

A Step by Step Guide
to becoming a
Manx Advocate

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CONTENTS

1. First Step – Before University
2. Second Step – University and Conversion Course
 - 2.1 Law Degree
 - 2.2 Non-law Degree
 - 2.3 First Class Honours Required?
 - 2.4 Non-law Degree Conversion Course
 - 2.5 Grants
3. The Third Step – Professional Training
4. The Fourth Step – Articles and Manx Bar Examinations
 - 4.1 Applying for Articles
5. Further Information

1. FIRST STEP – BEFORE UNIVERSITY

You cannot qualify as a Manx advocate without an honours degree, but there is no need to study A level law (unless it is an entry requirement of your chosen university). As far as selection of A levels is concerned, the best advice is to study those subjects you most enjoy and in which you are therefore likely to achieve good grades. As regards choosing a university, Cains do not have a particular policy about any university or type of institution.

2. SECOND STEP – UNIVERSITY AND CONVERSION COURSE

2.1 Law Degree

A law degree can cover a wide range of law-related subjects including ethics, criminology and jurisprudence; it may also be combined with other subjects such as languages or economics. Contrary to popular belief, it is not necessary to study law at university in order to qualify as an advocate, but a law degree should exempt you from one of the later stages of qualification. Check that the law degree you wish to study is a qualifying course covering the seven core subjects and legal research skills. The Law Society of England and Wales offers detailed guidance on qualifying degrees on its website www.lawsoc.org.

2.2 Non-law Degree

Many lawyers choose to study an honours degree in a field other than law and then complete a conversion course (the common professional examination or the post graduate diploma in law). Several lawyers at Cains have chosen this route by studying subjects as diverse as anthropology, history, Spanish and biology. At Cains we value the contributions made by individuals with diverse educational backgrounds. As with a law degree, it is your final classification that is most important. It may be important to remember with the non-law degree route will involve extra study, time and expense, because of the requirement to complete the conversion course.

2.3 First Class Honours Required?

The Isle of Man Law Society's minimum entry requirement to become an advocate is a second class honours degree. Cains normally recruit individuals who either excel academically and have at least a 2.1 or who can offer additional skills or relevant experience.

2.4 Non-law Degree Conversion Course

The common professional examination (CPE) (or sometimes referred to as the postgraduate diploma in law) is a conversion course for students with an honours degree in any non-law subject. It is an intensive course covering the seven core subjects, namely: contract, tort, constitutional law, European Community law, criminal law, land law and trust law. It is possible to study this course part time or by distance learning. More information about the CPE course is available from the Central Applications Board (www.lawcabs.ac.uk).

2.5 Grants

The Isle of Man Government may provide funding for both course fees and maintenance grants subject to status and residency requirements. Further information is available from the Isle of Man Government Department of Education (www.gov.im). Cains may be willing to provide some financial assistance to students that have accepted a training contract with the practice.

3. THE THIRD STEP – PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Prior to entering articles, all students must undertake a legal vocational course. This requirement can be fulfilled either by taking the Legal Practice Course, which is compulsory for all English Solicitors or the Bar Vocational Course, which is the training necessary for English Barristers. This choice of routes reflects the fused nature of the profession on the Isle of Man. Both courses last one academic year, although the Legal Practice Course can be studied part-time over a longer period. Details about the Legal Practice Course are available from the Law Society of England and Wales –

www.lawsoc.org and the Bar Council of England and Wales can supply information about the Bar Vocational Course www.barcouncil.org.

4. THE FOURTH STEP – ARTICLES AND MANX BAR EXAMINATIONS

Finally, following completion of a legal vocational course it is necessary to undertake two years' articles with an advocate. This period of articles is equivalent to a training contract for solicitors in England or a pupillage for Barristers. During this period it is necessary to pass the 5 heads of the Manx Bar examinations namely; Accounts, Civil Practice, Criminal Practice, Constitutional and Land and Company Law and Taxation. The examinations are held biannually in May and November and trainees have a maximum of three attempts in which to pass the exams. Solicitors of the Supreme Court of England and Wales and members of the Bar of England and Wales who have been practising or admitted for three years may qualify as an advocate after a period of articles of only one year. They are not exempt from the Manx Bar examinations. Study notes are available within Cains which have been prepared by previous students and updated. Our extensive library and IT system which contains local legislation, case reports and precedent database is continually updated by our in-house librarian. Most importantly, Cains operate an "open door" policy so that trainees can draw on the knowledge, support and guidance of senior lawyers. Additionally, the Isle of Man Law Society and the Young Lawyers Association arrange a programme of talks, lectures and moots for trainees. Cains offer a generous eight weeks' paid study leave prior to the examinations.

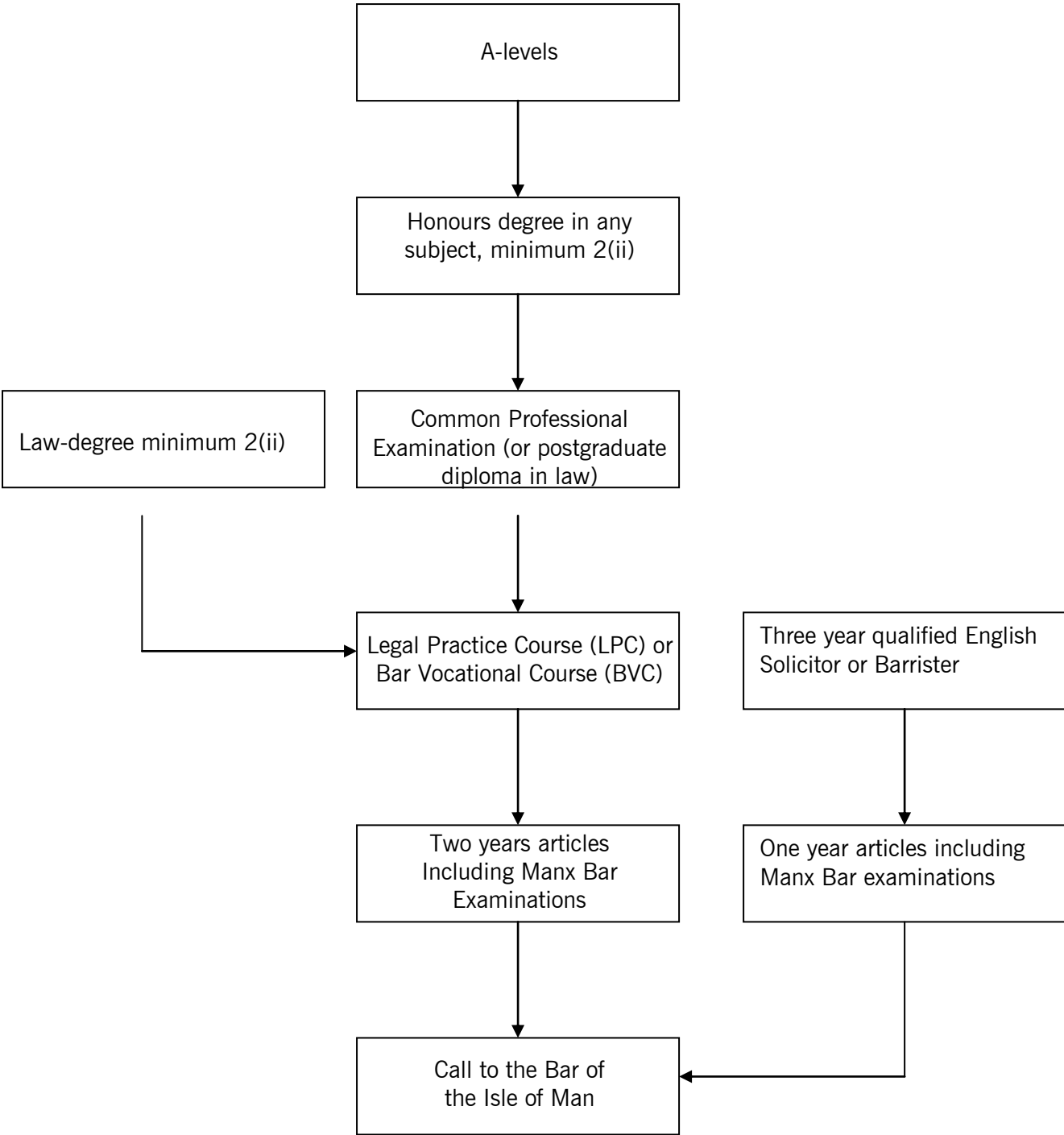
4.1 Applying for Articles

It is advisable to apply early for articles as places are in demand. Cains normally recruits students during the penultimate year of their degree, although we will consider later applications from exceptional students. Cains prefers to offer applicants a period of work experience prior to making any offers as it allows individuals to get a feel for the firm and vice versa before making decisions.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

The information below has been produced as an aid to those seeking general information with respect to qualifying to practice law in the Isle of Man. It serves as a starting point. Further questions about becoming an advocate should be addressed to the Isle of Man Law Society www.iomlawsociety.co.im. If you have further questions about a training contract with Cains or wish to apply for articles please contact Richard Vanderplank, personnel director.

Most common routes to qualification



IMPORTANT NOTE

This document does not constitute legal advice. It is summary in nature; reference should be made to the detailed provisions of the relevant law and legislation. Professional advice should be sought in relation to specific circumstances and matters.

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