
Guidance Note

Qualifying Experience



March 2023 (version 1)

Costs Lawyer Standards Board

CLSB

What is Qualifying Experience?

1. The CLSB's Training Rules set out the requirements for qualifying as a Costs Lawyer. Training Rule 3.1 provides that in order to qualify as a Costs Lawyer, a Trainee must:
 - (a) have successfully completed the Costs Lawyer Qualification; and
 - (b) have completed, or be currently undertaking, two years of Qualifying Experience.
2. The requirements for Qualifying Experience can be found in Training Rule 5. Training Rule 5.1 explains that Qualifying Experience is work undertaken in costs law and practice for a period of two years under the supervision of a Qualified Person. During the period of Qualifying Experience, the skills in the [Costs Lawyer Competency Statement](#) must be practised at work. The purpose of Qualifying Experience is to ensure that all qualifying Costs Lawyers have the support, mentorship and oversight needed to meet the standards in the Competency Statement in a day-to-day working environment.
3. This guidance explains the CLSB's processes for determining whether you have met the requirements for Qualifying Experience.

What evidence of my Qualifying Experience will I need to provide?

4. In order for the CLSB to determine whether you have met the requirements for Qualifying Experience, you will need to submit information about your Qualifying Experience and supporting evidence.
5. You will be asked for information about the details of your Qualifying Experience, such as dates, organisations, the type of work undertaken and working arrangements. You will be asked for this information either when you apply for your first practising certificate or later on, as explained further below.

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6. You will also need to upload completed versions of the following documents with your application:
 - A **Qualifying Experience Record** providing examples of how each of the skills in the Competency Statement has been practised during your period of Qualifying Experience.
 - A **Qualified Person Statement** from each qualified person who has supervised any part of your Qualifying Experience.
 7. You are encouraged to populate your Qualifying Experience Record with relevant examples throughout the course of your Qualifying Experience, to ensure all the necessary skills are covered by the end of the period.

When can I undertake my Qualifying Experience?

8. Training Rule 5.4 provides that the two year period of Qualifying Experience may be carried out:
 - while you are working toward completion of the Costs Lawyer Qualification;
 - during the 12 months prior to commencing the Costs Lawyer Qualification; and/or
 - after you have completed the Costs Lawyer Qualification.
9. This means that you can apply for a Costs Lawyer practising certificate even if you have not yet completed your Qualifying Experience, so long as you are working towards completing it and can give us an indication of when you expect it to be complete.

What happens if I'm ready to apply for a practising certificate and I've already completed my Qualifying Experience?

10. When you make your first application for a Costs Lawyer practising certificate, you will be asked to indicate whether or not you have completed your Qualifying Experience.

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11. If you have already completed your Qualifying Experience, you will be prompted to provide the evidence described in paragraphs 4 to 6 above. The CLSB will assess this evidence against the criteria in the Training Rules.
 12. If the CLSB determines that satisfactory evidence of Qualifying Experience has been provided – and assuming that all other practising criteria are satisfied (see the [Practising Rules](#) for further details) – you will be granted your first practising certificate without any conditions.
 13. If you would like advice or comfort that your Qualifying Experience meets the criteria in the Training Rules prior to applying for your first practising certificate, you can [contact us](#) about submitting your evidence early.

What happens if I want to apply for a practising certificate but I have not yet completed my Qualifying Experience?

14. As explained above, when you make your first application for a Costs Lawyer practising certificate, you will be asked to indicate whether or not you have completed your Qualifying Experience.
15. If you indicate that you have not yet completed your Qualifying Experience, you will be asked to specify the date on which you expect to complete it (the completion date). The completion date will depend on how much Qualifying Experience you have already accrued and your expected working arrangements going forward (for example, whether you intend to work full-time or part-time).
16. If you indicate that you have not yet completed your Qualifying Experience, or if the CLSB determines that you have not met the requirements for Qualifying Experience in the Training Rules and thus a further period of experience is required, you will be issued with a practising certificate that is subject to a condition (known as a conditional practising certificate). The condition will require you to practise under supervision and to complete your Qualifying Experience by a specified date, which will be based on your intended completion date or another date if appropriate in the individual circumstances.

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17. The condition will be published on the [Register of Costs Lawyers](#).
 18. At any time while the condition is imposed, you may make an application to the CLSB for removal of the condition on the basis that you have completed your Qualifying Experience. The application form is available [on our website](#). You will be prompted to provide the evidence described in paragraphs 4 to 6 above. The CLSB will assess this evidence against the criteria in the Training Rules.
 19. If the CLSB determines that satisfactory evidence of Qualifying Experience has been provided, you will be issued with an unconditional practising certificate and the condition will be removed from the [Register of Costs Lawyers](#).
 20. If you do not apply to have the condition removed from your practising certificate by the completion date, we will contact you about the status of your Qualifying Experience. Please tell us straight away if – at any time and for any reason – you do not expect to be able to fulfil the condition (i.e. if you are concerned you will not complete your Qualifying Experience by the indicated completion date or you cannot practise under supervision).
 21. If the condition has not been fulfilled in the time expected – for example, due to a period of extended leave – then the CLSB may extend or amend the condition as appropriate in the circumstances. If the condition has not been fulfilled in the time expected because you have not complied with the condition – for example, you have been practising without supervision – then your practising certificate may be revoked or other sanctions may be imposed. See the Practising Rules and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures in the [Costs Lawyer Handbook](#) for more details.

Where can I find more information?

22. Additional resources, including detailed FAQs about Qualifying Experience, are available on the [how to become a Costs Lawyer](#) page of the CLSB website. If you would like advice about your individual circumstances, please [contact us](#).