

PSC INFORMATION GUIDE

Thank you for choosing Kaplan Altior for your Professional Skills Course. This information guide is intended to answer most, if not all, of your questions between now and completing your course.

Please read the information below carefully before attending the course.

1. Introduction to PSC

The Professional Skills Course is the compulsory course for trainee solicitors. It must be completed satisfactorily during a training contract in order to qualify as a solicitor.

The course consists of 3 Core Modules (Client Care & Professional Standards (CCPS), Financial & Business Skills (FBS) and Advocacy & Communication Skills (Advocacy) and 24 hours of Electives. Each core module builds on the foundations laid during the LPC.

2. 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>.

Please contact us if you have not yet received your LPC results at the time of booking your PSC and require further clarification of our related policy.

3. Joining Instructions / Course notes

You will receive email notification to inform you that your MyKaplan access for each core module and elective has gone live approximately 3 weeks before the start of each course. To view the relevant information you will need to log into www.MyKaplan.co.uk, where you will be able to access the details of the venue, timings and any preparation required. Please note that you will be provided with hard copies of course notes at the venue, so should not print these in advance. Please contact our Delegate Services Team 02920 451000 if you have any issues with accessing the system or the materials.

The notes for each module will be handed out on the first day of each module. All relevant and current rules of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011 are included in the course notes so you do not need to bring a copy to the course.

4. CCPS - 6 Month Rule

The SRA requires trainees who commenced their training contract **prior to 1st July 2014** to have completed six months of their training contract before completing the whole of the CCPS module. If this applies to you, you may take the first day of our CCPS module within your first six months but you must wait until at least six months into your contract to take the final day. Alternatively, you may take the full two days after your first six months in your training contract.

Any 'time to count' will be deducted from the start of the Training Contract so, for example, a trainee who has been given 6 months to count will be able to undertake both days of CCPS straight away.

Please note that the CCPS 6 Month Rule **does not apply** to trainees who commenced their training contract on or after 1st July 2014. Such trainees may sit both CCPS days consecutively if preferred.

5. Absence & Transfers

If you know in advance that you cannot attend any date of

the course, **including any Electives**, you must give us a minimum of 28 days written notice (e-mail/letter)

If you discover within 28 days of any date that you are unable to attend, **please contact Delegate Services immediately on 029 2045 1000**, before writing to us.

You may transfer, subject to availability to alternative dates free of charge as long as we receive your transfer request at least 28 days before the start date of the course. Transfers requested within 28 days of the start date of the course, will also be subject to availability and will attract a transfer fee of £50 plus VAT for each day transferred.

In the case of courses/assessments involving delegates being allocated a role, and granted advanced access to role specific resources, a transfer fee of £100 plus VAT per day will apply to transfer requests received within 28 days of the start of the course. Details of the courses where roles are allocated are flagged on our website.

Please note that once a transfer fee has been incurred, it will only be waived in the case of proven illness (evidenced by a valid medical certificate sent to us within 7 days of your absence) or other exceptional circumstances.

On any of the Advocacy based PSC dates (including Electives) the trial roles are set 14 days ahead. It is therefore particularly important with these dates that you avoid any late transfers, as this places an additional burden on the remaining delegates.

Please note that our courses are non-cancellable and the full course fee will still stand.

6. Electives

You must undertake 24 hours of Electives (unless you are a CILEx delegate or have been granted an exemption). Details of our electives would have been sent with your confirmation letter. Alternatively, you can find (and book) them via our website: www.altior.co.uk

Most delegates tend to choose two topics and, for each of these, they will attend one day of face-to-face tuition and undertake one day of assessed associated distance work.

Many of our Electives are very popular and so you are advised to book as soon as possible. It is **your responsibility** to notify us of your Elective choices.

Elective Distance Work

This may be in the form of 'Pre' course work, sent out for completion before the course, or 'Post' course work handed out at the course for submission after the course.

Delegates are given approximately 3 weeks to complete the course work, which is formally assessed as a pass or fail. Kaplan Altior retains all course work and delegates are advised to keep an electronic copy.

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

Please arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of each day. The SRA requires that a minimum number of hours of face to face tuition must be completed and therefore arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of a course may result in the trainer refusing to admit you to the programme. Similarly, all delegates must stay until the end of each session. Please inform our PSC Team on 029 2045 1000 if you are running late.

Upon arrival, your **room will be sign posted at the venue.**

9. Signing the Register

It is crucial that you sign the register for each course date you attend as proof that you have attended.

Please note that the SRA specifies that you must attend each module in its entirety and our accreditation means that we can only issue a certificate of completion to those trainees who have attended the required number of hours.

10. Dress Code

There is no specified dress code apart from Advocacy Module, when we require you to dress as for Court on all days.

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 pen very useful for the FBS module in preparation for the open-book examination (see below).

12. Assessment Procedure

There is no assessment in CCPS. Delegates will be assessed in FBS by way of an examination and in Advocacy by way of participation in two mock trials.

The FBS assessment is a 1½ hour open-book examination split into two parts: part one consists of a series of multiple-choice questions; in part two, candidates must answer a series of short questions based on two case studies.

Full details of the examination format will be given to you during the FBS module.

Appeals Procedure

Details of the Appeals Procedure are available on request.

Mitigating Circumstances

Candidates who attend and complete an assessment 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 a candidate’s responsibility to notify us in advance of the assessment of any illness or personal circumstances (e.g. a close family bereavement) which may prevent them from performing to the best of their ability. If appropriate, we can then make arrangements to defer the candidate to a later date.

Kaplan Altior reserves the right to charge the candidate 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 at the front of our course notes.

13. Results

FBS results in the form of pass/fail are typically sent within 28 days of the exam date to the email address provided on booking. **You will not be provided with a percentage mark.** 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

Where a delegate fails the FBS examination, they may re-sit the examination element of this module up to two more times before the SRA requires them to re-attend the whole module in addition to re-sitting the examination. For related re-sit fees please contact Delegate Services directly. Please note that a delegate will not be permitted to book a re-sit until they have received the result of their last attempt.

15. Completion - Certificate

We will issue you with a certificate, once you have satisfactorily **attended** all Core modules and Electives (including any distance learning requirement); **passed any relevant assessments** and **any outstanding fees have been paid in full.**

Please safeguard your certificate as you will need to submit it with your application for admission to the roll. We charge a fee of £25 plus VAT for re-issuing any PSC certificates.

16. Admission as a Solicitor

In order to be admitted to the roll as a solicitor you must have completed the PSC - all three Core Modules, 24 hours of Electives and the FBS examination - and also have completed your training contract. Copies of your certificate from Kaplan Altior will be required for admission.

Please bear in mind when choosing your course dates that **your application for admission to the roll must be with the SRA at least 28 days before your chosen admission date.** Some of the distance learning elements of our Electives need to be completed after the course. Other reasons for a possible delay in receiving your certificate include the need for us to convene an Exam Board to validate examination results and non-payment of our course fee.

Any unforeseen delays in your PSC may delay your admission and may lead to you having to apply for an extension of your Training Contract.

17. Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high level service to clients and if you are not happy with something we want to know about it. This will help us improve our standards and prevent any problems recurring. In most instances, an issue can be easily resolved 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 Advocacy course notes. If you have not yet received these, please e-mail altior@kaplan.co.uk for a copy.

18. Key Contacts

Delegate Services or PSC Admin Team on 029 2045 1000.

