

How to requalify as an Irish solicitor - Q&A with the Law Society of Ireland

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- [qualified lawyers transfer test regulations](#)

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On 8 May, The Law Society organised an interactive information seminar with the President and Director General of the Law Society of Ireland to offer practical support to members.

As the Law Society of England and Wales, we aim to support our members in making informed decisions in the course of managing their businesses.

We will continue to make the case to the UK government, EU institutions and our European colleagues that our members have successfully worked together with other European lawyers as a large community of professionals for the best interests of their clients for a number of years, and that this should continue post-Brexit.

This seminar with Stuart Gilhooly, President of the Law Society of Ireland, and Ken Murphy, Director General, was an opportunity for those interested in learning more about the requalification route.

Please find below a summary of the most important questions and answers.

If you are interested in listening to the whole seminar, please contact us via EuropeCIS@lawsociety.org.uk to obtain a copy of the recording.

Q: How many English solicitors have established under the requalification agreement between the Law Society of Ireland (LSI) and the Law Society of England and Wales (LSEW)?

While in a normal business year, between 50-100 solicitors requalify, since last June LSI has seen 1.100 UK solicitors requalify under the agreement between LSEW and LSI. This includes 212 practising certificate (PC)-holders. There is no sign so far that any of the requalified solicitors have established themselves in Ireland.

Q: How complicated is the requalification process?

It is a bureaucracy-heavy but otherwise very simple process without any academic requirements (other than being qualified in England and Wales). (Please find attached the qualified lawyers transfer test regulations.) The LSI education team assists with any queries and will look at complicated cases on an individual case-by-case basis

Q: How much does it cost to requalify?

Being on the roll amounts to 300 €, while a PC costs 2550 €.

Q: Should I already get a practising certificate even if I do not want to establish myself in Ireland?

At the moment there is no reason to activate the PC while the UK is still part of the EU - being on the roll is enough to add on the Irish qualification and make use of the agreement.

Q: What happens if the SRA introduces the SQE (Solicitors Qualifying Exam) reforms?

The framework of mutual requalification between both jurisdictions only works with reciprocity. If the SRA introduces the SQE that is a qualifying exam without exceptions, this would imply that the option to requalify ends for Irish solicitors, and LSI would most likely introduce an equivalent exam for solicitors of England and Wales.

Q: What if I am qualified as a solicitor of England and Wales, but my first qualification is from a third-country jurisdiction?

Solicitors whose first qualification is not from England and Wales but that have requalified as a solicitor of England and Wales for example through the QLTS, would need to have practised in England and Wales for at least three years before they can take the requalification route via the agreement.

Q: Do I need additional insurance if I requalify?

No, there is (currently) no separate insurance necessary if the solicitor does not establish him- or herself in Ireland (physically) but continues to practice and pay insurance in England and Wales.

Q: What are the CPD requirements?

There is a requirement of 20 hours of CPD, but it is not (currently but subject to change) necessary to undertake any CPD in Irish Law.

Q: What about LLP status?

LLP status is currently not available in Ireland. However, legislation has been passed in October 2015 and it is envisaged that this legislation will be implemented within the next two years.

Q: Can solicitors that have requalified under the scheme become Council Members of the Law Society of Ireland?

Solicitors of England and Wales requalified as Irish solicitors can vote at the LSI Council if they hold a PC and become a member of LSI - being on the roll or being a PC-holder doesn't automatically entail membership. Membership is 86 €/year.