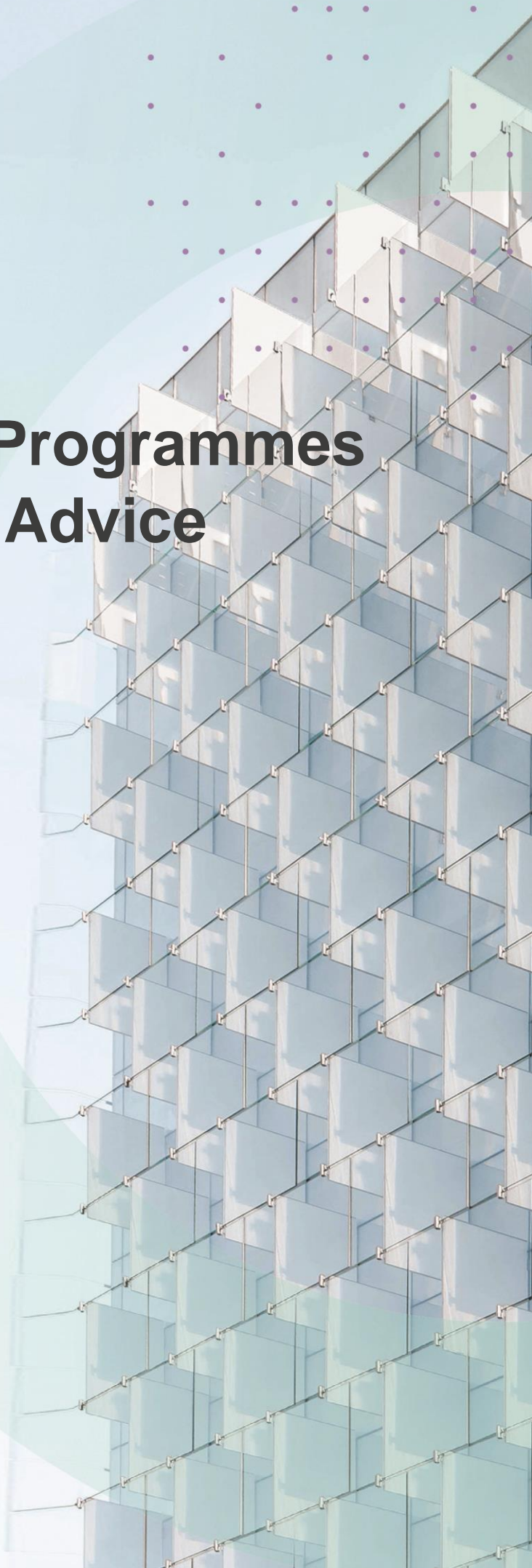




# **BPP's Solicitor Apprenticeship Programmes for Independent Advice Centres**

5 March 2020



# BPP's Solicitor Apprenticeship Programmes for Independent Advice Centres

## Introduction

You have identified an opportunity to support the development of current advice workers at independent advice centres by helping them qualify as solicitors through the solicitor apprenticeship programme. We would be delighted to partner with you in providing the training for your advice workers and support them on their path to qualification as a solicitor.

BPP University Law School has delivered market-leading Paralegal and Solicitor Apprenticeships since 2016, when the new Trailblazer Legal Apprenticeship Standards first became available. The growth of apprenticeships and the introduction of the Solicitors Qualification Examination (SQE) in 2021 has created opportunities for employers to introduce new career pathways, diversify their talent pools and support the development of their current employees. It has also created opportunities for us to develop programmes for apprentices and graduates that will meet the rigours of the proposed new assessments and meet the demands of employers for their future lawyers to be even better prepared for practice. We are now able to offer apprenticeship models for both non-graduate and graduate entry, all of which enable employers to utilise the apprenticeship levy.

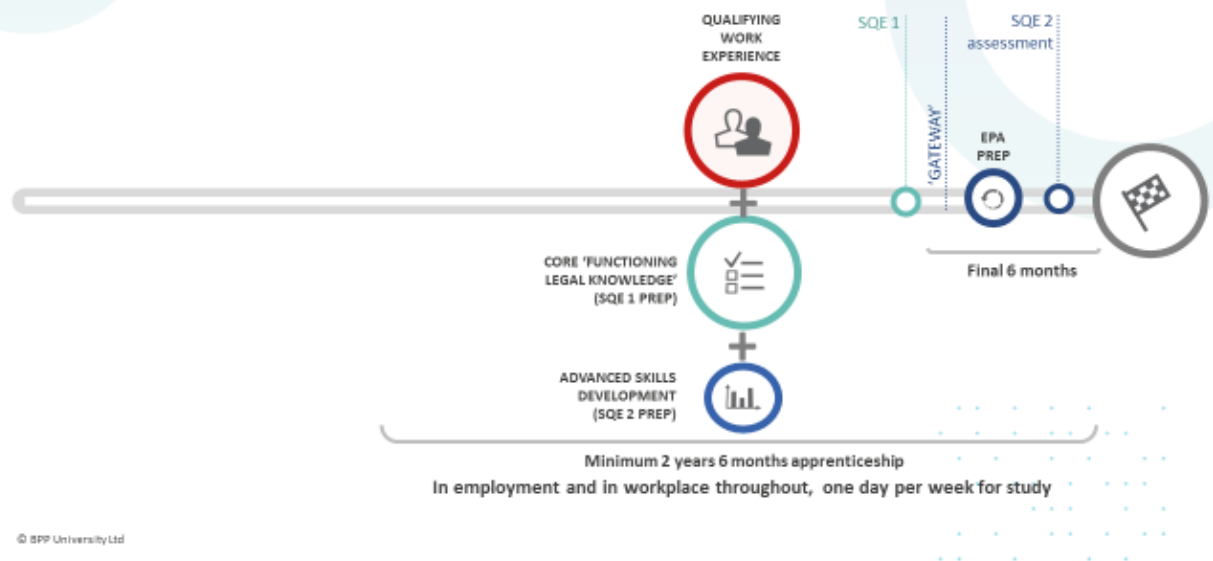
## Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeship

This programme is ideal for advice workers who have an LLB or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). The solicitor apprenticeship standard specifically anticipates recruiting law graduates as apprentices and the programme runs across two and a half years, with the apprentice working throughout this entire period and taking a minimum of one day a week to study.

The programme is structured so that apprentices will sit the SQE 1 assessment during the second year of the apprenticeship, and the SQE 2 assessment within the last 6 months of the apprenticeship. SQE 2 is the End Point Assessment for the solicitor apprenticeship and apprentices must pass both assessments to qualify as a solicitor.

During the programme, apprentices will refresh and fill in any gaps in their prior knowledge of foundational legal principles and build on that with new knowledge of the five legal practice areas which will be assessed in SQE 1. Throughout the programme the apprentices will continue to develop practice skills as preparation for SQE 2, and will evidence those skills through production of an online portfolio of professional assets.

## 'Graduate entry' solicitor apprenticeship: Day release model



© BPP University Ltd

This programme will be available from September 2020, anticipating that those apprentices will sit the SQE 1 assessment in November 2021 and the SQE 2 assessment in October 2022 (assessment dates subject to confirmation by the SRA/Kaplan).

We will have an alternative structure for graduate apprentices from summer 2021, where the apprentices carry out their off the job learning in two blocks of study. As this would take the apprentices away from their case work for several months at a time, it is not felt that this approach would be suitable for your people. However, further information on this can be supplied on request.

### **Solicitor Apprenticeship for non-law graduates**

We have an alternative programme which is appropriate for advice workers who do not have a law degree or equivalent. It is a six-year programme which incorporates a university degree award – an LLB in Legal Practice - as well as SQE 1 and 2. As with the graduate entry programme, SQE 2 is the End Point Assessment for the programme, successful completion of which will enable the apprentice to qualify as a solicitor. We understand that most, if not all, of the potential candidates for apprenticeships will already have a law degree, therefore this option is less likely to be suitable for your advice workers. However, further information on this option can be supplied on request.

### **Commitment from the employer/supervisor/apprentice**

You have secured commitments to transfer up to 25% of their apprenticeship levy from other organisations, meaning that you will be able to fund 100% of the training costs through this mechanism.

An apprentice employer must commit to allowing the apprentice 20% off the job study, which is usually structured as one full day each week. During each week apprentices will usually attend a 2 hour live online workshop and will undertake directed self-study to prepare for and consolidate after each workshop and prepare written assignments and assessments. Apprentices may need additional time to prepare for assessments. In addition, apprentices must attend a week-long induction at the beginning of their programme in September and three one-day face to face group coaching days each year. These face to face days will be held at the apprentice's local BPP centre: London, Birmingham, Cambridge, Bristol, Leeds or Manchester.

The employer must provide appropriate supervision for the apprentice (generally this would be similar to the level of supervision expected to be given to a trainee) and the funding rules stipulate that the supervisor must attend regular (three per year) three-way progress review meetings with the training provider and the apprentice. The aim of these review meetings is to ensure that the apprentice is on track in developing and evidencing the required knowledge, skills and behaviours against the apprenticeship standards. These meetings can be conducted face to face or through Skype.

### **Support for apprentices**

Apprentices will be supported throughout the programme by a team of tutors and a Coach, who will be on hand to guide them through the requirements of the programme.

The programmes will make use of cutting-edge educational technology to support apprentices, including the use of data analytics to track and measure progress and enable appropriate interventions as required. We appreciate that for many of your advice workers, it will have been some time since they have studied for their LLB. On starting the graduate apprenticeship programme, all apprentices will take a diagnostic test in our personal adaptive learning tool, which will identify any gaps and weaknesses in prior learning and create an individual learning path for each apprentice. Apprentices will all have access to materials to help them reach back to their learning, refresh it and complete any gaps in their knowledge.

For any apprentices that require learning support, we have a dedicated, expert and extensive Inclusion and Learning Support team that helps students with learning difficulties and disabilities. This team operates with the support of external experts, a national counselling service and network of educational psychologists to ensure that the right assistance (physical and mental) is provided to each person in need.

### **Eligibility criteria for apprentices**

Whilst the SQE assessment specifications have not yet been finalised, it is clear that SQE 1 in particular will be a challenging assessment due to the breadth of coverage and the nature of the assessment.

Due to the rigour of these assessments, our usual eligibility requirement for apprentices joining the graduate solicitor apprenticeship is a 2:1 in a law degree (or a 2:1 in another degree and a pass in a GDL). We appreciate that some of your potential candidates may not meet this criteria; given that they will already have gained significant experience of working in a legal environment, we would apply lower eligibility requirement of a 2:2, or consider other mitigating circumstances.

Many of your advice workers have considerable experience working in a legal environment and will have already developed many of the skills set out in the apprenticeship standard. The funding rules

state that funds must not be used to pay for training for skills, knowledge and behaviours already attained by the apprentice.

Where this is the case, the content, duration and price of the training must be reduced, although the minimum duration is one year. It is therefore a funding rules requirement that any apprentice who has accrued prior learning and experience will undertake a pre-onboarding skills scan (which we are currently developing) to ascertain whether there is scope for development against the required standards and therefore whether the candidate is eligible for the apprenticeship. We will need to consider each candidate on a case by case basis.

You may also wish to apply your own eligibility criteria to determine which candidates you wish to support through the programme, for example based on length of service.

### **Information for potential candidates**

We attach a fact sheet which sets out basic information about the graduate solicitor apprenticeship programme that can be shared with potential candidates. Please note that the references on the fact sheet to eligibility requirements may be flexed for those advice workers with significant experience (as set out above).

### **About BPP University Law School**

With over 25 years' experience in delivering professional legal qualifications, BPP University Law School is one of the largest providers of legal education and training in the UK. Many leading law firms send their trainees exclusively to us for the Legal Practice Course (LPC) and Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), and have done so for many years, which is a mark of the quality of our programmes and client support.

We are delighted that the City Consortium, a group of leading City law firms, has recently appointed us to deliver a suite of market-leading and innovative programmes which will both prepare their future trainees for the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) and for the future practice of law.

### **Further information**

Please contact the following for further information:

Tricia Chatterton (Commercial Director): [Triciachatterton@bpp.com](mailto:Triciachatterton@bpp.com)

Liz Ritter (Head Business Development): [Lizritter@bpp.com](mailto:Lizritter@bpp.com)