

THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT COURSE FOR SOLICITORS ENTERING SOLE PRACTICE OR PARTNERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS AND PARTICIPANTS

A. PERSONS REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE PRESCRIBED COURSE

1. As from 14 January 1993, no solicitor admitted in New South Wales after 1 January 1986 shall be permitted to first enter practice in New South Wales as a principal unless:-
 - (i) the solicitor has attended a prescribed course in practice management in the 12 months before becoming a principal; or
 - (ii) the solicitor has attended the Sole Practitioners Office Management Workshop; or
 - (iii) the solicitor provides satisfactory evidence of adequate academic and/or practical experience or attendance at a course similar to the prescribed course; or
 - (iv) the solicitor signs an undertaking to attend the next applicable prescribed course; or
 - (v) the solicitor is an interstate partner of a New South Wales firm whose principal practice is outside New South Wales, and who undertakes to advise the Law Society within 21 days in the event that that situation changes; or
 - (vi) the solicitor is exempted by Council for any other reason on the recommendation to it by the Membership Committee.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To improve the managerial skills and job satisfaction of intending sole practitioners and partners of legal firms.
- To improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of legal practices.
- To increase client satisfaction through the use of quality practice management techniques.

C. CORE SUBJECTS

Providers must include the following core subjects in the prescribed course:

Financial Mechanics

- Budgeting
- Cash flow
- Profitability Analysis
- Interpretation of Financial Statements
- Billing
 - methods
 - principles
 - restrictions (statutory)
- Taxation strategies
- Debtor Control
- Practice Valuation
- Borrowing Ratios

Accounting

- Trust Account and Controlled Money requirements
- Basic accounting principles

Professional Standards

- Conflict of Interest/Professional Conduct
- Ethics
- Professional Negligence - Law Cover
- Risk Management
- Fidelity Fund

Personal

- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership qualities
- Delegation/motivation/staff supervision
- Stress Management
- Client communication
- Personal Finances

Management

- Time Management
- Quality Control
- File/Case Management
- Industrial relations and Occupational Health & Safety
- staff selection and training
- Partnership agreements and partner relations

Office Systems/Technology

Marketing

- Practice Development
- Client Relations

D. COURSE MATERIALS

Each participant must be provided with course materials for each of the above core subjects and the Law Society reserves the right to call for such materials prior to approval of the course.

E. COURSE DURATION AND LOCATION

It is envisaged that the abovementioned core subjects could not be covered in less than 25 hours of face to face lectures. It is a requirement that the trust account session be no less than three hours for solicitors entering large partnerships and four and one half hours for solicitors entering sole practice and smaller partnerships. In addition, it is recommended that all solicitors be required to undertake a feasibility study although it is recognised that the applicability of a feasibility study may be inappropriate to those entering partnerships of large firms, in which case, the feasibility study should be substituted by more information on budgeting.

The location of the course is to be approved by the Law Society.

F. COURSE GIVERS/PRESENTERS

Presenters for the various sessions must be competent in the areas in which they give tuition and written proof of their competency must be provided to the Law Society prior to the prescribed course being approved. The presenters of the Trust Account, Law Cover and Fidelity Fund sessions must be provided by the Law Society.

G. COURSE PRESENTATION

All sessions must be face to face with class participation. Videos and other teaching aids may be used to demonstrate particular aspects of a session.

H. WHEN SHOULD THE COURSE BE UNDERTAKEN

It is a requirement that the course be undertaken in the 12 months prior to becoming a principal. However, if the solicitor must, for certain reasons, become a principal prior to undertaking the course, the Law Society will consider an application for exemption from the requirement. If

approved, the solicitor must sign an undertaking to attend the next applicable course. It is, however, preferable and in the solicitor's interest to undertake the course prior to admission as a principal.

I. CLASS SIZE

For optimum participation, it is recommended that class sizes be below 25 with an absolute maximum allowed of 30.

J. ATTENDANCE

Failure to attend all sessions may jeopardise participants receiving a Certificate of Attendance. If all sessions are attended, a Certificate of Attendance is to be given to each participant by the provider. Confirmation of attendance must be forwarded by the provider to the Law Society's Membership Department to enable the restriction on each participant's practising certificate to be varied. If all sessions are not attended, the provider must notify the Law Society's Membership Committee which will consider the non-attendance in making its recommendation to Council for the issue of a Certificate.

K. PRIOR APPROVAL OF A PRESCRIBED COURSE

Proposals to conduct the prescribed course must be in accordance with the above requirements and submitted for approval by the Law Society of New South Wales in advance of the course being conducted. Proposals are to be forwarded to:

*The Manager
Members' Services Division
Law Society of New South Wales
170 Phillip Street
SYDNEY
(DX 362 SYDNEY)*

Telephone enquiries (02) 220-0280

January 1993