

GUIDANCE NOTE

ADMISSION TO THE DIPLOMA IN PROFESSIONAL LEGAL PRACTICE

ACADEMIC SESSION 2024/2025

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INTRODUCTION

There are six Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (Diploma) providers across Scotland (*in alphabetical order*):

1. University of Aberdeen
2. University of Dundee
3. University of Edinburgh
4. University of Glasgow
5. Robert Gordon University
6. University of Strathclyde.

Each Diploma provider will take a different approach to admissions. It is important that you understand these different approaches before you apply. Please look carefully at the information provided on the websites for each provider. It is also recommended that you attend events such as the Law Society of Scotland's Virtual Diploma Fair and any open days or information sessions on offer.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO THE DIPLOMA

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 2011.

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.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

You may apply to up to two Diploma providers. You must apply separately to each Diploma provider, following the instructions on their website.

Each Diploma provider will rank applicants in accordance with their admissions criteria, and will make offers accordingly. **Please ensure you read the guidance provided by each University regarding their approach to Diploma admissions carefully.** Diploma providers have discretion to place weight on applicants' provider choice and to make offers accordingly. For example, a Diploma provider may prioritise applicants who have selected them as their first choice. It is important that you consider this when selecting your first and second choice providers.

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.

Example:

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.

KEY DATES

Applications open:	Friday 8 March 2024
Application deadline:	12 noon, Friday 10 May 2024
Round One decisions:	Tuesday 9 July 2024
Round One acceptances:	12 noon, Wednesday 17 July 2024
Round Two decisions:	Wednesday 24 July 2024
Round Two acceptances:	12 noon, Monday 29 July 2024
Round Three decisions:	Monday 5 August 2024
Round Three acceptances:	12 noon, Wednesday 7 August 2024

Diploma providers will set individual, bespoke deadlines for any subsequent rounds (i.e. Round Four onwards) as required.

Please ensure that you apply by no later than 12 noon on Friday 10 May 2024. Application forms which are submitted late will not be accepted.

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.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT LOANS FOR TUITION FEES AND LIVING COSTS

Please refer to the Law Society Guidance Note for Applicants 2024/25 for important information about arrangements for loan funding via the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) for the Diploma. It is vital that you read the guidance in full before

applying for a place on the Diploma. The tuition fee loan will pay only a proportion of tuition fees.

Information about postgraduate student loans and eligibility criteria is available from the SAAS website www.saas.gov.uk. Please refer to the information there before making your application and, if in any doubt, contact SAAS for guidance about your eligibility.

PLEASE NOTE that submitting an application for the Diploma does not constitute an application for a loan. Loan applications must be made via SAAS.

Full information is available at www.saas.gov.uk

Loan eligibility has no bearing on the award of a Diploma place.

THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES AND THE LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

Note for all intending Diploma Students re “Fit and Proper Person”

In deciding to apply for a place on the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice, you are no doubt at least considering the possibility of a career in one or other branch of the legal profession in Scotland. Both the Faculty of Advocates and the Law Society of Scotland are pleased to have this opportunity to introduce themselves to you, and to congratulate you on having taken this first step along the road leading to a career in Scottish legal practice. The officers of the Faculty and the Society whose addresses are shown below will be happy to deal with any individual queries which you may have in relation to your future career. Please note, however, that enquiries about whether or not you will receive a Diploma place or funding for that place should be directed to your undergraduate university or Diploma provider.

You will remember the Law Society of Scotland from the various visits made to your undergraduate classes. However, we need to remind you that the Society and the Faculty are interested in much more than your academic qualifications. As the professional bodies they have duties to protect the interests of both the profession and the public in relation to the profession.

In order to be granted an Entrance Certificate by the Law Society, you must satisfy the Society that you are a "fit and proper person" to become a solicitor. The Society's processes in relation to determining fitness and properness of those who wish to enter the profession are set out in the [guidance](#) available on the Society's website.

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 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.

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.

If you are in any doubt, write to the appropriate officer named below in the first instance, giving as much information as you can about the matter and you will be given further guidance as quickly as possible.

Dean's Secretariat
Faculty of Advocates
Parliament House
Parliament Square
EDINBURGH EH1 1RF
Tel: 0131 260 5795
Email: admissions@advocates.org.uk

Admissions Manager
The Law Society of Scotland
Atria One
144 Morrison Street
EDINBURGH
EH1 8EX
Tel: 0131 476 8162
Email: legaleduc@lawscot.org.uk