

## **The Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2026 (DIS)**

### **Application Guidance and Eligibility Criteria 2026**

#### **Application Guidance**

##### **1 Eligibility**

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria in order to be considered for Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2026. Details of the eligibility criteria are set out below.

##### **2 Scope**

Applicants to the Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2026 may apply to study:

- LPC Courses:
  - The Legal Practice Course (LPC) (online and part time only)– University of Law
- SQE Courses:
  - LLM Legal Practice combined with SQE preparation course – University of Law
  - SQE1 and/or SQE2 preparation course/s – The College of Legal Practice.

The fees for the LPC/ or the cost of the SQE preparation courses/SQE preparation courses combined with the LLM will be fully funded by BLS Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Scholarship partners.

Successful applicants will be contacted by The College of Legal Practice or University of Law award to discuss the most appropriate course for applicants.

Please ensure you have considered both options and are familiar with the rules regarding these qualification routes.

Further information can be found on the Solicitors Regulation Authority website <https://www.sra.org.uk/students/sqe/>

The scholarship shall be in respect of course fees only. Applicants must ensure they are able to meet all living costs for themselves (and any Dependents) during the period of study. Applicants are also responsible for any SQE exam fees as these are not included in the scholarship award.

Applicants must also meet the general admissions criteria for their preferred courses with either the University of Law or the College of Legal Practice. The application form will allow you to provide details of any extenuating circumstances if applicable.

Further details can be found <https://www.law.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/entry-requirements/> and <https://www.collegalpractice.com/our-programmes/apply>

### 3 Confirmations

3.1 All applicants will also be required to give the following confirmations:

- All statements made in this application are true at the time of submission.
- They have read and understand the application guidance and eligibility criteria.
- They meet the eligibility criteria and will continue to meet the eligibility criteria throughout the application process.
- They reside in Birmingham (or its surrounding areas) and I am committed to studying and working in Birmingham.
- If shortlisted, they are able to attend a virtual interview via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or another virtual platform during June 2026.
- If their application is successful, they will provide regular updates on their progress to the Birmingham Law Society and update the Birmingham Law Society with their contact details.
- If their application is successful, The College of Legal Practice or University of Law may specify the course that is most appropriate for them.
- If their application is successful and they are awarded a scholarship, they understand that the scholarship shall only be in respect of the course fees only and:
  - they confirm they will be able to meet all living costs for themselves (and any Dependents) during the period of study; and
  - (If applying for an SQE course) they understand they are responsible for any SQE exam fees and these are not included in the scholarship award; and
  - they meet the general admissions criteria for their preferred course with University of Law/The College of Legal Practice.

Applicants can email any questions that are not covered in this guidance or the Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2026 Webpage to [dis@birminghamlawsociety.co.uk](mailto:dis@birminghamlawsociety.co.uk).

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

Applicants who fulfil criteria in parts 1-3 are automatically eligible to apply to DIS.

#### **1 Residence**

1.1 Applicants will be required to confirm they reside in Birmingham (or its surrounding areas) and can commit to studying in Birmingham and taking part in the placements offered by the partner firms in their Birmingham offices.

#### **2 Financial Circumstances**

Applicants will be required to confirm the following statements:

- 2.1 They do not have access to familial loans or financial gifts
- 2.2 They do not have more than £5,000 in their savings account, current account, ISA or held elsewhere.

### **3 Background**

3.1 Applicants will be asked to confirm if any of the following statements apply (applicants may be asked to provide evidence supporting these statements during the application/interviewing process):

3.1.1 Attending a non-fee paying, non-selective school

3.1.2 Being part of the first generation in your family to attend higher education

3.1.3 Any experience in local authority care

3.1.4 Estrangement from family

3.1.5 Refugee status

3.1.6 Being the sole carer of a parent(s) or, if living away from home, the sole carer of a sibling

3.1.7 Having a registered disability

3.1.8 Being from a Low household income demonstrated by:

- (a) Being in receipt of Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance, or Employment and Support Allowance
- (b) Being eligible for free school meals whilst at secondary school
- (c) Being in receipt of Universal Credit
- (d) Being in receipt of, or living with a parent/Guardian in receipt of Asylum Support
- (e) Being in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary in England or EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- (f) Being in receipt of Learner Support (FE 19+) or equivalent FE funding for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- (g) Living with a parent/Guardian in receipt of Child Tax Credit where the candidate is named on the award and the household income used to calculate the tax credits is less than £25,000
- (h) Living with a parent/Guardian in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- (i) Living with a parent/Guardian in receipt of Universal Credit, if the annual household take-home pay as stated on the award is less than £25,000

**Applicants that do not fulfil the criteria in 2 and 3 may still be eligible to apply to the DIS 2026 if they face, or have faced, exceptional circumstances in pursuing their legal education or career.**

#### **4 Exceptional Circumstances**

**Applicants that do not fulfil the criteria in 2 and 3 may still be eligible to apply to the DIS 2026 if they face, or have faced, exceptional circumstances in pursuing their legal education or career as a result of their:**

- 4.1.1 Cultural background
- 4.1.2 Health problems
- 4.1.3 Sex
- 4.1.4 Gender identity
- 4.1.5 Sexual orientation
- 4.1.6 Race or ethnicity
- 4.1.7 Religion
- 4.1.8 Or other challenging personal circumstances

Applicants will be required to provide a brief description of their challenging circumstances on the application form.

#### **5 Changes in circumstances**

Applicants must notify the BLS of any change in circumstances and eligibility following the submission of their applications.

Applicants must provide details of any formal training contract offers they have received at the time of applying.

Applicants who receive an offer of a training contract after submitting the DIS2026 application form, must notify BLS as soon as possible.

Notifications can be submitted via [dis@birminghamlawsociety.co.uk](mailto:dis@birminghamlawsociety.co.uk).

BLS reserves the right to reconsider any offers or awards made in light of an applicant's change in circumstances.