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# NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

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## ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS LAW QUALIFICATIONS INFORMATION BROCHURE

[Effective 1 January 2026]

### 1. Introduction

This Brochure is designed for people who have academic legal qualifications from countries or jurisdictions other than New Zealand (i.e. overseas law graduates), and for people who have been admitted to practise law overseas. People who have such academic legal qualifications, and/or are admitted, must apply to the New Zealand Council of Legal Education (“the Council”) for an assessment of their qualifications and experience, and successfully complete requirements imposed by the Council, before applying to be admitted in New Zealand. If you hold a New Zealand law degree and are admitted overseas, see section 5.

### 2. Documents Required with Application

#### Important Note

Your application should consist of loose-leaf documents. Please do not bind your application or enclose it in ring binders, plastic folders, envelopes or similar. Do not staple it. Do not send unnecessarily bulky or extraneous material (see the headings below in this section). An application which is not in the correct format may not be processed.

The Council expects most applications to be between 20-70 pages in total. In any event, they should never exceed 100 pages. Where documents are in a language other than English, it is understood that this guideline range may be exceeded due to translations being included, but if this applies to your application, please see the guidance below, ‘Translations from languages other than English’

#### Application Form

All applicants must complete the application form in Schedule 1 of this Brochure. You may also attach a covering letter if you wish.

#### Curriculum Vitae

A curriculum vitae must be included with the application. In this document you should summarise your educational background and qualifications, relevant work experience and in particular your legal experience (if any).

#### Tertiary Academic Records

You must include certified copies of all tertiary qualifications on which you are relying as part of your application (degree certificates and academic transcripts). Only tertiary qualifications and transcripts should be sent- do NOT send secondary (school/college) qualifications. The academic transcripts must show all courses undertaken and set out the marks and results obtained. An explanation of the grading system must be included.

Ideally, all the above tertiary material should be provided. However, where difficulty is experienced in obtaining documents you should use your discretion as to the importance of each document. Those relating to legal qualifications are usually the most significant. However, evidence of other tertiary qualifications may be necessary to support the application, and therefore it is desirable to provide as much evidence as possible. If in doubt, please contact the Council prior to sending your application

## **Law School Handbook**

Extracts only, from the relevant law school handbook, or relevant publication showing length and structure of the degree programme, the content and length of those courses (e.g. course description/summary or, if necessary, course outline) that may correspond to the New Zealand core subjects or Legal Ethics, should be enclosed with the application. The core subjects in New Zealand are Contract, Torts, Criminal Law, Public Law and Property Law (Land Law, and Equity and Succession).\*

(\*Note that from 1 January 2025, tikanga Māori: Māori Laws and Philosophy is also a compulsory New Zealand law subject, but it is unique to New Zealand so you will be unlikely to have a relevant corresponding subject. But please note that applicants for assessment of overseas qualifications in 2026 will not be required to undertake such a course in any event.)

Please do NOT send entire handbooks, or any extracts other than the course description for the courses that may correspond to the core subjects or Legal Ethics. In any event, handbook extracts or other related materials described above, should not exceed 20 pages in total.

The handbook extracts should relate to the period during which you were studying. For example, if you studied Contract Law in 2002, you should produce the relevant extracts pertaining to Contract Law as it was taught at your law school in 2002. This enables the Council to examine the content of courses at the time that you studied the courses.

If you do not have, or cannot obtain extracts of your law school handbook for the appropriate period, you should arrange for your law school to send photocopies of the title page and relevant pages (degree structure and course descriptions) of the current or relevant Handbook, accompanied by a letter from the Dean of the Law Faculty, or other suitably authorised person, stating the substantial similarity and differences between the current provisions and those that were in force during your studies.

## **Evidence of Professional Experience**

### **Work Experience**

Applicants who are relying on professional experience must provide supporting evidence of their work experience, particularly legal work, in the form of certified copies of original letters or references on original firm or organisation letterhead and signed by the supervising partner or manager. Where an applicant is self-employed or practising independently these documents should be from an independent professional colleague.

Do NOT send any other materials under this heading, such as transcripts of cases in which you were counsel or entire employment contracts.

### **Order of Admission**

If you have been admitted to practise law overseas, please include evidence of admission in the form of a certified copy of your original certificate of admission, showing the date of admission and place of admission.

### **Statement of Good Standing**

You are also required to provide a certified copy of a certificate of good standing from the relevant professional or registration body, or the body responsible for discipline in all jurisdictions where you have been admitted as a lawyer, confirming:

- Your date of admission.
- Whether you are of good character and repute.

- Whether there are pending, or have ever been, any proceedings against you for professional or other misconduct
- Whether or not you are entitled to practise and, if you are not entitled to practise, the reason for this.

The certificate must be received by the Council within three months from the date of its issue.

### **Practising Certificate**

You should also include a statement as to whether you held a practising licence in the past five years, or if you have been admitted for fewer than five years, since the time of your admission. Please include certified copies of your latest practising licence, if current. Do not include past annual practicing licences.

### **General Advice on Post Admission Experience**

Admitted applicants should be aware that the length and breadth of post-admission experience may be a relevant consideration in an application in respect of a number of areas, such as imposition of the requirement to undertake additional degree study, the imposition of Legal Ethics, and the imposition of practical legal training requirements. It is therefore desirable for an applicant with post-admission experience to provide detailed information of his or her post-admission experience, including the organisation or place at which the experience was gained, the years in which it was gained, and the nature of the experience.

However do NOT include entire employment contracts.

### **Certification of Documents**

The certification of documents must be by an independent suitably authorised person, i.e. a practising lawyer or JP. Please ensure that the certification shows the signature, name, title and other details of the certifying person, and the date of certification clearly and visible. **Note the additional certification wording under Evidence of Identity.**

### **English Language**

Applicants are required to demonstrate they can communicate effectively in both spoken and written English. Applicants must include evidence of English language proficiency (see “English Language under section 4 for more information).

### **Translations from Languages other than English**

Documents in a language other than English should be accompanied by a certified copy of a translation from a reliable and/or recognised translation agency and be independently verified as a true copy of the original document.

You should use your discretion when deciding how much material to have translated. Key material will include your qualifications and transcript, professional certificates (eg certificate of admission and standing), and for the university handbooks, see above and note translations should only relate to the degree length and structure, and the content of subjects which may be regarded as equivalent to the core law subjects and legal ethics course. If in doubt, please contact the Council prior to submitting your application.

### **Statutory Declaration/Affidavit**

A statutory declaration or affidavit verifying identity and certifying the accuracy and completeness of the above information must be enclosed with the application.

The operative portion of the document should take the following form:

*I, A.B. of [place of abode and occupation] [solemnly and sincerely declare] or [make oath and say as follows] that I am the person named in the documents submitted in support of my application for assessment of my qualifications for admission as a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, and that the information contained in my application is true and includes a complete statement of my academic qualifications and my professional legal experience.*

The remainder of the document should be completed in a form which is binding upon you in the country where you make the declaration/affidavit, or according to the law of New Zealand if it is made in New Zealand. In general, this will require that the document is witnessed by a lawyer or Justice of the Peace, or other person authorised to take affidavits or statutory oaths and declarations in the jurisdiction where it is made.

If the declaration/affidavit is being made in New Zealand, please refer to Schedule 1 of the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957.

### **Evidence of Identity**

- A certified copy of your birth certificate must be enclosed.
- A certified copy of the first two pages of your passport must be enclosed.
- **The certifier must also certify that the “*photo in the passport represents a true likeness of [insert name]*”.**
- The passport must be valid.

Where you have changed your name in the past, a certified copy of the change of name document (e.g. the marriage certificate or the change of name registration or declaration) must also be provided.

Please note that your signature on the application form will be checked against the signature on your passport. If the signature page of your passport is not in the first two pages, please provide the signature page as well.

Please also provide a passport-sized photo that is not older than six months at the time of application.

The certifier must write the following when certifying the documentation:

**“Certification of Photo Identification:** *I certify that I have seen the original document and that the photograph is a true likeness, and this copy is a complete and accurate copy of the original.*” Name, Signed, Dated.

**“Certification of Non-Photo Documentation:** *I certify that I have seen the original document and this copy is a complete and accurate copy of the original.*” Name, Signed, Dated.

Please note that if you do not comply with these requirements, this may delay the processing of your application.

### **Verification of Qualifications and Experience**

The Council will, either itself or through its verification agent, be verifying your academic qualifications, professional registration and experience, and identity with issuing institutions, organisations, and individuals. This may include verification of references. In the case of your academic qualification and professional registration, verification must be received from an official university source and professional registration body respectively.

If the Council does not receive a response to its inquiries from official sources, or the Committee is otherwise not satisfied with part or all of the verification, the Council may, depending on the individual circumstances, either decline the application, or impose further study or training, additional to that which would have been imposed if verification had been received. You may apply to the Council for a reconsideration if you can provide satisfactory verification details.

You should also be aware that if the relevant body which issued your qualifications delays in responding to the Council’s verification request, this will cause delay in the processing of the assessment.

## Policy on Fraudulent Documents

You must only provide genuine documents (i.e. originals or certified copies as required) in support of your application.

If the Council is not satisfied that a document that you have provided is genuine, the Council may ask you for further information to assist in verifying the document.

If the Council remains unable to be satisfied that the document is genuine, the Council may:

- Decline your application (and retain your application fee);
- Retain the document for as long as it considers necessary;
- Return the document to the purported issuing person or institution; and/or
- Report the matter to the relevant authorities, including the New Zealand Police and/or the New Zealand Law Society, at any time.

You will be notified of the Council's concerns and/or proposed courses of action in writing and will be given an opportunity to comment before any final decision is made as to the veracity of the document.

## Fees and Costs

### Non-Admitted Applicants

Please refer to Schedule 5, Table of Prescribed Fees.

### Admitted Applicants

Please refer to Schedule 5, Table of Prescribed Fees.

In addition, admitted practitioners are required to pay a second fee of \$126.08 (excluding GST for applicants residing overseas) or \$145 (including GST for applicants residing in New Zealand) to the New Zealand Law Society for their consultative services.

If the application is lodged in New Zealand, the GST component will have to be added.

### New Zealand Council of Legal Education Payment Details

The Council's assessment fee should be paid by direct credit. The Council's account details are:

Bank account details:	International payment details:
New Zealand Council of Legal Education	New Zealand Council of Legal Education
Bank of New Zealand	Bank of New Zealand
Account No: 02 0506 0056941 00	New Zealand
	Account No: 02 0506 0056941 00
	SWIFT BIC code: BKNZNZ22
	IBAN: NZ020506

Applicants should use their name and "AOLQ" as the reference. You should also include evidence of the payment, such as a screenshot of the transaction, with your application.

If you are making payment from an overseas bank account, please advise the bank at the time of the transaction that all charges incurred in the payment transaction should be paid for by you and the correct amount required should be deposited into our account. If an incorrect fee is deposited, we may need to charge an administration fee to follow it up.

## New Zealand Law Society Payment Details

If you are an admitted practitioner, the New Zealand Law Society fee can be paid by direct credit or credit card. You will need to contact the New Zealand Law Society Registry ([registry@lawsociety.org.nz](mailto:registry@lawsociety.org.nz)) to obtain their bank details. You should also include evidence of the payment to the New Zealand Law Society, such as a screenshot of the transaction, with your application.

## Important Matters Relating to Fees and Costs

Your application fee covers the cost of initial verification. The fee for review will cover some of the further investigative work that is done to verify your overseas qualifications. However, these fees do not cover the fees that an overseas university may charge for providing verification. You will be required to pay any specific costs incurred by either the Council, or its agent, in the process of verifying your qualifications and experience. Please note that the application fees and review/reconsideration fees are non-refundable.

## 3. Process for Dealing with Applications

### Process

After an application is received, it is checked for completeness by Council staff. An e-mail acknowledging receipt of the application together with a receipt for payment is sent to the applicant once the payment is confirmed. Applicants will be advised if the Council requires any further material.

The application is then referred to the Council's Credits Consultant and Credits Committee for a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's qualifications and experience. Further information may be sought from applicants at this stage.

In the case of an application from an overseas law graduate, the applicant is advised of the result of the application in a letter of assessment, after the necessary requirements have been determined by the Council. Where an applicant has been admitted overseas, the same process is followed, except that the Council's preliminary assessment is provided to the New Zealand Law Society for its comments, which the Council will consider prior to making the final determination. The Council will then notify an admitted applicant of its determination in the usual way.

### Reconsideration

If following receipt of your letter of assessment, you realise that there may be further relevant information which has arisen from circumstances (e.g. qualifications and experience) since the date of your application, or where information was not provided with your original application you may apply to the Council to have the assessment reconsidered. A fee of \$362.00 (plus GST if applicable) must accompany the reconsideration application. All reconsideration applications must be addressed to the Chief Executive, attention Credits Consultant, at the address noted in section 10.

### Review

An applicant may apply for a review of the decision of the Credits Committee. A review is conducted by the Chairperson of the Council.

It is anticipated that an applicant will have exhausted any reconsideration application (if applicable) before applying for a review.

The review application must be in writing and identify the grounds for the review. It must include all information and documents which you wish the Chair to consider, in addition to any information or documents already provided. A fee of \$362.00 (plus GST if applicable) must accompany the review application. There is no right to appear.

The Chairperson may affirm the determination, vary the determination, or set aside the determination and make a new determination. The decision of the Chairperson is final. All review applications must be addressed to the Chief Executive, attention Senior Legal Officer, at the address noted in section 10.

#### **4. Assessment Process Introduction**

The following summary is designed to give a general indication of the process used when assessing applications. Applicants should note that each application is decided on its merits after a thorough examination of the applicant's documents. The summary is applicable as appropriate to applications from both law graduates and admitted practitioners.

The overseas qualifications provisions in the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008 anticipate that there will be an adequate assessment of an applicant's "academic" fitness to practise law in New Zealand. The assessment compares an applicant's knowledge and skills to those required of a New Zealand graduate seeking admission. The requirements should generally be no less demanding than they are for New Zealand trained lawyers. In the final analysis, the Council must be satisfied that the applicant has knowledge of the law, and the practice of law in this country, to a sufficient degree to be able to appropriately advise a member of the public. It follows that the Council's assessment process involves a detailed analysis of an applicant's tertiary academic qualifications, and of the nature and extent of an applicant's professional training and experience, as measured against the regulatory requirement for academic and professional training equivalence. The age of the overseas academic qualifications and professional training will be taken into consideration in assessing the degree equivalence, subject equivalence (including Legal Ethics) and professional training equivalence. Continuing post-admission experience will be relevant in determining whether additional university study and/or professional legal studies course should be imposed due to the age of the overseas academic qualifications and/or professional training. The Council also considers an applicant's proficiency in the English language.

#### **Degree Equivalence**

An applicant is *prima facie* required to have completed the equivalent of the New Zealand four-year Bachelor of Laws degree (LLB). At least three years full-time study of law subjects should have been undertaken by the applicant, and non-law courses comparable to those undertaken by a New Zealand law graduate should also have been included in the degree. The age of the qualifying degree will be taken into consideration in the assessment. A special policy applies to external qualifications. The policy is listed under the next heading.

As mentioned above, the applicant's academic transcript must show all courses undertaken, and must set out the marks and results obtained for each law subject that the applicant wishes to have assessed. In assessing degree equivalence, credit will not necessarily be given for subjects passed with less than a mark of 50% unless the Council is satisfied that the mark is equivalent to a pass grade at a New Zealand University.

Where because of the above, or because an applicant's degree is not, in terms of length or breadth, broadly the equivalent of the New Zealand law degree the applicant may be required to sit New Zealand University degree courses to broaden their degree.

This may involve completion of law elective degree subjects which are to be undertaken at one of the six New Zealand University Law Schools. (The Council may from time to time approve courses from other Universities.) See Schedule 2 for information on the Law Schools in New Zealand. Occasionally non-law degree courses may be required. These may be undertaken at any New Zealand universities.

Applicants with post-admission experience should note that this is a relevant consideration in determining the need for electives, and if the post-admission experience is sufficiently lengthy and broad, it may obviate or lessen the need for the applicant to study additional electives.

## Policy on External Qualifications

1. If your LLB qualification was obtained substantially or wholly externally you may apply for assessment of your qualification. However, you will need to provide information, with appropriate supporting documentation, to the Council showing:
  - (i) the exact structure of the degree, including the amount of study that was undertaken externally;
  - (ii) whether the external degree was studied in the awarding jurisdiction;
  - (iii) the arrangements for the examinations and examination venues;
  - (iv) whether the degree qualifies you to go on to be admitted as a law practitioner in either your home or the awarding jurisdiction; and
  - (v) why the qualification should be regarded as substantially equivalent to 3 years fulltime law study in New Zealand.
2. In considering the nature of an external degree the Council may take into account, *inter alia* –
  - (i) The information provided by the applicant in paragraph 1 above;
  - (ii) The grades which have been awarded to the applicant in core and elective law subjects;
  - (iii) The length of time which was taken to complete the degree;
  - (iv) If the degree was awarded with honours, the class of honours;
  - (v) Any additional legal study which the applicant has undertaken;
  - (vi) The post-admission experience of the applicant.
3. You should note that where insufficient information is supplied, or the Council is not satisfied on the basis of the available information, it may conclude that the degree is not equivalent in substance to a New Zealand degree, or if the external degree is a 3 year degree, not equivalent in substance to 3 years fulltime law study in New Zealand. In this case you may be required to apply to enrol in and complete a New Zealand LLB if you wish to qualify in law in New Zealand.
4. For the purposes of this Policy “external” refers to a qualification offered as an external degree, or through distance education, or undertaken partly on-line. “Externally” has a corresponding meaning.

## Subject Equivalence

An applicant should have included in his or her degree, and passed, courses that broadly cover the content of the compulsory New Zealand Council of Legal Education LLB subjects (“core subjects”). Currently these subjects are Legal System, Contract, Torts, Public Law, Criminal Law, and Property Law. (Property Law includes Land Law, Equity and Succession. It is taught as a full Property Law course at some Universities, and as separate subjects of Land Law and Equity and Succession at other Universities.) The age of the subjects will be taken into consideration in the assessment.

If an applicant has completed a course that is found to adequately correspond with any of the above subjects, the applicant may receive a credit in that subject, or part of that subject. Otherwise the applicant will usually be required to undertake that subject, or part of that subject, at a New Zealand Law School University. See Schedule 2 for information on the Law Schools in New Zealand.

The corollary of receiving a credit in that core subject (i.e. of not having to sit the subject at a New Zealand University) is that the applicant will generally have to sit the corresponding part of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination. See section 6 for information on the NZLP Examination.

From 1 January 2025, a separate course, tikanga Māori; Māori Laws and Philosophy, is a core subject in the New Zealand law degree. The Council has resolved that for those applying after 1 January 2027 for assessment of their overseas qualifications, (see ‘Law Handbook’ section above) such applicants will ordinarily be required to study and pass this New Zealand University degree subject, as there is unlikely to be an overseas equivalent degree course.



## Legal Ethics

An applicant should have completed a course in legal ethics and professional responsibility. The age of the subjects will be taken into consideration in the assessment. Any applicant who has not completed such a course may be required to do so. It should be noted that the New Zealand Legal Ethics course is a discrete, tertiary level course and applicants will generally be required to have completed an equivalent tertiary level course, or to have sufficient relevant post-admission experience to obviate the requirement for Legal Ethics. If required, the course must be undertaken at a New Zealand Law School University. However, occasionally the Council may approve a substitute degree level course to be undertaken at an overseas University or other appropriate institutes. Please note you must seek the NZCLE's prior approval if you wish to undertake a substitute course.

See Schedule 2 for information on the Law Schools in New Zealand.

## Professional Training and Experience

An assessment is made by the Council of the scope of any courses or practical training that an applicant may have completed, and of the applicant's post-admission experience. The basic principle is that an applicant must either demonstrate that he or she has undertaken a substantially similar skills based training course to that provided in New Zealand, or that he or she has sufficient relevant post-admission experience to compensate for being unable to fulfil that requirement. See section 7 for information on the Professional Legal Studies Course.

Pre-admission experience is sometimes advanced by non-admitted applicants as a basis for an exemption, but pre-admission experience by a New Zealand law graduate does not qualify New Zealand graduates for an exemption from the Professional Legal Studies Course. Therefore, the Council has typically applied the same rule to overseas applicants.

## English Language

The English language requirement is designed to ensure that persons from countries where English is not the primary language can demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the English language to cope with communication in New Zealand. Applicants must satisfy the Council that they can communicate effectively in both spoken and written English. Evidence in support of the language proficiency may be provided by:

- (a) completion within the last 2 years of the International English Language Testing System ("IELTS") Academic Module test obtaining minimum scores of 7.5 for each of writing, speaking, reading and listening. *(The Council accepts IELTS One Skill Re-Take for individual parts of the Test, but the minimum score of 7.5 must be achieved in the One Skill Re-Take attempt(s).); or*
- (b) completion of a law degree that was taught in English while residing in an English-speaking country;  
or
- (c) otherwise satisfying the Council that the applicant's proficiency in the English language is comparable to the proficiency demonstrated by completing the IELTS within the minimum scores set out in paragraph (a) above.

An applicant must meet the cost of undertaking the IELTS test, if applicable, or of otherwise satisfying the Council that the applicant has the requisite proficiency in the English language.

## 5. New Zealand Degree Holders Admitted Overseas

An applicant who holds a New Zealand LLB or LLB (Honours) but has been admitted overseas is not required to apply under the full overseas admission system. Such an applicant should apply to the Council to have his or her situation assessed. This will involve an analysis of the practical legal training courses undertaken

by the applicant, and consideration of the applicant's post-admission experience. The purpose is to see whether the degree and core subjects are stale, and whether the practical legal training requirements have already been satisfied. The Council will also check whether the applicant has completed a satisfactory Legal Ethics course or has sufficient relevant post-admission experience to obviate the need for this requirement.

There is no application form. However, you should provide a covering letter, a certified copy of your order of admission showing where and when you were admitted, a certified copy of a certificate of good standing, certified copies of practising certificates where applicable, certified copies of work references, and other documentary evidence of any post-admission experience. Your certificate of standing must be current to three months. You will also be required to provide certified copies of your New Zealand degree certificate, and academic transcript, in order to ensure that the necessary academic requirements have been met. You will also have to provide a certified copy of a valid passport, a statutory declaration or affidavit verifying identity, and provide a statement authorising the Council or its agent to verify your qualifications. (See section 2 Tertiary Academic Records, Evidence of Professional Experience, and Statutory Declaration/Affidavit for guidance.) After the Council has considered your application, a letter of assessment will be sent to you by the Council. Please refer to Schedule 5, Table of Prescribed Fees.

If, following receipt of your letter of assessment, you realise that there may be further relevant information, you may apply to the Council to have the assessment reconsidered. Please refer to Schedule 5, Table of Prescribed Fees.

## **6. New Zealand Law and Practice Examination**

Where an applicant receives a credit in one of the compulsory New Zealand Council of Legal Education LLB core subjects for their corresponding course studied overseas, the applicant will normally be required to sit the corresponding Part of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination (NZLP Examination) run by the Council. This section 6 does not apply to tikanga Māori: Māori Laws and Philosophy (see Subject Equivalence above).

This Examination is a six Part self-taught course following a comprehensive prescription. It is generally held twice a year. It covers the areas of Legal System/Public Law (Part I), Contract Law (Part II), Criminal Law (Part III), Property Law (Part IV), Torts (Part V), and Equity and Succession (Part VI). Each Examination is of 90 minutes duration and is an invigilated in-person handwritten exam. The Examination is administered and conducted from the Council's offices in Wellington. The Examination may be sat in one of the Law Schools in New Zealand, or at one approved venue in the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the Examination is to test the applicant's knowledge of the New Zealand law in the above areas and in particular the distinct features of New Zealand law. It should be noted that New Zealand law has diverged from the common law in a number of significant respects, for example the Treaty of Waitangi, the Contract Law regime, and the Accident Compensation regime. The NZLP Examination is designed to test an applicant's knowledge of these types of areas. In other words, the NZLP Examination is intended to provide a bridge between the legal knowledge of persons educated in another country, and the relevant law in New Zealand.

The nature of the NZLP Examination and its relationship to credits in the core law subjects needs to be clearly understood by applicants. Some applicants (generally from similar jurisdictions overseas) credited with a pass in a degree course in a core subject have felt they have been "exempted" from subject requirements, including the NZLP Examination. However, such a person has only been "exempted" from the requirement to pass a degree course in that subject, because that person has covered the core common law principles in their overseas degree. The person must, in lieu, demonstrate their awareness of how New Zealand law and practice in that area has tended to differ from the law in the similar jurisdiction overseas. In other words, while some applicants may have been exempted from the requirement to pass a degree course in Tort law because of their overseas degree, they must be able to show by passing Part V of the NZLP Examination that they are aware of relevant aspects of Tort law which are largely unique to New Zealand, in order that they can appropriately advise members of the public who may consult them.

It follows, that persons from non-common law jurisdictions will generally not be credited with the core law subjects and will need to study these subjects at a New Zealand University. Such applicants would not therefore be required to undertake the NZLP Examination.

The decision as to which Parts of the NZLP Examination must be passed depends on the compulsory degree subject credits. Thus, the decision to give a credit for the Criminal Law course (or courses) passed by the applicant overseas will normally lead to the requirement that the applicant passes Criminal Law (Part III) of NZLP Examination. From time to time, especially in Property Law, only a partial pass in the Property Law degree requirements will be specified (e.g., Equity and Succession) because an applicant may have covered all other aspects adequately. In such cases the requirement to pass Part VI of the NZLP Examination will stand, as there are other aspects of New Zealand Property Law which the applicant must become acquainted with, and will not do so through the partial degree course requirement. (The full Property Law course corresponds with Parts IV and VI of the NZLP Examination.)

Exemptions from Parts of the NZLP Examination are rare. However, exemptions are sometimes granted where an applicant has been teaching or tutoring for a period of time in one of the core law subjects at a New Zealand University, or where an applicant has attained extensive work experience in a core law area in New Zealand.

An applicant will not be eligible to enrol in the NZLP Examination until a formal application for an assessment of the applicant's legal qualifications has been received by the Council. Applicants are also advised to wait until they receive a formal letter of assessment in response to their application before sitting a Part or Parts of the NZLP Examination in case that requirement is rendered unnecessary by the imposition of degree requirements. An applicant who proceeds to sit the NZLP Examination before the official assessment result is notified does so at the applicant's risk, and the successful results in a Part or Parts of the Examination will not alter any subsequent requirement to complete New Zealand University degree subjects.

Details regarding the NZLP Examination, including a course prescription, may be obtained from the Council. A table of fees for the Examination is found in Schedule 5 to this Brochure.

## **7. Professional Legal Studies Course**

There are currently two providers of the Professional Legal Studies Course, the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, and the College of Law. Both providers provide full time onsite courses and part face-to-face, part distance delivered courses.

You may choose which course you wish to undertake, and the provider with whom you wish to train.

An overseas applicant will not be eligible to enrol in any of the Institute's courses, or the College's courses, until he or she has

- completed the degree study requirements (if any) imposed by the Council;
- completed the Parts of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination (if any) imposed by the Council;
- obtained a letter from the Council allowing for the enrollment.

The PLSC must be undertaken in New Zealand unless the Council approves otherwise in individual cases under special circumstances. A similar course provided overseas, or in New Zealand, by any of the New Zealand PLSC providers will not be automatically accepted by the Council, and a trainee of such a course will be subject to the normal assessment process if the trainee wishes to be admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.

An applicant may undertake the Legal Ethics course (if required) either before, concurrently with, or after completion of the Professional Legal Studies Course.

Contact details for the two providers of the course are contained in Schedule 3 to this Brochure.

## **8. Stale Qualification**

### **A) Council Imposed Requirements**

The Council has imposed restrictions on the currency of qualifications and completion certificates. In any case where a “qualification for admission” is more than 10 years old at the time that a candidate for admission applies to the Council for a completion certificate, staleness provisions will apply, and the candidate for admission will be required to make a stale qualification application. The Council will assess the qualification, and may, in its discretion, impose further study, examinations or training on the candidate. Please refer to Schedule 5, Table of Prescribed Fees.

In the case of overseas graduates and lawyers a “qualification for admission” means any determination issued to a person in relation to an application for assessment, or any degree subject, Part or Parts of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination, Legal Ethics course, practical legal training course, or English requirement prescribed by the Council pursuant to that determination.

The effect of this requirement is that qualifications may have become stale prior to application for a completion certificate, and in such cases, the Council has a discretion to impose further study such as degree courses, or to require passing of the relevant Part or Parts of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination, or a Legal Ethics course, or the Professional Legal Studies Course to refresh the stale qualification.

Note that for applications for a completion certificate made after 1 January 2027, the Council will require applicants whose qualifications for admission are stale as set out above, to take and pass the separate course, tikanga Māori: Māori Laws and Philosophy, which since 1 January 2025 has been compulsory in the New Zealand law degree (see Law Handbook section above).

### **B) Overseas Qualifications**

The Council will consider the age of the overseas qualification (degree and subsequent study), including professional experience. The Council may, in its discretion, impose further study, examinations or training on the candidate.

## **9. Completion Certificates**

After an applicant has successfully completed all the requirements prescribed by the Council, an applicant may apply to the Chief Executive of the Council for a completion certificate. If you require further information about completion certificates, please contact the Council. An application form for the certificate is on the Council’s website at [www.nzcle.org.nz](http://www.nzcle.org.nz). Please ensure that you use the application form for overseas law graduates and practitioners.

You should note that original evidence is required of completion of all requirements prescribed by the Council in your letter of assessment, and the Council will verify these requirements with the issuing institutions. You will also be required to provide evidence of your overseas law qualification, and this will be verified with the issuing institution if the Council does not already have the verification on record.

Please note that the Council endeavours to issue completion certificates within 40 working days of receipt of an application. However, where applicable, overseas applicants should note that there may be further delay depending on the response of the institution which issued the original overseas law qualification.

If any of your qualifications, including your overseas law qualification, cannot be verified your application for a completion certificate may be rejected.

## **10. GENERAL**

### **Contact Details**

Please send your completed application to the Chief Executive, New Zealand Council of Legal Education, PO Box 5671, Wellington 6140, Attention Overseas Administration Team.

### **Processing Time for Applications**

Applications are processed as expeditiously as possible, but an application will typically take sixteen weeks to consider and complete, and occasionally a longer time may be required depending on the nature of the application and the number of cases under consideration. Delays will be inevitable if poor quality or insufficient information has been provided by the applicant, or if the relevant body which issued the applicant's qualifications delays in responding to the Council's, or its agent's, verification request. Admitted practitioners are reminded that consultation takes place with the NZLS and time must be allowed for this process.

### **Return of Documents**

Any documents provided as part of an application will **not** be returned to applicants or retained by the Council after the assessment has been completed. As set out in the information brochure, you should only provide certified copies of your documents.

The Council may retain any document that it considers to be fraudulent notwithstanding any request you may make for its return.

### **Further Information**

For further general information see Schedule 4 to this Brochure and the Council's website at [www.nzcle.org.nz](http://www.nzcle.org.nz).

### **Chief Executive**

[Effective 1 January 2026]

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No part of this Brochure or the Schedules may be reproduced in any form without the prior written authorisation of the Chief Executive of the Council of Legal Education.

Please **include** this document with your application

## SCHEDULE 1

### Application for Assessment of Overseas Qualifications [Effective 12 August 2024]

**Please note:**

- Ensure you provide us with the completed application form, correctly certified documents and note the requirements for providing us with your transcript. **Follow the certification guidelines per Schedule 6.**
- Do not send us originals.
- No application will be processed unless we receive a complete application via post, and full payment has cleared.
- Application must be a 'loose-leaf document'. Do not staple or bind documents.
- Applications can take up to sixteen weeks to be processed. If we don't receive correct payment or the correct documents, this may cause further delays.
- Read the brochure carefully.

#### Section A: Details

Title

\_\_\_\_\_

Last name

\_\_\_\_\_

First name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nationality

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number

\_\_\_\_\_

Email

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (Day/Month/Year)

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Gender

Female

☐

Male

☐

Other

☐

\* If you have used other names, please enclose a certified copy of your name change document per paragraph 7 of Schedule 1. Please also note that the New Zealand Council of Legal Education (the Council) may also request to see the originals of any of these documents, and any other supporting documentation to establish identity.

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Please **include** this document with your application

## Section B: Application Checklist

- ☐ Cover Letter
- ☐ Application Form
- ☐ Evidence of payment (include proof of direct payment of NZLS fee if a Law Practitioner)
- ☐ Statutory Declaration of Affidavit
- ☐ Certified copy of Marriage Certificate, Name Change or Statutory Declaration (if name is different from documents)
- ☐ Certified copy of first two pages of Passport
- ☐ Certified copy of Birth Certificate
- ☐ Certified copy of a recent passport-sized photo (within 6 months)
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae
- ☐ Certified copies of Tertiary Academic Records (Degree Certificates and Transcripts)
- ☐ Certified Copies of Evidence of Professional Experience: Admission Certificate, Good Standing Certificate, Practising Certificate, Reference Letters
- ☐ Certified copy of IELTS Results and/or other evidence of English language proficiency
- ☐ Extracts **ONLY** of Law School Handbook: Degree Structure and Course Length/Content for courses that may correspond to the NZ core subjects (Contract, Torts, Criminal Law, Public Law and Property Law (Land Law, and Equity and Succession)) or Legal Ethics
- ☐ If your LLB was completed through distance learning, please provide a statement and additional information of your LLB.

**Please refer to page 21 to ensure that your documents are certified according to our requirements. If the documents are not certified appropriately, there will be delays in processing your application.**

Please note: The Council, or its agent, will contact issuing institutions to seek verification of qualifications and references and of your passport and identity, and may seek verification of other documentation. Your application may be declined if the verification cannot be achieved, or if the Council considers that any of the documentation is forged or fraudulent on the basis of information provided by you and/or the issuing institution. If your application is declined in these circumstances, the assessment fee will not be refunded. The verification may also delay the process of the assessment if the issuing body delays in responding to the Council's, or its agent's, verification request.

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Please **include** this document with your application

### Section C: Authorization and Signature

I \_\_\_\_\_ understand that the New Zealand Council of Legal Education, or its agent (including Edwards Sluiters Employment Lawyers) will seek verification of my overseas qualifications, identity and related matters, and this may extend to references, and I authorised any such verification checks to be made. I also authorise those issuing institutions to release to the Council, or its agent, such information as is required to undertake those verification checks for the purpose of verifying those documents and my identity and satisfying the Council that the information I have provided in respect of this application is true and correct in all respects. I understand that where any of the verification checks disclose that I have provided a forged or fraudulent document, or made any assertion about my qualifications, identity, or related matters, my application may be declined and my assessment fee forfeited, and the Council may take any further steps it considers appropriate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section D: Payment Fees

Please tick which assessment you are applying for.

*Please refer to the enclosed brochure to determine if you are a "Law Practitioner" or "Law Graduate."*

☐ **Law  
Practitioner**

If paying inside New Zealand (GST inclusive):

Payment of \$2,435.70 to the Council **and**  
Payment of \$145.00 to the New Zealand Law Society (NZLS)

If paying outside New Zealand (GST exclusive)

Payment of NZD\$2,118.00 to the Council **and**  
Payment of NZD\$126.08 to the New Zealand Law Society

OR

☐

If paying inside New Zealand (GST inclusive):

Payment of \$2,018.25 to the Council

If paying outside New Zealand (GST exclusive):

Payment of NZD\$1,755.00 to the Council

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**Bank account details:**

New Zealand Council of Legal Education  
Bank of New Zealand  
Account No: 02 0506 0056941 00

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**International payment details:**

New Zealand Council of Legal Education  
Bank of New Zealand  
New Zealand  
Account No: 02 0506 0056941 00  
SWIFT BIC code: BKNZNZ22  
IBAN: NZ020506

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**Reference to use:** Your name and "AOLQ"

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**End of application.**



Please **do not** return this document with your application

**Section E: Address to Which Application is to be Sent.**

Send your completed application and proof of payment to:

The Chief Executive  
New Zealand Council of Legal Education  
Attention: Overseas Administration Team  
PO Box 5671  
**WELLINGTON 6140**

Please **do not** return this document with your application

## SCHEDULE 2

### The Law Schools in New Zealand

There are currently six Universities in New Zealand which offer Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Laws (Honours) degrees approved by the Council of Legal Education. They are the University of Auckland, the University of Waikato, the Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Canterbury, the University of Otago and the AUT University.

The Auckland, Wellington, Waikato and AUT Universities are situated in the North Island of New Zealand. The Canterbury and Otago Universities are situated in the South Island.

Applicants who are required to undertake core law subjects, optional subjects, or Legal Ethics must do so at one of the above Universities. Non-law subjects may also be undertaken at these Universities, or at any other New Zealand University. It is not possible to undertake study of any core law subject, optional law subject, or Legal Ethics, by distance at any of the above Universities.

Applicants should also note that some of the core subjects have limited enrolment numbers and the Universities are not necessarily always able to give special consideration to the requirements of overseas graduates and practitioners.

#### Contact Details

University of Auckland  
Faculty of Law  
Private Bag 92019  
AUCKLAND 1142

**Fax: 09 373 7473**

**Email: [lawreception@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:lawreception@auckland.ac.nz)**

**Website: [www.law.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.law.auckland.ac.nz)**

**[www.waikato.ac.nz/law](http://www.waikato.ac.nz/law)**

University of Waikato  
Faculty of Law  
Private Bag 3105  
HAMILTON 3240

**Fax: 07 838 4417**

**Email: [lawrecp@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lawrecp@waikato.ac.nz)**

**Website:**

Victoria University of Wellington  
Faculty of Law  
PO Box 600  
WELLINGTON 6140

**Fax: 04 463 6365**

**Email: [law-enquiries@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:law-enquiries@vuw.ac.nz)**

**[enquiries@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:enquiries@canterbury.ac.nz) Website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/law](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/law) Website:**

**[www.laws.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.laws.canterbury.ac.nz)**

University of Canterbury  
Faculty of Law  
Private Bag 4800  
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

**Fax: 03 364 2757**

**Email: [law-](mailto:law-)**

**[enquiries@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:enquiries@canterbury.ac.nz) Website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/law](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/law) Website:**

University of Otago  
Faculty of Law  
PO Box 56  
DUNEDIN 9054

**Fax: 03 479 8855**

**Email: [law@otago.ac.nz](mailto:law@otago.ac.nz)**

**Website: [www.otago.ac.nz/law](http://www.otago.ac.nz/law)**

AUT University  
Faculty of Law  
Private Bag 92006  
AUCKLAND 1142

**Fax: 09 921 9976**

**Email: [law@aut.ac.nz](mailto:law@aut.ac.nz)**

**Website: [www.aut.ac.nz](http://www.aut.ac.nz)**

Please **do not** return this document with your application

## SCHEDULE 3

### Providers of the Professional Legal Studies Course

The two Professional Legal Studies Course providers:

- ☐ **The College of Law** - The College has a website address [www.collaw.ac.nz](http://www.collaw.ac.nz) and can be contacted on [enquiries@collaw.ac.nz](mailto:enquiries@collaw.ac.nz)
- ☐ **The Institute of Professional Legal Studies** - a website address [www.ipls.org.nz](http://www.ipls.org.nz) and can be contacted on [info@ipls.org.nz](mailto:info@ipls.org.nz)

Please **do not** return this document with your application

## SCHEDULE 4

### General Information

#### Employment Opportunities

The Council is frequently asked about the employment opportunities available to overseas law graduates and practitioners.

It is not within the Council's role to advise specifically on these matters, but it is suggested that applicants who wish to find out more about the area should contact a New Zealand recruitment agency specialising in legal placements. Applicants may also wish to contact the human resource departments of law firms, or other organisations. Job opportunities are also advertised in the Law Society's *Lawtalk* magazine, and applicants may place advertisements in that publication. Details relating to that publication are found on the Law Society's website [www.lawsociety.org.nz](http://www.lawsociety.org.nz).

#### Immigration

The Council is frequently asked about immigration matters. Again, it is not within the Council's role to advise on these matters. Applicants who wish to obtain information on such matters, including residency and permits, should contact the Immigration New Zealand, whose contact details can be found on its website [www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)

Applicants may also wish to contact the New Zealand Embassy or High Commission in their home country.

#### New Zealand Qualifications Authority Assessments

Assessments of qualifications are made by NZQA for immigration purposes, not admission purposes. Applicants who wish to be admitted to the profession in New Zealand are required to have their qualifications assessed by the Council of Legal Education.

#### Legal Executives

Legal Executives who have qualified in that role in the United Kingdom are eligible to have their legal executive qualification assessed for the purposes of admission in New Zealand.

For information on working as a legal executive in New Zealand applicants should contact the New Zealand Institute of Legal Executives, whose contact details can be found on its website [www.nzile.org.nz](http://www.nzile.org.nz).

#### Further Information

For general information on the profession in New Zealand, please see the New Zealand Law Society website [www.lawsociety.org.nz](http://www.lawsociety.org.nz).

#### Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Admission (TTMRA)

For information on TTMRA visit our website [https://nzcle.org.nz/Docs/Trans-Tasman\\_Mutual\\_Recognition.pdf](https://nzcle.org.nz/Docs/Trans-Tasman_Mutual_Recognition.pdf)

Please **do not** return this document with your application

## SCHEDULE 5

### Table of Prescribed Fees

Application	Fees effective 1 January 2026	
	Fees for applications lodged outside NZ (No GST required)	Fees for applications lodged within NZ (including GST)
Application for Assessment of Law Qualifications (Overseas Law Graduates)	\$1,755.00	\$2,018.25
Application for Assessment of Law Qualifications (Overseas Law Practitioners)	\$2,118.00	\$2,435.70
<b>Additional</b> Fee for Overseas Law Practitioners (to be paid to NZLS)*	\$126.08	\$145.00
Reconsideration	\$370.00	\$425.50
Review	\$370.00	\$425.50
NZ Degree Holders Admitted Overseas Review	\$635.00	\$730.25
	\$160.00	\$184.00
Stale Qualification Assessment	\$265.00	\$304.75
Completion Certificate (Overseas Applicant)	\$160.00	\$184.00
Expired Completion Certificate Renewal	\$160.00	\$184.00
Per Part- New Zealand Law and Practice Examination	\$798.00	\$917.70
Overseas surcharge (per par)	\$320.00	\$ -

\* New Zealand Law Society (NZLS) fee for Overseas Law Practitioners \$145 (\$126.08 for applicants residing overseas). This should be paid directly to the NZLS, and evidence of payment provided with your application. Please contact NZLS at [registry@lawsociety.org.nz](mailto:registry@lawsociety.org.nz) to obtain their bank details.

Please **do not** return this document with your application

## CERTIFICATION GUIDE

A certified copy is a photocopy that has been stamped or endorsed by a person who confirms that the copy is a true copy of the original document.

### Person that can certify your document

- Justice of the Peace
- Solicitor of the High Court
- Chartered Accountant
- Notary Public
- Court Registrar or Deputy Registrar
- Consulate

### The authorised person must note on the copied document

- "Certified true copy"
- Their authority
- Their name
- Their signature
- Certification must be done in English for it to be accepted
- The date (for NZCLE to accept this application it must be dated within 3 months of today)

### The certifier must write the following when certifying our documentation:

***“Certification of Photo Identification: I certify that I have seen the original document and that the photograph is a true likeness, and this copy is a complete and accurate copy of the original.”***  
Name, Signed, Dated.

***“Certification of Non-Photo Documentation: I certify that I have seen the original document and this copy is a complete and accurate copy of the original.”*** Name, Signed, Dated