



# Ongoing Competence Code – CLC Lawyers

## Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated: March 2025 – still in draft as under consultation.

**These FAQs are based on our proposed Code and are subject to change after the public consultation closes.**

### General questions:

**1. Why change from 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) to Ongoing Competence?**

We have renamed our 'Continuing Professional Development' regime to 'Ongoing Competence' to align with terminology now used by the sector, including the Legal Services Board.

**2. What are the key differences between the CPD Code and Framework to Ongoing Competence Code and Toolkit?**

We have:

- replaced the hourly-based requirement with an activity-based requirement (which is now standardised for all CLC Lawyers), of which a set number must be assessed.
- implemented mandatory 'Core Topics' and non-mandatory 'Suggested Topics' for CLC Lawyers; and now require both CLC Lawyers and Practices to categorise all recorded activity into those Topics, as well as assigning a standardised 'Impact statement' (based on LSB Ongoing Competence Outcomes) to link the activity to the outcome (i.e. how the activity has helped your practice).
- introduced a standardised annual reporting requirement for CLC Lawyers and Practices (who must report on the ongoing competence activity of their Key Compliance Personnel – HoLP, HoFA, MLRO, CLC Registered Manager).

**3. Who do the requirements in this Code apply to?**

Both CLC lawyers and Practices must comply with this code. There are separate specific requirements for CLC lawyers and CLC Practices, and the proposed Ongoing Competence Toolkit will provide more detail about certain elements of the regime.

**4. Why is the Ongoing Competence's year the same as the licensing cycle?**

Feedback gathered by consultation and engagement work when developing the Code strongly supported alignment with the existing licensing cycle for simplicity.

**5. Is there any minimum duration of an activity?**

No. All activities should be 'right-sized' for your needs, taking into account what you need to learn or revise about the topic and how long that might take you to achieve, for example. Ultimately, you are responsible for ensuring you maintain your competence at pace with any developments in the sector, including (but not limited to) those which are driven by legislative, technological, ethical, or regulatory changes.

**6. What constitutes an assessed activity?**

Assessed activities: activities where the CLC lawyer's sound understanding of the topic is informally or formally assessed, verified or evaluated. This could be through formal and informal post-training assessment (which produces a certificate/pass mark); recorded feedback or evaluation which is countersigned by a suitably qualified peer or colleague.

Assessed activity does not necessarily mean paid-for activity.

Assessed activities should cover a range of different topics and types of assessments over the three years; we do not expect the same assessment to be repeated each year, or identical topics to be assessed each year.

We have sought to keep flexibility in the type of assessment that must be completed, and believe the minimum requirements are proportionate to allow freedom and flexibility in the new Code.

**7. How formal are the assessments meant to be? Do they form part of the CLC's approach to revalidation?**

No. We are not proposing to introduce formal revalidation examinations, which we are not looking to introduce. By introducing assessed activities, we are seeking to ensure that you receive feedback about your competence in a topic after completing an activity, which in turn provides you also with some external validation of your competence.

**8. What constitutes a non-assessed activity?**

Non-assessed activities include the following:

- ✓ *Attending and/or planning and delivering in-house group, or one-to-one training or coaching sessions.*

- ✓ Attendance at group events, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, or webinars.
- ✓ Confirmation or certificate of attendance.

**9. What types of activity are not considered appropriate to be recorded as an ongoing competence activity?**

The following are not normally expected to be considered appropriate:

- ✗ Reading an article, or regulatory or company advice notices.
- ✗ Day-to-day activities such as: supervisee or supervisor processes, internal company briefings or external business meetings.

**10. Does the CLC accredit courses or course providers?**

No, we do not provide any form of accreditation for courses or course providers, and we are not planning to change this.

**11. Why do I need to select an Impact Statement for each completed activity?**

Impact statements have been introduced to ensure that our community understands and reflects on the reason behind (and benefits to) completing specific ongoing competence activities. They were created to broadly align with the themes from the LSB's '[Ongoing Competence: call for evidence themes and summary of evidence](#)' published February 2021.

**12. Why have the topics been divided into Core and Suggested topics? Can I do ongoing competence activity that falls outside of these topics?**

In order to provide more structure for, and consistency between, CLC Lawyers and Practices regarding the content of their ongoing competence activity, and enable us to become a more data-driven, risk-based regulator (which will, in turn, enable us to identify trends, strengths and needs, and to provide feedback to the sector), we have identified Core and Suggested Topics. We have suggested that:

**Core topics** are fixed for three years because we consider that these are fundamental areas necessary to maintain your day-to-day competence and to derisk your practice.

**Suggested topics** are published annually in the CLC's Risk Agenda and may change each year to reflect the biggest risks faced by consumers and the CLC's regulated community. The Risk Agenda is informed by intelligence gathered within all of our regulatory regimes as well as external information. The Risk Agenda is typically published in June each year, and therefore will be available in good time for you to incorporate into your planning.

As part of your minimum requirements, you are welcome to undertake and record ongoing competence activity which falls outside of these topics.

You might like to approach the introduction of topics by continuing to complete the ongoing competence activity that you think you need, and then refer back to

the Core Topics/Suggested Topics to check for any gaps, rather than use the Core Topics as the starting point.

**13. Will the CLC provide the Ongoing Competence Return (OCR) template in advance of the Code starting?**

Yes, whilst we envisage that you will be able to submit your information through an online facility, we will also provide a copy of the OCR template in advance so that you are aware of the information you must report on.

You should continue to save or record any evidence digitally, so it can be easily uploaded to the online platform.

**14. Will the CLC provide any support to help me to plan and record my ongoing Competence activity using the OCR?**

Yes, once we receive approval by the Legal Services Board, we will plan to host a range of webinars on 'How to Plan and Record your Ongoing Competence' using the OCR format, as well as other supportive events to help you to become familiar with the new requirements. We will publicise these events through our newsletter and on our website. If you have not already subscribed to our newsletter, please [visit our website](#) to do so.

**15. What sort of evidence must I submit?**

The type of evidence you must submit should support the type of activity, i.e. was it assessed or non-assessed activity and what topic it covered.

If it was assessed you should include detail of the topic covered and a copy of the certificate of assessment, written evaluation/feedback or other document showing your score or assessment mark, or if you attended a seminar it is likely to have been non-assessed, but you could for example provide evidence of having booked and paid for the seminar and the agenda for the seminar, or if you attended a formal talk, you could provide a copy of your booking or acceptance of the invitation to attend the talk and what topic the speaker covered.

Evidence will be varied, partly because employers and training providers are not likely to produce or provide certificates or evidence of completion containing identical levels of information. Broadly speaking, we would expect evidence of:

- ✓ assessed activity to demonstrate the topic covered and the method and/or outcome of the assessment.
- ✓ non-assessed activity to demonstrate the topic covered and confirm your attendance.

**16. If I complete more than the minimum number of activities, should I record the additional ones?**

Please record all the activity that you complete, even if it is more than the minimum requirement. Not only will you be better able to reflect on your

learning over the cycle, but also by recording this information you will enrich the holistic data we hold, helping us to highlight any trends and learning that we can subsequently feedback to the sector.

**17. What should I do for the current year, up to 31 October 2025?**

The current CPD Code and Framework remain in place up to 31 October 2025. Please continue to maintain a CPD record and retain your evidence of completed hours, as this may be requested as part of the CLC's annual sampling or future licensing applications.

**18. Will I be required to complete a CPD/ongoing competence declaration as part of the formalities of reviewing my annual licence?**

Yes. The requirement to complete an annual declaration will not change, albeit the term 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) will be replaced by 'Ongoing Competence' and you will be required to use the OCR to document your Ongoing Competence.

**19. Will I be able to view my previously submitted OCRs?**

That may be possible, however for the time being we suggest that you maintain a digital copy of your OCR and copies of your evidence each year for your own records.

**20. If I make a future licensing application that calls for evidence of my Ongoing Competence activity, will I need to provide this evidence separately in my application, or will you be able to internally verify my activity?**

Any new licensing application is likely to be a reinstatement of an expired licence or a new application to become a CLC HoLP, HoFA or MLRO. In which case the evidence being requested is likely to be additional activity to support the specific requirements of the application type, which is likely to be different to the activities recorded in your previous OCR submission. This means you would need to submit further evidence.

**21. What if I am unable to meet the minimum requirements by the time that I intended to renew my licence?**

We expect all CLC lawyers to meet the minimum requirements. You must notify us if you think that you will not be able to complete them in time.

**22. How will the CLC check that I have completed the minimum requirements?**

Firstly, the OCR online facility will help us to verify the minimum metrics have been met for each OCR submitted. Any non-compliant OCRs, such as any that do not meet the minimum number of activities, will be followed up by us. We are not anticipating high levels of non-compliance but will routinely sample check a percentage of submissions.

**23. What are the consequences of regularly not meeting the minimum requirements, or not submitting a completed OCR by 31 October?**

A range of support webinars will help you prepare, and a dedicated team will be available to assist with any technical queries.

With regards to completion of the minimum required number of activities, any non-compliance from the previous year must be addressed in the current year before you are able to renew your licence. This may delay the issue of your licence, and potentially remove you from the CLC Public Register until you have provided evidence of having met the minimum requirements for both years, and only then will your licence be re-issued to you.

**24. How would the CLC deal with non-compliance over more than one year?**

Failure to meet the minimum requirements may result in measures being taken against you. Any measure taken will be proportionate and, in deciding on any measures, consideration will be given to a range of factors, including whether there has been repeated failure to meet ongoing competence requirements or intentional misreporting. The decision of the CLC in these matters is final and not subject to appeal.

**Specific questions:**

**25. I work for an in-house legal department at a local authority. The 'Knowing your Client' core topic will be different from other CLC Lawyers. Would undertaking training relevant to the circumstances of my practice be acceptable?**

Yes. We expect Lawyers to cover all of the Core Topics within a three year period and they can be relevant to their current practice or to general practice – whichever the lawyer believes is more important for them at that time. It is important to maintain your competence as a CLC Lawyer irrespective of your current practice.

**26. I hold a dual licence (conveyancing and probate), am I required to complete more than the minimum activities?**

No. The requirements for single licence holders (conveyancing or probate) and dual licence holders (conveyancing and probate) are now identical. However, you should complete additional activities when you consider this is necessary to maintain or develop your professional knowledge, skills, or behaviours to advance your career or when you take on additional supervisory responsibilities.

**27. I am a HoLP, HoFA, MLRO can I count any specific or mandated general legal updates necessary to hold this role towards my annual licence requirements?**

Yes, role-specific activities and mandatory requirements can count towards your minimum activities. However, you may need to do additional activities to meet the requirements that apply to you.

**28. I am a licence holder, but my core job functions are teaching, learning and assessment, can I use any of my teaching preparation and activity towards the minimum requirements?**

Yes, but it should not be the totality of what you do and the activity must be certified as a true reflection of the activities you have performed by your employer (or, if you are self-employed, by the client for whom you were working). This is likely to be either a legal practice or teaching and training organisation. The certifying organisation should provide a written record of the activity, and the activity should be recorded on your Ongoing Competence Return (OCR).

**29. I work for a CQS accredited SRA firm and have done the two assessed 2025 modules, would this satisfy the 4 assessed activities?**

We recognise that CQS update training tends to cover multiple relevant topics in depth with the final assessment covering all topics. Due to the nature of the CQS scheme, we will allow relevant modules to be recorded separately and the final assessment evidence and specific module descriptors to be provided against each of those modules. It remains up to the individual to consider whether the training was relevant to their CLC licence and whether to record this as part of their Ongoing Competence activity.