

Duty lawyer accreditation

Duty lawyer accreditation is open to experienced legal practitioners holding current practising certificates whose firm or employer firm (including Legal Aid Queensland) is on Legal Aid Queensland's Preferred Supplier list, or in the case of Barristers-at-Law, who are on Legal Aid Queensland's panel of barristers and are current members of the Bar Association of Queensland or corresponding association and in full time private practice at the bar (not employed by statutory corporations, government or semi-government departments or agencies, etc).

An experienced practitioner is a practitioner who has a minimum of six (6) months post admission experience in general criminal law.

Practitioners wishing to attain accreditation will need to attend to the following:

1. View the Criminal law duty lawyer video.
2. Become familiar with the Criminal Law Duty Lawyer Handbook, published by Legal Aid Queensland.
3. Attend two sessions in an adult Magistrates Court with an accredited duty lawyer, as an observer. And one further attendance as the duty lawyer, under supervision of an accredited duty lawyer, and/or
4. Attend two sessions in a Childrens' Court with an accredited Childrens' Court Duty Lawyer, as an observer. And one further attendance as the duty lawyer under supervision of an accredited Childrens' Court duty lawyer.
5. Provide declarations specifying the required attendances, from both applicant and accredited duty lawyers with whom Court was attended.
6. Provide, details of relevant criminal law experience i.e. number of guilty pleas, bail applications etc which they have appeared in (please ensure you have also provided details with regard to your admission dates).

Legal Aid Queensland will only approve accreditation when satisfied that the above criteria has been met and the applicant has sufficient experience to provide a 'stand alone' duty lawyer service in the appropriate court.

To submit an application for duty lawyer accreditation or for more information, contact Damian Smiechowski at Legal Aid Queensland on telephone: 3917 0403 or by e-mail to criminallaw.dutylawyer@legalaid.qld.gov.au.

Practitioners who are not currently on the duty lawyer roster and wish to seek exemption from attending to the accreditation process, should write to the Coordinator, Duty Lawyer Services at LAQ detailing their relevant experience as grounds for exemption. Exemption, will only be considered if a practitioner's situation/location is such that attendance to the accreditation process is impractical and a managing partner or equivalent, is prepared to state they are satisfied the practitioner is capable of providing "sand alone" duty lawyer services.

Note: This accreditation scheme has been in force since 1 January 1991 and supersedes the earlier Brisbane metropolitan accreditation scheme. Practitioners who participated in the duty lawyer scheme continuously up to 1 January 1991 and subsequent to that date are "deemed" to be accredited. Any practitioner intending to become involved in the tendering process need only state those facts in their tender documentation.