded		22 (5%)	22 (4%)	6 (8%)	2 (1%)	0
Total		459 (100%)	583 (100%)	76 (100%)	165 (100%)	2 (100%)

<i>Ethnicity refused applications</i>	<i>for</i>	QE	WBL	Apprenticeship	Practice Rights	Advocacy
Asian		1 (25%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Black		0	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Mixed		0	0	0	0	0
White		2 (50%)	0	0	0	0
Other		0	0	0	0	0
PNS/Not recorded		1 (25%)	0	0	0	0
Total		4 (100%)	2 (100%)	0	0	0

Conclusions in relation to equality and diversity data

- As with previous Admissions and Licensing Committee annual reports, the data continues to show that overall refusal rates across all applications remains very small, and therefore any data regarding BAME backgrounds should be treated with some caution.
- Any applications considered by the Committee are anonymised. It should be noted that the data in relation to ethnicity and the likelihood of an application being approved or refused has not significantly changed as a result.
- CRL previously commissioned research to review its processes with applications and the report resulting from the research did not find that there were biases in the applications process. As such, this trend may be indicative of a broader equality, diversity, and inclusion issue across the legal sector.