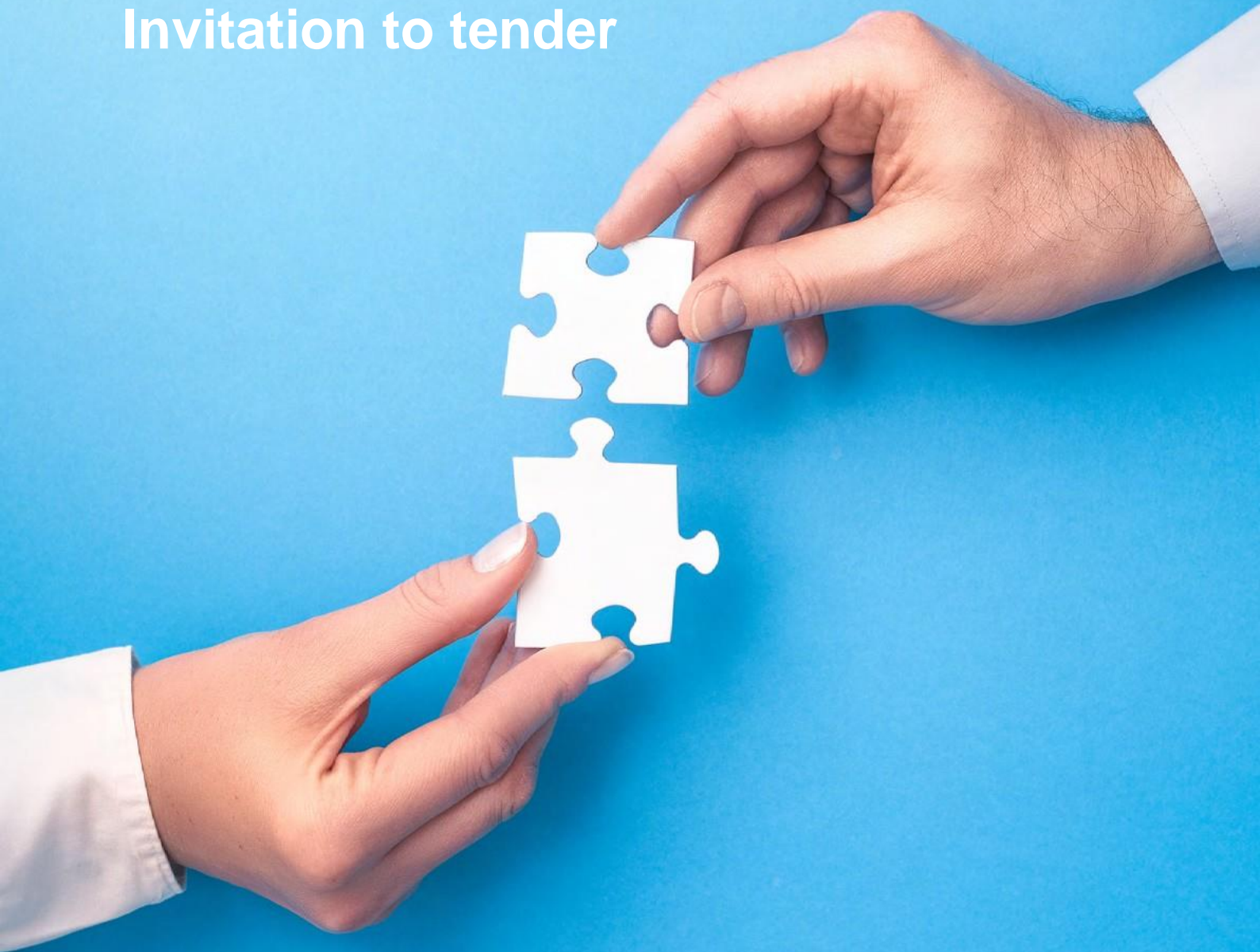




**Law Society  
of Scotland**

# Formal paralegal qualification education partner

## Invitation to tender



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April 2021

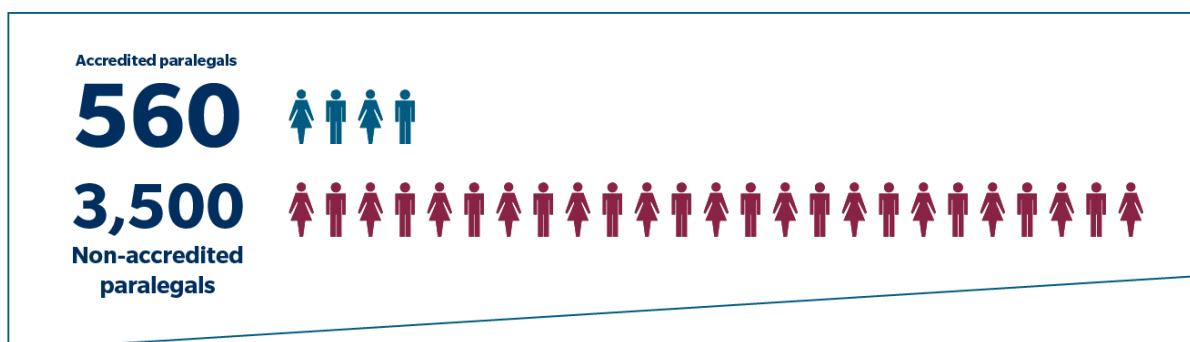
We invite you to consider the opportunity to partner with the Law Society of Scotland to introduce a new, online paralegal qualification for paralegals across and outwith Scotland.

## Introduction

The Law Society of Scotland is the professional body for Scottish solicitors and promotes excellence across the profession through support and regulation. We have an overarching objective of leading legal excellence and strive to maintain our status as a world-class professional body by understanding and serving the needs of our members and the public.

### Key facts

- 12,200 practising solicitors
- 560 accredited paralegals with another estimated 3,500 working in the sector who self-identify as paralegals
- There are around 1,100 firms
- The sector contributes c£1.5bn to the Scottish economy.



## About us

We have a unique role in Scotland as the Scottish Solicitors' professional body, and the regulator that sets and enforces standards for a profession which helps people and businesses in need. We support and care for our hard-working members. We provide a voice that represents our members and wider society when it speaks out on human rights

and the rule of law. We are an influencer on changes to legislation and the operation of our justice system. We also work with our schools and universities on legal education.

We have seen numbers of Scottish solicitors rise to record levels following the October 2021 renewal cycle. This underlines the strength and resilience of the sector despite the challenges arising directly from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our membership is inclusive of other legal professionals, such as accredited paralegals, legal technologists and Law Society Fellows. Our Student Associate Scheme has also been a tremendous success.

Our [‘leading legal excellence’ strategy](#) gives us a clear direction and is flexible enough to respond to the huge socio-economic challenge of the here-and-now as well maintaining focus on big issues facing our members and the clients they serve. This unusually short two-year strategy was put in place to support the profession recovery and build greater resilience, along with ensuring our own organisation does the same.

We have also changed our work to respond to new and emerging issues, particularly around technology, reform of the courts and on equality, diversity and wellbeing in the profession.

### **Law Society of Scotland Accredited Paralegal Status**

For the last ten years, we have run a voluntary accreditation for paralegals working in Scotland. The accreditation provides recognition of the professional status of paralegals and helps to increase awareness of their role in the legal sector. This is achieved through setting a consistent standard for paralegals to attain.

Admission is based on education and experience in both general paralegal work and a specialist area of law, as well as a commitment to CPD and maintaining standards. Applicants can join as trainees or fully accredited, depending on experience. There are currently 13 areas of practice in which paralegals can become accredited. [More details can be found on the Society’s website.](#)

## **Paralegal qualifications in Scotland**

Paralegal qualifications in Scotland are currently offered by other organisations but not the Law Society of Scotland. We do not approve or accredit any paralegal course provider.

Accredited Paralegals are seen as a key part of our membership growth strategy. Our own paralegal course would enable us to clearly demonstrate to Scottish paralegals their value to us by setting out a clear career progression trajectory that is transferable between employers.

With technology changing the work of paralegals the market will become increasingly competitive driving up demand for formal qualifications and accredited status<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, we are keen to take a more active role in the professional development of paralegals from an earlier stage.

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<sup>1</sup> We provide Accredited and Trainee Accredited Paralegal status to those who meet our standards, one of which is the completion of an appropriate course.

Through contractual controls within any agreement with an education partner, we would be able to offer the highest quality studies for paralegals in our members' firms and other sectors (many paralegals are also in-house working in non-legal businesses). This would help us improve professionalisation of the support functions in legal teams and firms. With the aforementioned impact of technology, it is more important than ever that we influence the continuing evolution of paralegal education to ensure our members' firms can flourish in the future.

Our accreditation should therefore cover:

- An introduction to Scots Law
- General competencies required of a paralegal
- Practice area specific competencies
- Standards.

## Opportunity

The proposed Law Society of Scotland paralegal course would be entirely online making it available to all corners of the jurisdiction and beyond by removing the geographical barriers of a classroom-based course. We do not believe we will be unique in delivering the course this way as COVID has forced our competitors to increasingly adopt online delivery.

This approach would drastically increase the potential market. While we cannot provide precise numbers on how many paralegals are working in Scotland, this demographic has been growing exponentially as firms modernise and seek to use paralegal skills to lower business costs. We conservatively estimate the number of those working in the sector who self-identify as paralegals to be in the region of 3,500 but many more will be doing similar roles under different job titles. In some firms, paralegals outstrip the number of solicitors, and vice versa in others. But the reliance on paralegals as continually grown over the last few decades.

A Law Society of Scotland course would benefit from carrying our imprimatur, but it would still need the credibility of an established educational institution that has credibility within the legal services sector and the expertise to develop a high quality online academic course.

We are therefore seeking an exclusive educational partner to develop and introduce a Law Society of Scotland paralegal course in early 2022. It is of course possible that a successful tender party may be able to truncate this timeframe and we would remain open to discussing that.

We are also keen to explore whether we can develop a modern apprenticeship for paralegals through this tender.

We envisage our paralegal courses will be tailored to provide skills to fulfil the criteria laid out in the Accredited Paralegal Accreditation.

The initial focus would be on Scots Law but in time we would be looking to use the global brand of the Society to offer material outwith Scotland to other jurisdictions, such as England and Wales and further afield.

## Commercial model

The preferred corporate vehicle would be a subsidiary of the Law Society of Scotland Service Company, which is a wholly owned entity of the Society for our investment and commercial purposes. This would permit a joint venture with an education institution if necessary. However, we could also consider a Law Society Service Company owned entity that contracts with a university/education provider to develop a course under different commercial terms.

We are intentionally being non-prescriptive in our invitation to tender, leaving the options open for potential partners to propose. Through the tender process we will explore the most attractive proposition.

This invitation to tender also asks potential partners to consider future development of our course to include:

- Adaption to provide a dual-qualification element for cross-border practices
- Potential international markets, in particular jurisdictions with similar jurisprudence.

## The unwritten

Our business model is constantly evolving, and this is reflected in how we work with our partners. This invitation to tender is where we suggest starting that journey with you, but by working closely together we would expect to identify new and often unique opportunities as our relationship matures.

All our strategic partnerships have evolved from where they started to mutual benefit. If you wish to get direct feedback from our existing strategic partners on what it is like to work with the Law Society of Scotland, we can put you in touch with:

- [Amiquis](#)
- [Mitigo](#)

As an organisation we do not sit still and strive for constant improvement on a competitive global stage, we hope you will consider working with us to achieve our goals in a way that helps you achieve some of yours.

## What makes us different?

- ✓ Our dedicated Member Engagement team are targeted to meet our members each year while maintaining strong relationships with the other stakeholders. These senior representatives of the Law Society will be able to explain the benefits of your organisation to appropriate audiences in virtual meetings and at large networking events/educational seminars when COVID restrictions permit.
- ✓ Our reach into England and Wales, with nearly 1,000 members in the jurisdiction at hundreds of firms and organisations working in private practice and in-house.



## Submitting a tender

We invite creative and innovative tenders from educational institutions within Scotland who can assist us creating this entirely online course. We would anticipate receiving a proposal that includes:

1. Profile of institution
2. Preferred commercial model
3. Costs and income projections
4. Risk management
5. Timeline.

The deadline for submitting a tender proposal is 9am on Monday 14 June 2021. Tender proposals should be submitted via email to [paulmosson@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:paulmosson@lawscot.org.uk). Please do NOT send any proposals in the post as they will may not be seen.

## Evaluating the proposal

The Law Society of Scotland Services Company Board will evaluate the proposal and if appropriate invite you to a panel interview. Our panel will be drawn from the Board of Directors of the Law Society of Scotland Services Company.

## Further information

For an informal, confidential discussion please contact Paul Mosson, Executive Director of Member Services and Engagement [paulmosson@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:paulmosson@lawscot.org.uk).

12 April 2021

## Appendix 1 – our marketing and promotional reach

This high-profile opportunity will enable you to:

- engage with all solicitors in Scotland
- build brand presence and traction within the Scottish legal sector
- build independent credibility by association with the Society
- demonstrate expertise to our members
- deliver solutions, insights, guidance to our members.

Examples of things we can do in return for our partners include:

### Exclusivity

- ✓ Position your institution exclusively as ‘the Law Society of Scotland’s Paralegal Education Partner’
- ✓ Ability to use our ‘Strategic Partner’ logo on marketing material, adverts and webpages.

### Events and CPD Training

- ✓ Speaking opportunities at our CPD training, conferences and events
- ✓ Presidential engagement event speaking opportunities (these are only open to our strategic partners)
- ✓ Sponsorship opportunities at relevant conferences/seminars
- ✓ Exclusive networking events, initially virtual but face-to-face when restrictions permit
- ✓ Invites to the Law Society’s Annual Dinner (when COVID restrictions permit).

### Website

- ✓ Branding and provision of content on our website
- ✓ Regular updates and news items.

### Social media and emails

- ✓ The opportunity to provide relevant content to be shared regularly through our social media channels (Twitter 16K followers, LinkedIn 9,800 followers)
- ✓ The opportunity to provide relevant content for our regular emails to members.

### Journal magazine print and digital

- ✓ The opportunity to provide content to our member magazine the Journal (distr. 13,400).