



Legal Aid
Agency

Approved Training Course Criteria

Requirement	Approval Criterion
Course Audience	The course must be designed for and open to legal practitioners wishing to undertake inquest work or must contain a clearly identified legal-practitioner route. A generic witness-familiarisation course, operational staff course, or non-lawyer evidence-giving course does not qualify on its own.
Course Duration & Delivery Format	The course duration must be at least two full day's equivalent of guided learning. This would equate to 14 hours minimum learning time. 7 hours of learning time must be delivered in a live format. This can be either live in-person, live virtual or a hybrid format with meaningful opportunity for interaction, questions or discussion. Pre-recorded or self-paced material may supplement the course but should not satisfy the requirement on its own. Guided learning can be delivered in a modular format.
Syllabus	The course must cover, at a practical introductory-to intermediate level, all of the following: • Purpose, legal framework, including The Public Office for Accountability Bill and its implications on inquest proceedings. The inquisitorial nature of coronial investigations and inquests, including the limits on determining civil or criminal liability. • Core inquest lifecycle: reporting and opening, interested person status, disclosure, pre-inquest review hearings, witness and expert evidence, hearing preparation, conclusions, post-hearing steps, and the occurrence of fresh inquests. Related proceedings including, challenges to coroners' decisions and legal proceedings concerning inquests decisions, including Section 13 proceedings and judicial reviews.

	• Public body participation: organisational witnesses, document preservation, privilege, confidentiality, data protection, redaction, transparency, candour, escalation and conflicts between organisational and individual interests. • Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights and relevant case law, including identifying engagement and implications on scope. To include practical consequences for scope, evidence, understanding systems issues, conclusions and narrative conclusions. The role of experts in the inquest process and identifying when experts are required. Circumstances when a jury is mandatory for an inquest, and those when a jury is not required. Material to also cover deaths in custody, police contact, mental health, healthcare and other specialist settings. • Advocacy and professional conduct in the Coroner's Court, including appropriate questioning, written and oral submissions, and the non-adversarial character of the jurisdiction. • Working with bereaved families, vulnerable participants and unrepresented interested persons, including tone, language, professionalism and sensitivity. Communication techniques focussing on best practice when communicating with traumatised families. Managing sensitive interactions with bereaved families, witness and other parties to reduce re-traumatisation and assist bereaved families during the inquest process. Awareness of available avenues to gain further knowledge of the experiences of bereaved families. • Understanding of the framework in which Prevention of Future Deaths reports occur and the relevance to bereaved families. To include risk identification, submissions, responses, publication and organisational learning.
Practical Application	The course must include at least one practical element, such as a case study, mock pre-inquest review hearing, disclosure exercise, witness-questioning exercise, draft submission exercise, Prevention of Future Deaths scenario or facilitated discussion of a realistic fact pattern.
Trainer Expertise	The lead trainer, or at least one trainer, must have substantial recent inquest experience occurring within the last 24 months

	as a solicitor, barrister, coroner, legal adviser, senior public body practitioner, legal academic or other suitably experienced coronial law practitioner.
Course Currency	The provider must confirm that the course materials are reviewed at least annually and updated for material changes in coronial law, inquest case law, Chief Coroner guidance, professional conduct expectations and relevant public body duties.
Attendance Evidence	The provider must issue a certificate or attendance confirmation showing the course title, provider, date, delivery mode, duration description, trainer and confirmation of attendance. For split-session or live online courses, the solicitor must attend all required sessions or any provider-specified completion route.
Assessment and Engagement	A formal pass/fail examination is not required. The course must, however, include a reasonable mechanism for confirming meaningful attendance or engagement, such as an attendance register, interactive participation, a knowledge check, completion declaration or practical exercise.
Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments	The provider must be able to make reasonable adjustments for delegates and provide accessible materials on request.