

Release notes for SRA Handbook, Version 15

1 November 2015

The fifteenth version of the Handbook was published on 1 November 2015, and all the changes in this version came into effect on that date. The changes are outlined in these notes: please refer to the Handbook itself for full details.

Separate businesses

We have amended Chapter 12 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011 to replace restrictions on links with certain types of separate business with new outcomes on client protection when separate businesses are involved.

Activities of a recognised body or recognised sole practice

We have amended the SRA Practice Framework Rules to allow a wider range of professional activities to be carried out within recognised bodies and recognised sole practices.

Accounts and overseas practice

We have amended the SRA Accounts Rules 2011 and the SRA Overseas Rules 2013. The changes:

- exempt some firms from the requirement to obtain an accountant's report
- remove rigid restrictions on the format of the report to allow the accountant to exercise their professional judgement and concentrate on risks to client money
- simplify the overseas accounting requirements.

Authorisation of sole practitioners

We have made changes throughout the Handbook to reflect the new approach to the way we authorise sole practitioners and to remove various references to Recognised Sole Practitioners. From 1 November 2015:

- existing Recognised Sole Practitioners became Recognised Sole Practices
- their authorisation is granted under the SRA Authorisation Rules 2011; previously, authorisation was granted under the SRA Practising Regulations 2011



- sole practitioners no longer need to renew their authorisation annually and have an endorsement on their practising certificates; instead, sole practitioner firms are given lifetime authorisation in line with other types of firms authorised by us.

Regulatory reform programme

We have introduced a number of changes and improvements to our regulatory arrangements through the Amendments to Regulatory Arrangements (Regulatory Reform Programme) Rules 2015 make changes to the SRA Code of Conduct 2011, SRA Authorisation Rules 2011 and SRA Practising Regulations 2011.

Training regulations – apprenticeship pathway

We have amended the SRA Training Regulations 2014 - Qualification and Provider Regulations to enable people to qualify as a solicitor through completing an apprenticeship.

Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme

We have removed the requirement in the SRA Qualified Lawyer Transfer Scheme Regulations 2011 for candidates to obtain a certificate of eligibility.

Financial services – consumer credit activities

We have updated guidance to Rule 5.11 of the SRA Financial Services (Scope) Rules 2001 to reflect the extension of the transitional period which will now run until 31 March 2016.

Insolvency practice

We have removed the SRA Insolvency Practice Rules 2012 to give effect to the SRA's decision to cease regulating solicitor insolvency practitioners from 1 November 2015.