

FAQs for Advanced Diploma for Legal Executives

What standard of English do I need to enrol on the ADLE and PCLL programmes?

For the ADLE, the minimum required level of English proficiency is:

- grade of D in English language (Syllabus B) (or equivalent) in pre-2007 HKCEE; **or**
- Level 3 in English language from 2007 HKCEE onwards; **or**
- Level 3 in English language in HKDSE Examination since 2012; **or**
- overall score of 6 in IELTS; **or**
- equivalent evidence of English proficiency.

(NB: For the PCLL, the minimum required level of English proficiency is an overall score of 7 in IELTS.)

Are there any further educational requirements to enrol on the ADLE?

You need to have:

- 5 subjects in HKCEE; **or**
- 5 subjects in HKDSE, inc. Senior Secondary Subjects at Level 2 **and** “Attained” in Applied Learning Subjects (max. 2) **or** Grade E in Other Language Subjects; **or**
- **equivalent qualifications; or**
- **alternatively**, if you have none of the above, you will still be eligible to enrol on the ADLE if you have been in law-related employment in Hong Kong for 3 years.

What constitutes the relevant “law-related employment”?

Qualifying “law-related employment” will *typically* include any full-time employment in Hong Kong, or another common law jurisdiction, as:

- a legal executive;
- a paralegal;
- an in-house counsel or as part of an in-house legal team;
- a court prosecutor;
- a court liaison officer.

However, upon proof of sufficient legal work experience, qualifying “law-related employment” *can* include any employment in Hong Kong, or another common law jurisdiction, as:

- a chambers’ clerk;
- a legal secretary;
- a contract negotiator;
- a company secretary;
- compliance officer .

What if my employment does not fall into any of the above categories?

If a candidate’s employment does *not* fall into any one of the above categories, the candidate may email the *AdvDip for LE* Programme Team with relevant details and the Programme Team will then make an assessment as to whether the candidate’s employment experience would qualify the candidate as eligible to be awarded the *AdvDip for LE*.

When must I complete the relevant law-related employment?

A candidate's 3 years of law-related employment can be completed *before* enrolling on the *AdvDip for LE* programme but can also be completed *during or after* studying on the programme, *provided that* these 3 years of law-related employment are fully completed before expiry of 5 years from the date of programme enrolment.

How do I prove my 3 years of law-related employment?

Candidates must submit an *original signed letter from the relevant employer*, on the employer's letter-headed paper, containing the following information:

- name of employer (company name/institution name);
- how long the candidate has worked there (dates);
- approximate number of hours per week typically worked by the candidate;
- candidate's position and role within the company/institution (brief description of duties); and
- name and position of the person attesting to the candidate's employment at the company/institution.

Note: The *AdvDip for LE* Programme Team reserves the absolute right, in *all* cases, to determine whether a candidate's work experience meets the minimum requirement to qualify as the requisite 3 years of law-related employment.

What if I have/had more than one employer during the 3 years?

Candidates may have more than one employer during the requisite 3 years, in which case the candidate should submit all relevant employer letters with the above information. Although there may be gaps in between different employments, the sum-total of law-related employment must be at least 3 years.

Will my law-related employment be taken into account by the PCLL-provider?

All 3 law schools have a certain number of PCLL places reserved for applicants who can demonstrate at least 2 years of law-related employment, particularly where such applicants do not have sufficiently competitive grades.

Each year, HKU reserves 10-15 places on its part-time PCLL programme for such applicants (see <https://www.ple.hku.hk/>); CityU has a similar scheme of up to around 20 such places on its PCLL programme (see <https://www.cityu.edu.hk/slwp/PCLL/admission.html>); and CUHK also has a limited number of such places on its PCLL programme (see <https://www.law.cuhk.edu.hk/app/study-with-us/pcll/>).

PCLL applicants who graduate from the *AdvDip for LE* will usually fall into this category of applicants since they will have at least 3 years of law-related employment (i.e. *more* than required by the 3 law schools for eligibility to take up those specially reserved PCLL places) and be well-positioned to be considered for this special quota of PCLL places. Please note that since decisions on what constitutes law-related employment for the purpose of this special quota of PCLL places are a matter for the 3 law schools, there is no guarantee that any law-related employment recognised by HKU SPACE will always be similarly recognised by PCLL providers.

Do I have to do any PCLL conversion exams after completing the AdvDip for LE programme?

No. By the time you have successfully completed the *AdvDip for LE*, you will have passed all the law subjects required for eligibility to apply for the PCLL programme. **There is no need to take any of the PCLL Conversion Exams required of graduates of many other law courses.** However, like all PCLL applicants, you will need to have an overall IELTS score of 7 or above.

If I don't have an Advanced Diploma in Legal Studies (Professional Stream) or a Higher Diploma for Legal Executives, am I still eligible to apply for the AdvDip for LE programme?

Provided that you are a graduate of another legal executive course which is recognised by the Law Society of Hong Kong, you may be eligible for admission to the *AdvDip for LE* programme.

For example, if you hold a legal executive qualification from the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (such as the Higher Diploma in Legal and Administrative Studies or the Professional Diploma for Legal Executives) you will usually be eligible for admission to the *AdvDip for LE* programme, subject to: (1) our verification of the syllabus of that particular legal executive programme; and, (2) where necessary, you taking a short bridging course with HKU SPACE for any missing subjects (such as a short online course on Hong Kong Basic Law).

To check your eligibility, simply send us a copy of the legal executive course syllabus that you studied (and/or the course handbook) which lists all the law subjects covered in that course. We will then promptly assess and confirm whether you are eligible to be admitted to the *AdvDip for LE* programme.

Do I have to take the “bridging course” on Hong Kong Basic Law? If so, can you tell me more about it?

This does *not* apply to ADLS graduates; ADLS graduates have already completed the requisite study of Hong Kong Basic Law.

However, HDLE graduates and graduates of other approved legal executive courses who have not already completed a course on Hong Kong Basic Law as part of their studies must take this short online bridging course. Such applicants will be made a “conditional offer” of admission to the *AdvDip for LE* programme, i.e. conditional on completing the bridging course on Hong Kong Basic Law.

Once such applicants have received their conditional offer, they may take the bridging course at any time before starting their first module on the *AdvDip for LE* programme. Nevertheless, it is recommended that such applicants apply as early as possible to enrol on the *AdvDip for LE* programme to allow enough time to complete the bridging course before the scheduled start of their first module on the *AdvDip for LE* programme.

The bridging course comprises 11 pre-recorded lectures (including a revision lecture) on Hong Kong Basic Law. Assessment will be by way of a take-home assignment of 2,000 words (worth 25% of the final mark) and a two-hour online open-book examination (worth 75% of the final mark). The course is offered on a rolling basis and costs HK\$1,600.

How are the modules taught?

A mixture of lectures, seminars and tutorials, with classes delivered face-to-face and/or online.

Note: Depending on the social health situation and other restrictions, class delivery may vary.

How are the modules assessed?

Each of the 8 modules is assessed by way of both a written assignment and examination. For 7 of the modules, the percentage split is 30:70, respectively. For the Advanced Hong Kong Constitutional Law and Hong Kong Legal System module, the percentage split is 40:60.

If I want to become a lawyer, what do I have to do after I have completed the PCLL programme?

It depends on whether you want to become a solicitor (律師) or barrister (大律師).

If you want to become a solicitor, you must complete a 2-year Training Contract with a firm of solicitors (for more information, see under “Maintain Standards” → “Admission Standards” at https://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/pub_e/default.asp).

If you want to become a barrister, you must complete a 1-year Pupillage in one or more barristers’ chambers (for more information, see under “Becoming Barristers” → “Pupillage” at <https://www.hkba.org/>).

Is it worth doing the AdvDip for LE programme even if I don’t want to become a lawyer?

Even if you are *not* interested in becoming a lawyer, studying for the *AdvDip for LE* still has the advantage of allowing you to expand your legal knowledge, building upon and learning beyond the subjects that you studied in your previous law programmes, equipping you with further legal skills and awareness, and increasing your appreciation of law in a wider context.

Do the PCLL-providers recognise this programme?

Yes. The programme was validated by a panel of representatives from all 3 law schools. The programme has been devised and developed in close consultation with, and with extensive input from, these PCLL-providers. Both the programme’s syllabus and assessment methods have been approved by the PCLL-providers.

After completing this programme, will I be eligible for any postgraduate study?

Since the ADLE is a graduate level qualification, it is recognised for admission to some postgraduate programmes. These include recognition in principle for admission to many LLMs offered by the University of London, and also recognition for admission to the [Postgraduate Diploma in Finance and Law](#) at HKU SPACE.