

Accredited Specialists say...

"Specialist Accreditation has been particularly valuable to me. It was incredibly useful and has worked as a marketing tool"

"I really enjoyed my involvement in the Specialist Accreditation program. It was excellent for my knowledge of the law and a good marketing tool to attract clients"

"One of the big selling points for the Law Society is Specialist Accreditation. The best continuing education, professional development program that someone can attempt"

"I am accredited and I thought that the program was excellent"

"As a legal consumer in my personal life I would generally be looking for an Accredited Specialist."

"It's a marketing tool and a stamp of expertise"



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OF NEW SOUTH WALES



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What is the Specialist Accreditation program?

Specialist Accreditation is an opportunity for practitioners to demonstrate their competency, have their expertise in a particular area affirmed and acquire a reputation for excellence in their chosen area.

Established in 1992 the program aims to:

- Provide practitioners with an incentive and opportunity to demonstrate their competency in their chosen area of practice.
- Offer the public and the profession a reliable means to identify a practitioner with proven capability in a specific area; and
- Encourage improvement in the quality and delivery of legal services.

Accreditation is offered across fourteen areas of practice generally every 2–3 years. The areas to be offered in 2011 are indicated in bold:

Business Law

Business & Personal Tax

Children's Law

Commercial Litigation

Criminal Law

Dispute Resolution

Employment & Industrial Law

Family Law

Immigration Law

Government & Administrative Law (new area)

Personal Injury

Property Law

Wills & Estates Law



What are the benefits of accreditation?

Gaining accreditation is a significant achievement. It offers practitioners a vehicle to:

- Advance specialist legal skills
- Enable career development
- Achieve greater recognition amongst peers
- Be equipped for a changing profession
- Build credibility of the firm
- Gain referral work from peers
- Gain referral work from the public
- Differentiate and highlight expert legal knowledge and services
- Access advanced continuing legal education in the specialty areas

Achieving accreditation provides a new range of opportunities to expand your practice and gives you the prospect to do more work in your area of choice.

Accreditation offers you the ability to better market and promote your specialist skills by:

- Registering with the Law Society's Solicitor Referral Service
- Using the Specialist Accreditation logo on stationery, marketing materials and the firm's website
- Using the post-nominals
- Displaying your accreditation certificate

All candidates for Specialist Accreditation, earn the 10 continuing professional development (CPD) units required for renewal of their practising certificate in the following year, regardless of success.



Who is eligible?

Practitioners interested in Specialist Accreditation need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- 1) hold a solicitor's* practicing certificate; and
- 2) have practiced for 5 years on a full-time basis, or equivalent; and
- 3) for 3 years prior to application, have demonstrated a substantial involvement in the area; and
- 4) have devoted time to this area of practice, in each year of the past 3 years, that is not less than 25% of normal full-time practice; and
- 5) be a full solicitor member of the Law Society of New South Wales or be a full solicitor member of an equivalent state or territory body in Australia.



What is involved?

Specialist Accreditation is not a training course, but a structured process for being assessed by peers for existing knowledge, competency and ability in your area of practice.

Generally three assessment components need to be completed and they vary between areas, but may include:

- a take home assessment (mock file or take home exam)
- a formal written examination
- a resume of work
- a peer interview
- a simulated client interview
- a mock hearing

* The definition of a solicitor can be found in Section 4 of the Legal Profession Act (NSW) 2004

Be the right lawyer for the job!

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