SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE NOTE FOR DIPLOMA APPLICANTS 2018/19

Each year the Society issues a guidance note to all those who are apply to undertake the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (DPLP). This is issued with DPLP application forms and is available via the society’s website.

Given the numbers of applications for the DPLP this year we have produced this supplementary guidance note. This supplementary guidance note is for all individuals who have applied to commence the DPLP in 2018/19. We are issuing this as the number of DPLP applications is high this year and we wish for you to be aware that this may mean increased competition for traineeships.

This guidance note outlines:
- An update on the numbers of applicants for the 2018/19 Diploma
- Some context for this figure
- What is the potential impact?
- What to do if you have applied to do the DPLP but not got a place
- An update on the application process

An update on the number of applicants for the 2018/19

The number of people applying to commence the DPLP in the 2018/19 academic session is **800**.

This represents a **14%** increase in the number of people who applied to commence the DPLP in the last academic session (2017/18).

Some context for this figure

It is important to note that it has generally been the case that more people apply to undertake the DPLP than those who actually commence the DPLP. In recent years the difference between those applying and those commencing has been between 11% and 18%.

While we cannot guarantee this will be the case in 2018/2019, it is worth noting that a similar drop off rate (e.g. using a 11%-18% drop as a guide) would suggest a DPLP cohort of 2018/19 of between **720 and 656 students**.

Diploma numbers over recent years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DPLP applications</th>
<th>Numbers commencing the DPLP</th>
<th>Drop off rate between application and commencing</th>
<th>Traineeships registered that year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The traineeship numbers are included for context though they should be considered with caution (as, for instance, someone commencing the DPLP in 2014/15 could not also commence a traineeship that year).
What is the potential impact?

*Number of 2018/19 DPLP graduates against the number of traineeships*

Traineeship numbers in recent years have generally been between 540-550. These numbers have remained relatively steady and therefore the Society does not expect to see these numbers fluctuate significantly.

The size of the 2018/19 cohort may have implications for those applying to undertake the DPLP in 2019/20. While the majority of DPLP students will secure traineeships, there will likely be a significant percentage of students graduating from the DPLP who will not have a training contract in place. As seen with the large 2015/16 cohort, it is highly possible that many of next year’s graduates will compete with the 2019/20 cohort meaning that the traineeship will be exceptionally competitive.

**An update on the application process**

We would advise DPLP applicants who have been unsuccessful in securing a place at their chosen university to directly contact other DPLP providers. *Please be aware that applications are not forwarded to alternative providers and therefore the onus is on the student to apply to other universities.* As a courtesy, we would ask that all students who have been offered a place on the DPLP to decide whether to accept it as soon as possible, to allow universities to offer available places to other students.

We are committed to ensuring that those on the route to qualification have the best possible information so those studying law can make informed decisions about their future.

All LLB students will have had the opportunity to hear the Society’s staff talk about the route to qualification in their first year, in their third year, and in their fourth year. As well as this the Society visits every law fair in Scotland giving students the opportunity to speak to our staff about any matter that concerns them. We also attach to the DPLP application forms a detailed guidance note which outlines the funding arrangements.

We know though that those intending to do the DPLP do so without three pieces of knowledge:

(a) The number of people who apply to undertake the DPLP
(b) The number of people who actually will commence the DPLP
(c) For those who do not have a traineeship in place, the number of training contracts there will be the following year

We believe it is in the best interest of students to highlight the number of people who have applied to undertake the DPLP for next session and we hope that this alongside the context offered in our visits and previous guidance will help those applying for the DPLP to get the best possible information meaning that they can make informed choices about their future. It is important, therefore, that those applying to commence the DPLP in 2018/19 are aware:

- that the number of applicants for the DPLP this year is still higher than recent years;
- that the high figure of DPLP graduates this year will likely impact them in terms of finding traineeships next year;
- and that this should be viewed against the likely future trainee job market.

We would encourage students would like to discuss the issues raised in this guidance note to contact the Society on: darrenkerr@lawscot.org.uk