

CITY CONSORTIUM APPOINTS BPP AS SQE EDUCATION PROVIDER

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Firm news

The City Consortium (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Herbert Smith Freehills, Hogan Lovells, Linklaters, Norton Rose Fulbright and Slaughter and May) is delighted to announce that it has appointed BPP [University], one of the UK's leading law schools, to partner with it to design an integrated suite of education and skills programmes for its future trainees.

This appointment follows the SRA's decision to introduce a common assessment from autumn 2021, the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). The SQE marks the most profound change in the education and training of entry level graduate talent in nearly 30 years.

In response to the opportunities presented by the revised regulatory regime, the City Consortium undertook a wide-ranging review of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of City lawyers both now and in the future. The review involved stakeholders at each firm, including trainees, associates and partners as well as learning and development, knowledge, technology and innovation specialists. It also sought to respond to the evolving needs of the firms' clients. The results of the consultation formed the basis of a rigorous tender process.

Over the next 18 months the City Consortium will be collaborating with BPP to design outstanding and innovative education and skills programmes supported by BPP's cutting-edge learning technologies. These bespoke programmes will prepare prospective trainees to pass the centralised SQE assessments and also develop the wider knowledge, skills and behaviours identified by the review.

BPP will deliver the new suite of programmes for the City Consortium’s prospective trainees from autumn 2021. It is currently intended, subject to any changes made by the SRA, that the City Consortium’s prospective trainees will first sit the SQE 1 assessment in, or around, November 2022 (a year after the proposed introduction of the SQE 1 assessment by the SRA). It is anticipated that the first intake of trainees that this would affect is those joining the City Consortium firms in spring 2023.

A spokesperson on behalf of the City Consortium said: “Investing in the development of our talent is key to enable our future lawyers to meet client needs in a rapidly changing business environment. We look forward to working in partnership with BPP as we embrace the opportunities presented by the revised regulatory regime to develop innovative training programmes”.

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