



Lexcel: Your route to a well-run practice

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Your route to:

- Better customer care
- Improved marketability
- Effective risk management
- Fewer claims and complaints
- Increased client retention

Lexcel is the Law Society's practice management quality mark. Written specifically for the legal profession and its clients, it allows any type and size of legal practice to undergo independent assessment to certify that the requirements of the Lexcel standard are being met.

Lexcel sets 55 requirements in the following eight areas:

Structures and Policies

Strategy, the Provision of Services and Marketing

Financial Management

Facilities and IT

People Management

Supervision and Operational Risk Management

Client Care

File and Case Management

How does it work?

The simple and transparent Lexcel process features:

- Independent assessment by one of twelve ISO9000 or Investors in People assessment bodies, authorised to conduct Lexcel assessments on behalf of the Law Society
- Flexible approach specifying requirements, not procedures (what to do, not how to do it)
- Three year validity, with annual monitoring visits
- Avoids duplication of time & costs by allowing simultaneous assessment with ISO9000 or Investors in People. We also give credit where Lexcel requirements have been satisfied by recent ISO9000 or Investors in People assessments

What sort of legal practices apply for Lexcel?

Lexcel is available to any practice in England or Wales, including in-house, local government and sole practitioner practices. By March 2005, 535 practices had achieved Lexcel accreditation, with numbers increasing by 25 per cent during 2004.

Accredited practices currently include 50 sole practitioners, 13 of the largest 100 firms, 140 local authorities and other bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality.

How does my practice benefit?

In times of increased competition and demand for evidence of good value and quality service, Lexcel provides a competitive advantage for you and peace of mind for your clients. The Lexcel quality mark is evidence of a well managed practice committed to providing a quality service.

Most complaints and claims against solicitors cite delay, communication failures and weaknesses in service delivery, rather than lack of legal knowledge. With increasing pressures to comply with legislative provisions and new practice rules, there has

never been a better time to minimise mistakes and raise standards of practice management.

In particular, Lexcel provides an excellent framework to meet the requirements of rule 5 of the new Code of Conduct, expected to be in force in early 2006. This requires all practices to “produce evidence of a systematic and effective approach to management” and to demonstrate arrangements for risk management and supervision.

By investing in Lexcel, your practice is likely to benefit from the following:

- **Better customer care**
- **Increased client retention**
- **Fewer complaints**
- **Greater consistency in service standards**
- **Improved marketability**
- **Greater success in tenders and pitches**
- **Effective risk management and favourable treatment from insurers**
- **A framework to meet new legislative requirements and practice rules**

Find out more

Get our free information pack

Includes the full A4 brochure (including the standard and full details on applying for Lexcel certification), a list of accredited firms, the latest copy of our ‘Lexcel Link’ newsletter and a copy of ‘A Practical Guide to Minimising Risk’. We also publish specific Lexcel guides for sole practitioners and local authorities which are available on request.

Join the Lexcel Commitment Scheme

The Lexcel Commitment Scheme offers free additional support for practices working towards Lexcel. Benefits include:

- telephone advice from Lexcel experts
- quarterly newsletter ‘Lexcel Link’
- news, guidance and information on events
- Areas of compliance on ‘dummy assessments’ are credited towards the formal lexcel assessment, saving time and money for the practice.

Speak to a consultant

Whilst it is not necessary, some practices may choose to seek the help of a consultant. Training has been offered to consultants so they are familiar with Lexcel and the assessment process and are kept up-to-date with any developments. Details of consultants who have attended the Law Society training course are available from the Lexcel office.

Attend a Lexcel focus group

Regional focus groups are held to enable accredited practices and those working towards assessment to exchange views, discuss issues and provide feedback on the scheme. Assessors or consultants normally attend and firms report that they find the groups very useful.

Attend a Lexcel training course or seminar

We organise one-day courses in London, Manchester and Birmingham for practices working towards Lexcel assessment. We also hold regional seminars to explore the benefits of Lexcel in relation to client service or risk management.

Contact us

Call 020 7320 5749 or email lexcel@lawsociety.org.uk

Visit the Lexcel website at www.lexcel.lawsociety.org.uk

Buy the Lexcel Practice Excellence Kit

This official guide to Lexcel is essential reading for firms planning to gain Lexcel accreditation or to improve their practice management procedures. The kit includes *The Lexcel Office Procedures Manual and CD-Rom* which provides useful templates to enable you to prepare a manual for your firm. Also included is the *Lexcel Assessment Guide* which sets out the requirements for meeting the standard and explains the process of Lexcel certification.

The Practice Excellence Kit is available for £79.95 from Marston Book Services on 01235 465 656 or law.society@marston.co.uk

Quotes:

Lexcel accredited firms have 40 per cent fewer complaints to the Law Society, per fee-earner, than non-accredited firms.

2004 study by the Independent Commissioner to the Law Society

“Though there are obvious marketing advantages both through having a quality mark, and also internally through the procedures we have installed, the main reason for achieving Lexcel was for our clients. It is essential that we understand their needs, whether they be corporate clients or private individuals. Our clients need as much assurance and peace of mind as possible”

Roger Pannone, Pannone & Partners

“In any business, having appropriate systems and procedures in place are key to reducing complaints and potential claims, resulting in savings in time, worry and expenditure, and ultimately leading to lower premiums. Lexcel provides an ideal means to achieve these goals”

QBE International Insurance Ltd

“One enormous difference is that Lexcel radically reduced the premium we had to pay for our professional indemnity insurance”

David Kirwan, Kirwans

“We decided that Lexcel was the best objective and independent standard, and we now promote it to clients as an extra level of quality assurance. We also do a lot of work in the public sector, where Lexcel is already widely known and is sometimes a distinct advantage if you are competing for a contract”

David Biggerstaff, Trowers & Hamlins

“In the light of new money laundering legislation, it is more important than ever to have defined framework on which to build practice standards. The standard also gives partners a better overview of all the work that is being done within a certain department, rather than just what one or two colleagues are doing”

David Biggerstaff, Trowers & Hamlins

“Lexcel is more than just a piece of paper – it is a manifestation of our commitment to people management, and a guarantee that you can be assured of a quality service”

Trevor Phillips, Campaign for Racial Equality

“We view Lexcel positively and see it very much as a practical management tool. It embraces good practice at every level and I am sure it will help us to achieve consistent standards. Whether it is a coincidence or not, we also saw a 27 per cent fall in the level of our professional indemnity insurance premium. Lexcel has already paid dividends!”

Nigel Smith, Ellis Jones

“We had many reasons for seeking Lexcel accreditation, from assisting with the final integration of predecessor practices, to being able to answer the first question on many tender forms about quality standards. We also wanted to demonstrate to our clients independent authentication of the quality of our systems which enable us to provide the level of service and client care demanded of a modern law firm”

Alan Bannister, Vizards Wyeth

“I would greatly recommend any sole practitioner to look at Lexcel – it’s not just for larger practices. As a firm our service to clients has improved markedly and we haven’t looked back”

Fiona Bruce, Fiona Bruce & Co