

**Guidance Notes
Experiential Route
Paralegal Practising Certificate Application Form**

INTRODUCTION

Paralegals who are registered with the PPR are able to apply for a Paralegal Practising Certificate (PPC) and be regarded as a Professional Paralegal Practitioner.

Paralegals who hold a PPC are fully regulated by the PPR for all the services that they are authorised to undertake, provided these services are specified on their practising certificate.

The Paralegal Practitioners' Rules 2015 requires that any paralegal working in the unregulated legal services market in England and Wales in connection with the provision of legal services needs a Paralegal Practising Certificate.

Paralegals who hold a PPC are fully regulated by the PPR for all of the services that they are authorised to undertake, provided these services are specified on their practising certificate.

This provides visibility and certainty to consumers, or other clients, such as companies or local authorities who use their services and want to know whether they are a bona fide Paralegal.

The PPR can hear complaints relating to conduct only in respect of Registered Paralegals and do not fully regulate the services that they offer.

A Professional Paralegal Practitioner's clients are able to utilise the compensation fund when things go wrong. Members of the public who use PPR Paralegals that are only Registered, do not have access to the compensation fund.

A PPC is your license to practise and enables you to carry out legal services and be held accountable by the PPR. A proportion of the PPC fee contributes to the compensation fund.

Paralegals that hold 'Practising Certificates', 'Licenses' or 'Certificates to Practise' via a membership organisation are not regulated by the PPR.

TYPES OF PRACTISING CERTIFICATES

A Specified Certificate is appropriate for Tier 2 and above Registered Paralegals who offer services to consumers in one area of law or service, for example Employment or Will Writing. This is £155 per year and includes an application handling fee of £30 and a contribution to the compensation fund of £25.

A General Certificate is appropriate for Tier 3 and above where one or more areas of law or services are being provided. For example, Will Writing, Employment Law and Family Law. This is £205 per year and includes an application handling fee of £30 and a contribution to the compensation fund of £35.

EXPERIENTIAL ROUTE

At the PPR we recognise that competency can be achieved through non-academic routes.

The experiential route assessment is available to Paralegals who may have many years' experience in a specific practice area/s but do not meet the necessary qualification requirements to apply for a Paralegal Practising Certificate (PPC) and be regarded as a Professional Paralegal Practitioner.

Taking the Experiential Route Assessment will enable you to reflect on your skills and knowledge to date.

There is an additional **one-off fee** of £400 of which £100 is an administration fee and non-returnable should your application be unsuccessful. You will be required to pay the fee for the Practising Certificate (Specified £155 or General £205) on applying and thereafter each year when renewing.

WHO CAN PRACTISE AS A PARALEGAL UNDER THE PPR?

No person shall be entitled to practice as a Paralegal under this Register unless:

- they have met the requisite qualification and/or experience as a Professional Paralegal; and
- they have a current Paralegal Practising Certificate issued in accordance with the provisions of these Rules and the Paralegal Practitioners' Rules; and
- they have and continue to comply with CPD requirements set out in the Paralegal Practitioners' Rules and the CPD Rules, and
- they have professional indemnity insurance in accordance with the Paralegal Practitioners' Rules, and
- they are deemed to be a fit and proper person having met the requirements of these Rules and the Paralegal Practitioner's Rules.

WHO IS ABLE TO OBTAIN A PARALEGAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE?

- Subject to the powers set out herein to refuse a Paralegal Practising Certificate a PPR Member at Tier 2 or above is entitled to a Paralegal Practising Certificate provided:
- they return their application for a Paralegal Practising Certificate by the deadline stipulated; and
- they have paid the Paralegal Practising Certificate Fee in full within the deadline stipulated; and
- they have provided evidence that they fulfil the requirements of the Certificate, PPR will notify its reasons in writing to the Applicant in the event PPR:
 - refuses an application;
 - makes a Paralegal Practising Certificate subject to a condition or conditions;
 - refuses to remove a condition imposed on a Paralegal Practising Certificate.

If you are unsure about the type of Practising Certificate you require, please contact us on info@ppr.org.uk, 0203 039 3710 or speak to your Recognised Membership Body.

THE EXPERIENTIAL ROUTE PROCESS

STEP 1 – YOUR PRE-ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

The pre-assessment discussion is a free 15-minute discussion by telephone with an experienced assessor. It helps determine your eligibility for the Experience Assessment, and whether it is the right route for you.

Book your FREE pre-assessment discussion by calling +44 (0) 203 039 3710 or emailing info@ppr.org.uk

STEP 2 - REGISTER AND PAY FOR THE FULL EXPERIENTIAL ASSESSMENT

After your pre-assessment discussion you will need to complete and submit the Experiential Route online form and pay the experiential route process fee of £400 and the appropriate fee for the Practising Certificate (a Specified Certificate is £155 per year, and a General Certificate is £205 per year).

STEP 3 – COMPLETE ASSESSMENT

You should expect to invest around 10 days of your time over a four-week period to do the following part of the online assessment:

- Impact report: Demonstrate how you have contributed to your organisation's success or your success as a sole trader.
- Self-assessment: Demonstrate how you meet the behaviours required of a paralegal professional.
- Workplace or client feedback: provide feedback from people you work with, including your line manager (or clients).

The timescales above are estimates and should be used as guidelines only. We strongly advise you to plan ahead, to give yourself enough time to think and prepare your examples.

STEP 4 – YOUR PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

Approximately 2-3 weeks after you complete your online assessment you will be required to attend a Professional Discussion - a one-hour interview (video call) with an experienced PPR assessor. Your assessor will explore your evidence in more detail - discussing your submission, the evidence you have provided on your experience, and ask a series of general technical questions based on the area of law that you practice.

About a week later you will receive your results.

STEP 5 – RECEIVE OUTCOME OF YOUR ASSESSMENT

You will learn the outcome of your assessment within six weeks from the start of the overall process. If successful, you will be awarded a Practising Certificate in the respective practice area/s.

If you are unsuccessful you will be refunded the £300 (the administration fee of £100 will be deducted) and the full fee of the practising certificate.

COMPLETING THE ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

STEP 1 - Your Recognised Membership Body Details

You must be a member to of one of the PPR's current Recognised Bodies and be registered with the Professional Paralegal Register to apply for a Practising Certificate. You will need to provide the name of your membership body, your membership number with them and the Tier you are on the PPR.

You have been placed on the PPR at a Tier Level according to information from your Recognised Body (RB). This is dependent on your qualifications and experience. If you believe that your Tier Level on the PPR is wrong, then please raise this with your RB. You will need to be a Tier 2 or above on the PPR to be eligible for a Paralegal Practising certificate.

STEP 2 - Your Personal Details

Names

If you have changed your name, you must indicate both names (i.e. present and former) and the date the change became effective. Please include documentary evidence, such as a certified copy of your marriage certificate, deed poll or statutory declaration.

Current Home address

Please provide a current home address (indicating the month and year you moved in). If you have lived at any other address during the last 5 years, please provide details in the box provided (the country for each must be specified).

Please note that if you have lived in a country outside of the UK, for a period of six continuous months, during the last five years, you must provide evidence of a criminal record check from the relevant country or countries.

STEP 3 - Complaints Procedure

You will need to tell us if you subscribe to your Recognised Body's Complaints procedure. If you do not, then you will need to upload a copy of your complaint's procedure.

You will also be asked if you have had any complaints during the last two years. If you have you will be required to provide more details.

STEP 4 - Areas of Law and Services offered

You will need to provide information regarding the areas of law that you will be practising and the services you will be offering to a consumer. You need to specify this in order to be granted the appropriate Paralegal Practising Certificate which will either be 'General' or 'Specified.'

The areas of law that users of the PPR will be able to search by are shown in Appendix 1. Please indicate

which of these areas your services fall into on your application form.

STEP 5 - Professional Indemnity Insurance

Every PPR Registered Paralegal who applies for a PPC should have PII in place and evidence needs to be provided to the PPR of this at the time of application. If you have not already attained PII then please refer to our approved insurance broker [Professional Indemnity Insurance](#).

Please make sure that you have this in place before applying for a Practising Certificate. If you do not have this, then your application will be refused.

STEP 6 - Suitability Test

The PPR must be satisfied as to your character and suitability to be a Professional Paralegal before you are granted a Paralegal Practising Certificate.

The questions in this section are based on the criteria set out in the [PPR Paralegal Practitioners' Rules](#).

You must disclose all material information.

Failure to disclose material information will be treated as prima facie evidence of dishonest behaviour. You are therefore encouraged to provide all information in respect of your character and suitability, even if you are unsure whether it is 'material'.

If you disclose any issues that may affect your character and suitability, you must provide full details, including, where appropriate, supporting independent evidence. We will then undertake an assessment of the information you have provided.

We are aware that we receive applications in respect of overseas candidates and that some of the terminology used in the form, particularly in respect of criminal offences and financial behaviour, may not be exactly analogous to terminology relevant in the home jurisdiction. We would ask that you carefully consider the terminology of the Suitability Test in the context of your home jurisdiction and provide as much information as possible about any issues which call into question your character and suitability.

(i) The provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 will be taken into account by us in considering any application you make.

(ii) A period of rehabilitation, particularly after we have decided to refuse your application, will not in itself result in automatic admission/authorisation. We need you to show, through a period of good behaviour, that you have taken steps to rehabilitate yourself by your own volition.

The questions you will be asked are as follows:

- Have you ever entered into an individual Voluntary Arrangement under the Insolvency Act 1986 as amended?
- Have you ever entered into a partnership Voluntary Arrangement under the Insolvency Act 1986 as amended?
- Have you ever been an un-discharged or discharged bankrupt?
- Have you been a Director of a company or member of an LLP which has been wound up or the subject of an administration order administrative receivership or a voluntary arrangement under the Insolvency Act 1986?
- Have you ever been disqualified from being a company director?
- Have you been committed to prison in civil or criminal proceedings or been convicted of an indictable offence (subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act)?
- Do you lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005?

- Have you been removed from the office of charity trustee by an order within the terms of section 72(1) (d) of the Charities Act 1993?
- Have you been the subject of a money judgement which has been outstanding for more than 28 days?
- Is there any other matter that might reasonably be expected to be disclosed as affecting your fitness to act as a Paralegal?

If the answer is YES to any of the above, then the PPR may either refuse the application for a Paralegal Practising Certificate or impose a condition upon the Paralegal Practising Certificate.

Recognised Body Confirmation of Suitability

The PPR will seek confirmation of your suitability to be awarded a Paralegal Practising Certificate from your Recognised Membership Body.

STEP 7 - Declaration

You will be required to accept that the information disclosed in the application form is true and that you have read and will comply with the Paralegal Practitioners' Rules and Code of Conduct of the PPR. I declare that the information disclosed in this application form is true and that I have read and will comply with the Paralegal Practitioners' Rules and Code of Conduct of the PPR. I will also ensure that I complete the requisite number of hours CPD required in order to renew my certificate on an annual basis and that I will inform the PPR of any change in my circumstances or event that may affect the validity of my practising certificate within fourteen calendar (14) days of the changes taking effect.

You must also agree to complete the requisite number of hours CPD required in order to renew your certificate on an annual basis and that you will inform the PPR of any change in your circumstances or event that may affect the validity of your practising certificate within fourteen calendar (14) days of the changes taking effect.

STEP 8 - Paralegal Practising Certificate Fees

Your Paralegal Practising Certificate Experiential Route application cannot be processed unless the appropriate fee has been paid.

Payment

You will be required to select the Practising Certificate type you are applying for.

Payment options are by debit/credit card, PayPal or invoice/bank transfer.

If you require an invoice and wish to pay by bank transfer, you will need to contact the PPR's admin team on info@ppr.org.uk or 0203 039 3710 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm) to request an invoice and a coupon code to bypass the payment gateway and submit your application.

Please note that we will not process applications until full payment has been received.

APPENDIX 1

PPR Expertise Categories

Accident and Injury Law
Accountancy Law
Adjudication Law
Administrative Law
Advocacy Law
Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR)
Animal Welfare and Protection Law
Armed Forces Law
Assisting Counsel in Court
Banking Law
Business Law
Capital Markets and Private Equity Law
Charity Law
Children and Family Law
Civil Litigation and Claims
Civil Rights
Claims Management Law
Commercial Law
Commercial Property Law
Competition Law
Company Law
Construction Law
Consumer Law
Contract Law
Conveyancing Law
Corporate Law
Court of Protection Law
Criminal Law
Debt Recovery Law
Education Law
Employment Law
Environmental Law
Estate Administration Law
Ethics and Compliance Law
EU Law
Family Law
Finance Law
Financial and Estate Planning Law
French Law
Gambling Law
Health and Safety Law
Housing Law
Human Resources Law
Immigration and Asylum Law
Inheritance Law
Insurance Law
International Commercial Law
International Trade Law
Intellectual Property Law
Land Law
Landlord and Tenant
Matrimonial Law
McKenzie Friends
Media Law
Mediation and Arbitration Law
Medical Negligence Law
Mental Health Law
Money Advice Law
Money Laundering
Personal Injury Law
Police Station Accredited Representatives
Power of Attorney
Private Clients Law
Private Investigations Law
Process Servers
Procurement Law
Property Law
Regulatory Law
Repossession Law
Residential Leasehold Disputes
Road Traffic Accidents
Shipping Law
Social Welfare Health and Benefits Law
Spanish/French/Italian Document Management
Tax Law
Tort (negligence, nuisance)
Trust Law
Wills and Probate