

Consultation on Continuing Legal Education

1 The Singapore Academy of Law Interim Committee on the Institute of Legal Education is seeking feedback on improvements that can be made to Part A of the Singapore Bar Examinations (formerly the Diploma in Singapore Law), Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations (formerly the Practical Law Course). In relation to the proposal to implement mandatory Continuing Legal Education for lawyers practising in Singapore and the Corporate Practice Examination which would qualify foreign lawyers to practise prescribed areas of Singapore law it seeks suggestions as to how these schemes may be optimally implemented.

Background

2 The growth of the Singapore legal sector depends on its ability to attract, sustain and nurture top-notch legal practitioners. The Minister for Law has announced a two-prong strategy to address this. Firstly, the legal sector has been liberalized to allow more foreign lawyers with the requisite qualifications to practise in Singapore. Secondly, new initiatives for continuing legal education and training have been considered for law professionals (see [Annex A](#) in related links below).

3 Over the course of the last few years, legislation has been amended to facilitate the development of the legal sector. Most recently, amendments to the Legal Profession Act in Sep 2009 formalized the changes to the qualification requirements for lawyers to be called to the bar (see [Annex B](#) in related links below). These reforms included: the replacement of pupillage with training contracts whose contents are prescribed by the Legal Profession (Practice Training Contract) Guidelines; the replacement of the Practical Law Course with Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations; and the replacement of the Diploma in Singapore Law, a one year course, with the three-month long Part A of the Singapore Bar Examinations. Exemption requirements which were previously under the oversight of the Ministry of Law and the Board of Legal Education have also been streamlined and now come under the purview of the Ministry of Law.

4 During the second Parliamentary reading for the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill in Aug 2009, Minister for Law also announced that an Institute for Legal Education would be launched in 2010 to serve as “an umbrella institution to co-ordinate, administer and have oversight of the various initiatives relating to legal education” (see [Annex C](#) in related links below).

5 To oversee and guide the establishment of the Institute of Legal Education, the SAL Executive Committee has appointed an Interim Committee on the Institute of Legal Education (Interim Committee). The Interim Committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Law, the Judiciary, the Attorney-General's Chambers, the Singapore Academy of Law, senior practitioners, as well as law professors. One of the key functions of the Interim Committee is to deliberate on and

propose the establishment of schemes relating to legal education and professional training for law professionals, qualifying exams for foreign lawyers, and all other schemes relating to the training of lawyers post-graduation and post-qualification.

Views sought on proposed schemes

6 The Interim Committee seeks views from SAL Members on the following schemes:

- (a) Part A of the Singapore Bar Examinations (formerly the Diploma in Singapore Law);
- (b) Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations (formerly the Practice Law Course);
- (c) mandatory Continuing Legal Education of lawyers practising in Singapore; and
- (d) the Corporate Practice Exam which would qualify foreign lawyers to practise prescribed areas of Singapore law, such as banking, finance, corporate and other areas of legal or regional work.

7 The Interim Committee invites interested parties to provide feedback on the schemes listed in paragraph 6. The consultation period is from **5 to 28 February 2010**. The feedback may be sent in electronic or hard copy form to:

The Interim Committee on the Institute of Legal Education
Singapore Academy of Law
Attn: The SAL Interim Committee Secretariat

1 Supreme Court Lane
Level 4
Singapore 178879
Fax: 63335085
E-mail: sile_feedback@sal.org.sg

For inquiries, please contact Mr Aloysius Goh at 63323451 or Aloysius_Goh@sal.org.sg

RELATED LINKS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Annex A

Speech by Minister for Law K Shanmugam on Legal Services & Education during the Committee of Supply Debate (Outlines the framework for legal education changes)

13 Feb 2009

<http://app2.mlaw.gov.sg/News/tabid/204/currentpage/6/Default.aspx?ItemId=65>

Annex B

Guidance Note on Changes to Legislation Regarding Admission to the Singapore Bar

29 Jun 2009

<http://app2.mlaw.gov.sg/News/tabid/204/currentpage/5/Default.aspx?ItemId=32>

Annex C

Speech by Minister for Law K Shanmugam on the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill 2009

18 Aug 2009

<http://app2.mlaw.gov.sg/News/tabid/204/currentpage/3/Default.aspx?ItemId=427>

Annex D

Legal Profession (Practice Training Contract) Guidelines

4 Dec 2009

<http://www.lawsociety.org.sg/ble/pdf/Practice%20Training%20Contract%20Guidelines.pdf>

SCHEME-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

On Part A of the Singapore Bar Examinations

<http://app2.mlaw.gov.sg/UsefulInfo/PracticeoflawinSingapore/PartAoftheBarExamination/tabid/265/Default.aspx>

On Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations

<http://app2.mlaw.gov.sg/UsefulInfo/PracticeoflawinSingapore/PartBoftheBarExamination/tabid/266/Default.aspx>

On mandatory Continuing Legal Education and Corporate Practice Exams, see Annex A.