

Training trainee solicitors

Voluntary code to good practice in the recruitment of trainee solicitors

Education and Training Unit
Version 1

Agreed by

- [The Solicitors Regulation Authority](#)
- [The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services](#) (AGCAS)
- [Association of Graduate Recruiters](#) (AGR)
- [Trainee Solicitors' Group](#) (TSG)

The Code has been drawn up to assist all concerned with the recruitment of law degree students and non-law degree students as trainee solicitors. The Code is intended to operate alongside the [Code of Practice](#) agreed between [AGCAS](#), [AGR](#) and the [NUS](#). It is intended to enable trainees to be given opportunities to explore the possible options open to them before making a commitment to a particular employer. It also recognises the business context in which employers operate when they are interviewing and offering training contracts.

Employers voluntarily subscribe to and agree to comply with their responsibilities under the Code. An employer who agrees to adhere to the Code is free to advertise this fact. Students also have responsibilities under the Code, and employers are asked to draw their attention to this Code and to ask prospective trainee solicitors whether they are prepared to adhere to their responsibilities.

Careers advisory services

Careers Advisory Services will observe the provisions of the general [Code of Practice](#) and will encourage and monitor the observance of the Code by all with whom they have dealings.

Employers

1. Employers will not discriminate directly or indirectly; they will comply with rule 6 of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2007, which is available at www.sra.org.uk and statutory requirements.
2. The final date for the receipt of applications will not be before 31 July at the end of the student's penultimate year of undergraduate study. Offers of employment as a trainee solicitor will not be made before 1 September in the student's final year of undergraduate study. This applies to all applicants whether or not they have undertaken/are undertaking a vacation placement with the employer and whether they are law degree or non-law degree students.
3. Visit dates to institutions of higher education to interview applicants will be agreed in advance between the employer and the appropriate careers' service. Where part of the selection procedure takes place off campus during term time, alternative interview dates will be offered if requested by the student.
4. At interview, the applicant will be told if there are any further stages to the selection process and when these will take place. Applicants will be informed, in writing, within two weeks of the completion of the selection process whether an offer has been made.
5. All offers will be in writing and contain the information prescribed by the Solicitors Regulation Authority as set out in **Trainee Solicitors: Solicitors Regulation Authority** requirements. Applicants will be given four weeks to confirm whether or not they wish to accept an offer. The employer will give sympathetic consideration to an applicant's request for an extension to the time limit on an offer provided that a good reason is given. An offer will not be withdrawn before the time limit for acceptance has expired.
6. Where an employer is prepared to provide financial assistance to a student in relation to undergraduate or postgraduate studies, the terms and conditions on which the assistance is offered will be explained in writing when the training contract offer is made. Any time limit for the acceptance of an offer of financial assistance must not have the effect of reducing the time limit for accepting the training contract offer.
7. This section should not be construed as imposing upon solicitors any new requirements of professional conduct.

Students responsibilities

1. Students should respond as promptly as possible to an offer of employment as a trainee solicitor. If the student is unable to give a final decision, he or she must ask for time to consider the offer, but must indicate the date by which the decision will be given. In all cases, unless the student has been given an extension of time by the employer, the student must make a decision one way or the other within four weeks of receipt of the offer.
2. A student who receives more than two offers will without delay turn down the excess offers that he/she does not wish to hold.
3. A student should accept offers in writing within the time frame stipulated above.
4. Once a student has accepted an offer, the student must inform all other employers who have made an offer or invited them to attend for interview and make no further applications for a training contract.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Solicitors Regulation Authority will encourage authorised training establishments to adhere to the Code and will, in conjunction with [AGCAS](#), monitor the operation of this Code. Alleged breaches of the Code should be referred to the Monitoring of Training Team Manager, Education and Training Unit, The Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN or DX 720293 BIRMINGHAM 47. Such complaints will be followed up during a subsequent monitoring visit.