



Legal Aid
Agency

PEER REVIEWER PANEL APPOINTMENT

COMMON ISSUES

What do Peer Reviewers do?

Peer Review is an integral part of the Legal Aid Agency's (LAA) provider management strategy providing quality assurance of the advice and legal work delivered by legal services providers contracted to deliver advice funded by legal aid. Peer Reviewers assess a random sample of a provider's case files using the Peer Review Criteria and Guidance and Quality Guides.

The Independent Peer Review Process requires Peer Reviewers to carry out independent assessments based on their expertise in Specialist categories of law. Peer Reviewers assess 12 files in a category of law using the Peer Review Criteria and Guidance and Quality Guides. Following their assessment of the files using the relevant Peer Review Criteria, Guidance and Quality Guides, the Peer Reviewer makes an overall professional judgement concerning the quality of advice and legal work provided by the provider in a category of law, based on the professional experience and judgement of the Peer Reviewer and maintaining the consistent approach developed by the Peer Reviewer Panel.

Peer Reviewers are required to attend mandatory relevant training to understand the Independent Peer Review Process and ensure a consistent approach is maintained by the Peer Reviewer Panel. This will include their obligations as part of that process, assessing the quality of work carried out on Closed Files by Legal Aid Providers and reporting their findings to the LAA. The Peer Reviewer's function is to assess the overall quality of work in the organisation from the random file sample.

Further information about the Peer Review Process is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-agency-audits).
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-agency-audits>)

I currently have a Peer Reviewer Contract do I need to apply?

No. If you currently hold a Peer Reviewer contract then you do not need to apply.

I am a self-employed consultant can I apply to be a Peer Reviewer?

If you are a legal practitioner who is currently, or who has been within the 12 months preceding the Contract Start Date Engaged with a legal services provider contracted

to deliver legal advice funded through legal aid then yes you can apply. At any given time during the Contract period, a Peer Reviewer must be Engaged with a Provider.

Can I apply to be a Peer Reviewer in more than one category?

Yes, as long as you meet the Supervisor Standards in each of the categories of law for which you are applying to be a Peer Reviewer.

What time period does my Supervisor Self declaration form need to cover?

For Supervisors employed on a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) basis, a fully compliant Peer Reviewer Panel Appointment Supervisor Self Declaration Form should be submitted demonstrating the required case hours/ case involvement from the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of submission.

For Supervisors employed on a Part-Time Equivalent (PTE) basis, a fully compliant Peer Reviewer Panel Appointment Supervisor Self Declaration Form should be submitted demonstrating the required case hours over a 5- year period and required case involvement which have been worked or closed in the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of submission.

Submitting an Application

Do I need to express an interest in making an application to be a Peer Reviewer if I have previously applied and have an account on the Ministry of Justice eTendering system already?

Yes, you need to express an interest in this individual application. Entry to Peer Reviewer Panel is by invitation only. Even if you have previously used the Ministry of Justice eTendering system you will still have to request to register (by emailing PRApplications@justice.gov.uk) so that your account can be reactivated and a new password set up for this appointment process.

I am having trouble logging on to the Ministry of Justice eTendering System, what should I do?

Please contact the Central Support Team: email: esourcing@justice.gov.uk/ [telephone: 0845 0100 132](tel:08450100132) and a member of the team will make contact and offer assistance.

Can I submit my application by post?

No. All forms must be submitted electronically via the Ministry of Justice eTendering system.

Can the application form be uploaded in PDF format?

No. All forms must be submitted in Word format.

How will I know my application has been received?

All applicants that submit applications via the Ministry of Justice eTendering system will receive an automated message confirming receipt. If this message is not received, the application has not been submitted successfully and your application will not be considered. In this situation, the applicant should go back through the submission process again.

An email providing detailed instructions on how to submit an application will be sent to all registered applicants prior to 11.59 a.m. on Monday 4 November 2024. Even after

completing the submission process, it is still possible to return to the application, delete, and upload a revised application at any time before 11.59 a.m. on Monday 4 November 2024.

I will struggle to meet the published deadline, can I submit a late application?

No. Unfortunately we are unable to accept late applications.

When will I hear about the outcome of my application?

Candidates should be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of November 2024.

What is a PRPR?

A PRPR is a Peer Review of your own work. You must be able to provide 15 closed legal aid files (files opened from 1/10/21 and closed between 1/9/22 and 31/8/24) for a Peer Review of your own work (PRPR), either by paper or SFE within 14 days of request. You will need to achieve a Peer Review rating of 1 or 2 on these files in order to proceed to the Peer Review Training.

You must commit that your own work may be subject to a PRPR not less than once every 3 years, and to achieve a 1 or 2 rating in that PRPR to maintain your contract.

What happens if I receive a 3,4 or 5 in the review of my own work (PRPR)?

Unfortunately, you cannot progress with your application at this time, but you can always reapply on subsequent panel appointments.

How long is my contract?

The Contract Period shall be the period up to 31st August 2026.

How will I be remunerated under the Contract?

You will be paid £53.57 per hour.

This payment covers time spent Peer Reviewing files, completing the associated Peer Review report and at any cross-checking, consistency or benchmarking review session and attendance at training sessions.

How and when will I be paid under the Contract?

You will be required to complete an application for a Purchase Order and thereafter you will make a claim for each Peer Review when it has been finalised. Payments are only made to Peer Reviewers individual bank accounts.

How many Peer Reviews are you expected to do?

Any new Peer Reviewer panel member must be available to conduct 6 Peer Reviews if offered within 6 months of the Contract commencement date.

Thereafter you must be available to deliver a minimum of 24 days of Contract Peer Review work per year. Please note this volume of work is not guaranteed.

Peer Reviewers must schedule two (2) days' Contract Work each month – as it is important that the LAA Peer Review Team can maintain Peer Review capacity throughout each year.

Where can I carry out my Peer review?

Peer Reviews are carried out either in your office or at home. You will be required to register for a cjsm email account. Details on how to register can be found here: [CJSM-Sign Up - How to Apply \(justice.gov.uk\)](https://www.justice.gov.uk/cjsm/sign-up).

What training will I receive?

You will be required to attend training on three separate dates in January. The training will include both in-person and virtual sessions. The options available to select from are the following:

- Virtual training session one: either 13th January 2025 or 14th January 2025 (half-day session); **and**
- Virtual training session two: either 20th January 2025 or 21st January 2025 (half-day session); **and**
- In-person training:
 - Civil in-person training on 22nd January 2025 or 27th January 2025 (whole day session); or
 - Crime in-person training on 23rd January 2025 or 27th January 2025 (whole day session).

The mandatory training will cover the Independent Peer Review Process and the Peer Reviewer's obligations, as well as the development of a consistent approach towards the Independent Peer Review Process from the Peer Reviewer Panel. It will also include sessions on Equality & Diversity and Information & Security Management.

You will also be required to complete one or two "dummy peer reviews" and you will have a mentor in the specific category to discuss and resolve issues. Assistance and guidance will be given in order to ensure that the Panel maintains a consistent approach under the Independent Peer Review Process.

You will then complete 6 peer reviews which will be validated for quality and consistency purposes.

Thereafter you are required to attend annual consistency training.

Do I need to attend the training?

Yes applicants will need to commit to being able to undertake the training. Peer Reviewer Contracts cannot commence if all the training is not completed.

Will I be paid for attending training?

Once your files have been submitted for your PRPR you will be reimbursed for attending the training. Payment of £53.57 per hour will be made.

What happens if I cannot attend all of the training dates?

If you are unable to complete all of the training, you will not be able to continue with the process at this time.

What happens if I leave my LAA Provider?

Unless you join another LAA Provider, you will be able to continue as a Peer Reviewer for 12 months.

What happens if my Supervisor declaration form lapses?

You are required to submit annually a compliant Supervisor Self Declaration Form for the category in which you are a Peer Reviewer.

What happens if I need to take a break/sabbatical?

Each case will be looked at on an individual basis.

What do Senior Peer Reviewers do?

Senior Peer Reviewers also conduct validations of Peer Review reports and responses to representations.

When can I become a Senior Peer Reviewer?

You can apply once you have completed 20 Peer Reviews after the Contract Start Date.

How will I be remunerated as a Senior Peer Reviewer?

Senior Peer Reviewers are paid an hourly rate of £53.57. This rate assumes that one Peer Review report takes a maximum of one (1) hour to validate.

All capitalised terms included in this document, are defined in the Peer Reviewer Contract.

October 2024