



HIGHER RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE INFORMATION GUIDE

Thank you for choosing Kaplan Altior for your Higher Rights of Audience (HRA) training and/or assessment. This guide is intended to answer most, if not all, of your questions between now and completing your course/assessment.

Please read the information below carefully before attending the course/assessment.

1. Introduction to HRA

Higher Rights of Audience are extended rights of advocacy for solicitors, enabling them to conduct hearings in the higher Criminal and Civil courts, usually the Crown Court and High Court. When you obtain the qualification, you can call yourself a Solicitor Advocate. To gain Higher Rights, you must pass an SRA-validated assessment in advocacy. Although the scheme is intended for solicitors, trainees can also take the assessment during their training contract (and satisfy the elective requirement of the PSC through the associated training if they wish). They have to wait until they qualify however, before they can apply to call themselves a Solicitor Advocate.

2. Training and/or assessment

Kaplan Altior's HRA programme is made up of training courses and an assessment, comprising 2 parts. In order to obtain the HRA qualification you will need to sit and pass the HRA assessment, which consists of a written and practical assessment. The training is designed to help to prepare you for the assessments and to develop your advocacy skills for use in Court.

3. Confirmation of Booking

You will receive a confirmation email on booking. We advise you to **keep a note of your Delegate ID**, which is shown on the top right corner of the letter attached to the email, as this will be requested whenever you contact us. **Please be reminded that our Terms & Conditions apply to all bookings.** Please see our website for full details: <http://www.altior.co.uk/terms-and-conditions>.

4. Joining Instructions

You will receive joining instructions approximately two weeks before the start of each module, by email for training courses and the written assessment but by post for the practical assessment. These will contain details of the venue, timings and any preparation work you need to complete. Instructions will be provided to enable you to access any online course preparation materials. The documents for the training course are provided as a reference. There is no need to print these as all documents will be provided in hard copy on the day at the venue. Written and Practical Assessment joining instructions will also contain details of the assessment process, Candidate Handbook and Assessment Regulations.

5. Absence & Transfers on Training courses and Assessments

If you know in advance that you cannot attend any day of the training course or assessment, you must give us written notice in advance (e-mail/fax acceptable).

Transfer requests received 60 days or more prior to the first day of the programme - no transfer fee will be payable.

Transfer requests received fewer than 60 days prior to the first day of the programme - a transfer fee equivalent to 50% of the fee paid / due for the booked programme will be payable.

Transfer requests received fewer than 28 days prior to the first day of the programme - 100% of the fee paid / due for the booked programme will be forfeited / remain payable. The new programme dates to be booked will attract the full fee as published at the time.

Transfer fees will only be waived in the event of proven illness (evidenced by a valid medical certificate sent to us within 7 days of your absence or anticipated absence) or other exceptional circumstances.

6. HRA Preparatory Work

There is no preparation work required for the written and practical training courses although you will be provided with an electronic version of the course materials to review prior to the course should you wish to do so. Please see section 12 for details of the material for Written and Practical assessments.

7. Special Requirements

If you have any special need, impairment or disability and require any assistance or a particular piece of equipment to be made available, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can try to accommodate your needs.

8. Arrival

Your joining instructions will detail the start time of each course and assessment day. For assessment days we advise that you arrive at least 45minutes before the assessment start time. For Practical Assessments you will be allocated a specific assessment time slot, which will be detailed in your joining instructions. Please inform our HRA Team on 029 2045 1000 if you are running late as you will not be allowed to attend the assessment if you arrive after your allocated time/start of the assessment.

You will be required to produce photographic identification in the form of a current passport, driving licence or other recognised form of photographic ID.

Upon arrival, during the training days, your **room will be signposted at the venue**. On the practical assessment day, please wait in the designated waiting room/area signposted at the venue until the assessor collects you.

9. Signing the Register

It is crucial that you sign the register for each course/assessment date you attend as proof that you have attended, particularly if you are completing HRA as part of your PSC elective option.

10. Dress Code

There is no specified dress code for the training days. However for the Practical Assessment day, we require you to dress as for Court (gowns are not required).

11. What to Bring

As the notes for the course will be handed out on the morning of the first day of each course, you only need to bring writing materials with you. You may also find post-it notes and a highlighter pens useful.

On the written assessment days you may wish to bring any permitted materials as detailed in the Candidate Handbook.

On the practical assessment day, you will need to bring hard copies of any documents you wish to use during the practical assessment. You must also provide the assessor on the day with a hard copy of both your skeleton argument for your Legal Submission and your trial strategy plan.

12. Assessment Procedure

The HRA assessment is a single assessment which comprises two elements; a written examination and a practical advocacy assessment.

Written Element

This part consists of a 2½ hour examination with an additional 30 minutes of reading time. The paper contains a section of short answer questions based on a case study and a section of multiple choice questions. You are able to take permitted materials into the examination (please see Candidate Handbook for further details).

Practical Element

This element is split into two parts and lasts for approximately 50 minutes. The first part requires you to submit a skeleton argument and conduct a contested interim hearing. The second part revolves around a mini mock trial and requires you to submit a trial strategy plan and be assessed in one of the following areas: • Opening Speech. • Examination in Chief. • Cross examination. • Closing Speech. You will be told on the day of the assessment which area you will be assessed in so you need to fully prepare to be assessed in all of these areas.

You will receive the case papers for the assessment approximately two weeks before the assessment date. This allows you a minimum of 5 working days to prepare your skeleton argument (for the interim/preliminary hearing) and your trial strategy plan (for the mini mock-trial). You will be required to submit your documents online by 10am on the last working day prior to the practical assessment. No extensions to this timeframe are permitted. Full details of the examination format will be given to you in your joining instructions.

Appeals Procedure

Details of the Appeals Procedure are available on request.

Mitigating Circumstances

If you attend and complete an assessment you will be presumed to be “fit to take the assessment” and evidence produced after the event in respect of circumstances existing before the assessment will not be accepted nor considered by the Exam Board. You will be required to sign a ‘fit to sit form’ prior to sitting the exam. It is your responsibility to notify us in advance of the assessment of any illness or personal circumstances (e.g. a close family bereavement) which may prevent you from performing to the best of your ability. If appropriate, we can then make arrangements to defer your assessment to a later date.

Kaplan Altior reserves the right to charge you a fee for the deferred sitting in the absence of corroborating evidence. Full details of our “fit to take the assessment” and mitigating circumstances procedures can be found in the Candidate Handbook.

13. Pass marks and Results

The written and practical parts of the Assessment each account for 50% of the total available marks. You must achieve a minimum of 60% across both parts (an aggregate mark) to pass the Assessment. You will also be required to satisfy the Equality and Diversity and Ethics Standards throughout the assessment.

The two elements of the assessment (written and practical) comprise one assessment and you will only be notified of your final aggregate result expressed as pass or fail. As such results for the written and practical assessments will not be issued separately and **you will not be provided with a percentage mark**. If you attend the training course you will be given feedback on your practice performances but formative feedback will not be provided for the practical assessment.

Results for the assessment will be released within 12 weeks of the final element of each assessment being taken and will be sent via email to the email address provided on the booking form. It is therefore imperative for you to ensure that your preferred email address held on our files is kept up to date. For data protection reasons results cannot be given out over the telephone.

Please note that examination results will not be disclosed until our fees have been paid in full.

14. Re-sits

If you fail the HRA assessment and wish to resit, you will have to book and pay for both elements (Written and Practical) of the Assessment. There is no limit to the number of times you can resit the HRA assessments. It is a matter for you to decide if you wish to re-attend the training course, at your expense, prior to any resits.

15. Completion - Certificate

We will issue you with a certificate, once you have satisfactorily passed the assessment and **any outstanding fees have been paid in full**.

Certificates will be sent to the nominated postal address held on our database. It is therefore imperative that you inform us of any changes to this address. Please safeguard your certificate as you will need to submit it to the SRA as proof that you have passed the assessment. We charge a fee of £25 plus VAT for re-issuing any HRA certificates.

16. Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high level service to you. If you are not happy with something, we want to know about it. This will help us improve our standards and prevent any issues recurring.

In most instances, the issue should be capable of being resolved simply by discussing it with the person involved, or raising the matter with the trainer, Programme Leader or another member of Kaplan Altior staff. However, if you would like to make a formal complaint, please refer to our complaints procedure which can be found within your Candidate Handbook. If you do not receive this with your assessment joining instructions, please e-mail altiorhigherrights@kaplan.co.uk for a copy.

17. Key Contacts

Customer Services or HRA Admin Team on 029 2045 1000.