

Rationale for the development of the Professional Development Award in Family Law

This award has been designed to fill the void in qualifications for paralegals already employed in family law and also for family law paralegals who wish to undertake CPD. It is also designed as a qualification for anyone aiming to achieve the role of a family law paralegal.

The aim of this award is to develop the competencies required by employers to allow individuals to undertake specialist paralegal support roles within the legal profession, or in a legal context within a variety of businesses, public sector or financial organisations.

Achievement of this particular award, will give an individual the competences to carry out the role of a family law paralegal within a legal environment and allow registration with the Law Society of Scotland.

The structure of the PDA in Family Law consists of the following units:

F1B1 35 - Legal Research Techniques

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the specialist research skills required to locate and retrieve legal information from the main sources of law through effective research, analyse the information retrieved and to explain the purpose of effective legal research.

F1A3 34 - Legal Secretarial Practice

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with an understanding of the role and function of a legal secretary and/or a paralegal in Scotland, to equip them with the knowledge to explain the laws of confidentiality applicable in a legal environment, and equip the candidate with the skills to prepare legal documentation.

F50D 35 - Legal and Ethical Issues

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with an understanding of the sources, composition and procedures involved in the Scottish Legal System. It also provides an understanding of the role of the Law Society and of the money laundering regulations.

F19Y 35 – Sheriff Court Divorce Procedures

The purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required of solicitors and paralegals working in a law firm who are expected to use the documents and apply the procedures involved in the raising of a divorce action in the Sheriff Court.

New Unit - Family Law Actions

The purpose of the Unit is to give Candidates the necessary practical skills and theoretical knowledge to produce Family Law documents and to give them a thorough grounding in the similarities and differences in the rights and responsibilities of civil partners, married couples and cohabitating couples in Scots Law.

New Unit - Marriage and Civil Partnerships

This Unit is designed to provide the candidate with a knowledge of the principles of family law in Scotland relating to Marriage, Civil Partnerships, Divorce and Dissolution of Civil Partnerships. The Unit will provide an explanation of the changes in legislation relating to marriage, civil partnerships and co-habitees. The Unit will also explain the rights and responsibilities of parents to their children, the rights of children, together with the grounds required for a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership and how the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act applies.