



# COMPETENCY-BASED EXAMINATION FOR ADMISSION AS AN ATTORNEY

## SYLLABUS 2024

*(March 2024 Issue)*

In this examination, candidates must have a sound knowledge of substantive law and be able to apply it to matters covered by this syllabus.

**NB: Please note the practical skills to be tested per paper.**

**For registration and the EXAMINATION DATES (Please refer to the LPC registration form).**

**the examination dates for the next assessment are the 13th and 14th** March 2024. The registration fee is R345,00 (incl. VAT), irrespective of the number of papers to be written.

### **THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM**

The guidelines for the competency-based examination for admission as an Attorney are set out in terms of the Rules of the Legal Practice Act 28 of 2014 (Rules 21 – 27), Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Notice 401 of 2018, National Forum on the Legal Profession.

### **THE EXAMINATION FORMAT**

Candidates are allowed 15 minutes to peruse the paper before answering the questions. No candidate may start writing in the answer book during this period.

The areas of practice to be assessed remain much the same.

**NB: CANDIDATES TO PLEASE REVIEW THE CURRICULUM DETAILED IN PART 2 OF THIS DOCUMENT  
[PAGE 4 ONWARDS FOR GUIDANCE]**

### **Paper 1 – Court Procedures**

The practice and procedure in the High Court and courts were established under the Magistrates' Courts Act, 1944, motor vehicle accident claims, and criminal procedure.

***This paper is written on the first day of the examinations, usually in the morning session, approximately from 09:00.***

**Paper 2 - Wills and Estates**

The practice and procedure relating to the winding up and distribution of estates of deceased persons.

***This paper is written on the first day of the examinations, usually in the afternoon session, approximately from 14:00.***

**Paper 3 – Professional Legal Ethics [Attorney's Practice]**

The practice, functions and duties of an Attorney, including the ethical duties of an Attorney.

***This paper is written on the second day of the examinations in the morning session, approximately from 09:00.***

**Paper 4 – Bookkeeping [Legal Accounting]**

***This paper is written on the second day of the examinations in the afternoon session, approximately from 14:00.***

**EXAMINATION CRITERIA**

A candidate who attains 50% or more in a paper will be deemed to have passed, and subject to special circumstances, a candidate may have to attend an oral. Candidates who score from 40% and below 50% in any of the papers will be permitted to do an oral in respect of that paper. Candidates who attain less than 40% in any of these papers will be deemed to have failed the paper and will not qualify for an oral.

**REMARK**

Candidates who are dissatisfied with their marks in any section of the examination may have their paper remarked before orals are conducted if:

1. They apply in writing for a remark of the paper to the Legal Practice Provincial Council, where they registered for the examination paper concerned **within three days [3] of the results of the examination becoming available;**
2. They pay a remark fee equivalent to twice the fee for the section of the examination in which the remark is requested. If the remark is successful, the candidate passes the examination as a result of the remark, and the fee will be refunded.

**REGULATIONS**

1. A candidate may complete the four phases of the examinations in any sequence.
2. The golden thread of ethics runs through the whole examination and can only be considered finished after the entire examination has been completed. Questions concerning ethical matters pertaining to the practise of Legal Practitioners may also be asked throughout the allocated examination fields as set out hereunder.

### **COMPOSITION OF THE PAPERS**

1. The Legal Practice Council appoints examiners.
2. Examiners and experts in various fields set the papers. Moderators, appointed from the ranks of the examiners, check, discuss, and approve these papers and review the marked papers to ensure Quality assurance and reasonableness of the marks allocated.

### **PRACTICAL ORIENTATION**

Although the examination emphasises practical aspects and the candidates' understanding of the substantive law and its practical application in practice, this can never be separated from a thorough knowledge of the law, the Acts with regulations and court rules. As new entrants, the primary application of the law in practice is tested.

### **ALLOCATION OF MARKS**

The allocation of marks is a good indication of the detail required. In the examinations, candidates should consider the question paper and plan for each section accordingly.

### **GENERAL**

1. Unless informed to the contrary, all questions should be answered with reference to current legislation, Regulations, Rules, etc.
2. Copies of previous papers are available from the Legal Education and Development [LEAD] website [www.LSSALEAD.org.za](http://www.LSSALEAD.org.za) for free download.
3. The Legal Practice Council registration form has the latest administrative information, including the dates and times of examinations, and these are available on their website: [www.LPC.org.za](http://www.LPC.org.za).
4. **Candidates are to know the practical implementation of various Acts and Regulations, not detailed knowledge or wording of Acts and Regulations.**

**PART 2:       GUIDE TO THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE**  
**COMPETENCY-BASED EXAMINATION FOR**  
**ADMISSION AS AN ATTORNEY**  
**(SYLLABUS)**

**1.       INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1       In terms of the Rules of the Act, for the examinations conducted in respect of  
          High Court Practice  
          Magistrate's Court Practice  
          Criminal Court Procedure  
          Motor Vehicle Accident claims  
          Administration of Estates and drafting of wills  
          Attorneys' Bookkeeping  
          The practice, functions, and duties of a Legal Practitioner

- 1.2       At present, the examination is conducted as follows:

**First paper:     Court Procedures**

The practice and procedure in the High Court and in courts established under the Magistrates' Courts Act, 1944, motor vehicle accident claims, criminal procedure.

This paper is set as a three-hour paper and counts 100 marks.

**Second paper:   Wills and Estates**

The practice and procedure relating to the winding up and distribution of estates of deceased persons.

This paper is set as a one-and-a-half-hour paper, but two hours are allowed for completing it to enable candidates to read the questions carefully before answering them.

The paper counts 100 marks.

**Third paper:   Professional Legal Ethics [Attorney's Practice]**

The practice, functions, and duties of an Attorney, including the ethical duties of an Attorney.

This paper is set as a one-and-a-half-hour paper, but two hours are allowed for completing it to enable candidates to read the questions carefully before answering them.

The paper counts 100 marks.

**Fourth paper: Paper 4 – Bookkeeping [Legal Accounting]**

This paper is set as one-and-a-half hours, but two hours are allowed to complete it. The paper counts 100 marks.

- 1.3** A candidate may complete the four examination papers in any sequence.

In general terms, candidates are tested in the written paper on their ability to draft and record matters related to the fields of practice set out above. They can only be tested by testing their ability to apply the relevant substantive law. Candidates who must present themselves for oral examinations will be tested on their verbal presentation of legal knowledge. Special attention is given to the practical application of the particular fields of law and candidates' knowledge and insight into the ethical standards applicable to a Legal Practitioner's practice.

The examinations are conducted to establish whether candidates meet these standards. Examination questions may be set with more than one objective. In a single question, candidates may be tested on their knowledge of the rules and practice in the courts in whose jurisdiction they are examined and, simultaneously, they may be tested on their ability to examine and analyse facts placed before them, to apply the substantive law to the facts and to draft documents logically and coherently based on the relevant facts.

Questions on Constitutional Law Practice and Ethical Practice can also be asked under any of the allocated examination fields set out hereunder.

**2. NATURE OF THE EXAMINATION: OBJECTIVES**

The content of the syllabus (and the nature of the examination) aims at ensuring that candidates have specific basic skills and experience. The level expected is that of a newly admitted Legal Practitioner in a general medium-sized firm.

This implies the following:

- 2.1** Candidates must have a general understanding of the role of a Legal Practitioner and an officer of the court, the legal profession's role in society, the profession's ethics and an ability to recognise conflicts of interest, the generally applicable principles of practice, ethical difficulties and essential drafting concepts.
- Candidates must know the Legal Practice Council's Code of Conduct as far as they relate to professional conduct.

- ✓ Candidates must be competent and have adequate experience in the basic skills and techniques of Legal Practitioners, and for that purpose:
  - ✓ be able to handle facts and apply legal principles to factual situations;
  - ✓ be able to research legal problems and use the sources of law;
  - ✓ have knowledge of the practical aspects of advocacy (the arguing of elementary cases before courts and tribunals and the effective presentation of written legal arguments), which shall include knowledge of negotiation (e.g. to settle the terms of an agreement, out-of-court settlements, finalising disputes without recourse to the courts - mediation), the preparation for and the conduct of a trial in the high court, the Magistrate's court and other tribunals, the gathering and preparation of evidence and the procedures relating to the calling of witnesses in civil and criminal courts;
  - ✓ understand office procedures and routines, including the keeping of Legal Practitioner's books of accounts and the preparation and rendering of bills of cost and accounts and administering the affairs of clients;
  - ✓ be experienced in drafting documents (straightforward contracts, wills, pleadings, opinions, briefs to counsel, and pleadings in the Magistrate's court and, where relevant, in the High court).
  - ✓ be able to communicate effectively with clients, colleagues, and officials orally and in writing.

The above objectives presuppose that candidates have adequate knowledge of substantive law's relevant principles and provisions.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS PAPERS

The various papers test the following skills and knowledge.

#### 3.1 Paper 1: Court procedure

##### High court

The practical application of the High Court Act and rules.

The following are the essential practical skills to be tested:

- the ability to draft
  - ✓ notices of motion;
  - ✓ affidavits and causes of action for a summons,
  - ✓ other notices and documents in respect of which no prescribed forms exist;
  - ✓ instructions to counsel on pleadings;

In addition to the above, the following prerequisite practice skills will be tested:

- ✓ Locus standi
- ✓ Cause of action
- ✓ Jurisdiction
- ✓ Form of Proceedings

### **Criminal court procedure**

- conduct all types of proceedings in the high court and
- write letters and opinions.

### **Magistrate's court procedure**

The practical application of the Magistrates' Courts Act and rules.

The following are the essential practical skills to be tested:

- Action and application procedures on the foundation of the practical application being inclusive of drafting skills as follows:
  - ✓ All types of pleadings in action and motion proceedings;
  - ✓ All pleadings used during those proceedings, i.e. particulars of claim, a notice of motion;
  - ✓ All types of affidavits that may be applicable during those proceedings;
  - ✓ All notices that can be issued;
  - ✓ All types of defences that can be raised;
  - ✓ All types of judgments and orders that may be asked for.

### **Motor vehicle accident claims**

Candidates should know all aspects of the Multilateral Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund Act 93 of 1989 (as amended), as well as The Road Accident Fund Act 56 of 1996, the regulations promulgated in terms of this Act, as well as the case law concerning the rights of injured persons and dependents and the procedure relating to the formulation, computation and institution of claims against the Fund.

The following are the essential practical skills to be tested:

- The Road Accident Fund Act No. 56 of 1996, specific in issues dealing with future medical treatment as well as non-compliance of claims lodged;
- Locus standi across the board;
- Apportionment of claims;
- Drafting skills specifically pertaining to citations and pleadings;
- The legitimacy of claims;

- All aspects pertaining to damages sustained;
- All aspects pertaining to claim procedures with an emphasis on procedure.

### **Criminal Court procedure**

The following are the essential practical skills to be tested:

- Aspects regarding the prosecutor's role, crime investigation and the various methods to secure the accused's attendance in court.
- The procedure relating to a criminal trial, including bail applications, the procuring of evidence and general working knowledge of the Criminal Procedure Act.
- Without derogating from the above in terms of having to know all the procedures relating to a criminal trial, delegates are advised to pay special attention to the following sections in the said Act:

Sections: 3, 6, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 49, 50, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66, 73, 103, 112, 113, 114, 115, 123, 124, 150, 174, 195, 196, 201, 217, 220 and 297.

## **3.2 Paper 2: Wills and Estates**

The following are the fundamental practical skills to be tested:

- Drafting of Wills and Testate Succession;
- Intestate Succession;
- Administration of Estates;
- Drafting the Liquidation and Distribution Account;
- Calculation of Estate Duty and Estate Duty Payable;
- Trusts
- Knowledge of estate planning.
- Knowledge of the application in practice of the RELEVANT LEGISLATION:
  - ✓ The Wills Act No. 7 of 1953.
  - ✓ The Intestate Succession Act No. 81 of 1987.
  - ✓ Administration of Estates Act No. 66 of 1965.
  - ✓ Regulations to the Estates Act.
  - ✓ Attorneys, Notaries and Conveyancers Admission Act No. 23 of 1934 (Regulation 910).
  - ✓ Estate Duty Act No. 45 of 1955.
  - ✓ Regulations under the Estate Duty Act No. 45 of 1955: Notice No. R1942 of 23 September 1977 - Annuity Tables.
  - ✓ Trust Property Control Act No. 57 Of 1988.
  - ✓ Maintenance of Surviving Spouses Act No. 27 of 1990.
  - ✓ Recognition of Customary Marriages Act No. 120 of 1998.
  - ✓ Reform of Customary Law of Succession and Regulation of Related Matters Act No. 11 of 2009.
  - ✓ Pensions Fund Act No. 24 of 1956 (Section 37C).
  - ✓ Sub-Division of Agricultural Land Act No. 70 of 1970.



- ✓ The Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No. 25 of 2002 (Schedule 1).
- ✓ The Immovable Property (Removal or Modification of Restrictions) Act No. 94 of 1965 (Section 6).
- ✓ The Matrimonial Affairs Act No. 37 of 1953 (Section 5(3)(b)).

### 3.3 **Paper 3: Attorney's Practice**

The attorneys' practice includes professional ethics, which entails all the rules of professional conduct appertaining to a Legal Practitioner in his professional life - as an officer of the court, in his relationship with his client, colleagues, society, and staff - also extra-professionally while he remains in the profession.

- In terms of drafting skills, the implications of having and failing to have mandate and fee agreements;
- The different types of mandates and the contents of the agreements that can exist between the attorney and client;
- Factors to be considered when considering a mandate;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Confidentiality and legal professional privilege;
- The ethical duties of an attorney related to the profession and the code of conduct;
- The content of a fee agreement, including the structure, the tariffs, an explanation of the various fee scales as well as when and how applicable;
- The different types of fees that can be charged and not charged and the factors to consider when establishing the cost structure;
- The various principles considered when evaluating fees;
- The rights of members of the public and clients to dispute the fees and the processes for same;
- The different types of cost orders that a Court of law can award;
- The membership requirements with the Legal Practice Council;
- The liability and extent of the liability in terms of the LPIIF and LPFF (a brief overview)
- To understand marriage in Community of property and out of Community of property and the effect and implications hereof on the various types of contracts
- The classification and applicability of agreements under the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No. 25 of 2002;
- Dismissals, disciplinary processes, notices and warnings under the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995, including CCMA conciliation and arbitration processes.;
- The procedure and implications for strikes (protected and unprotected)
- Insolvency and the requirements pertaining to procedures related to sequestration and liquidation applications and understanding business rescue as part of insolvency practice.
- The implications and consequences on the debtor's estate and persons associated with the debtor's estate, pending the insolvency and after the insolvency is finalised.

The second broad subject that is included in this section is the drafting of the following documents:

- Deeds of sale - movable and immovable goods
- Skills pertaining to movable and immovable property sale agreements, including litigation drafts on such agreements and options to purchase agreements or immovable property.
- Partnership Agreement
- Suretyship - a reference to the relevant Act
- Acknowledgement of debt
- Power of attorney and mandates [attorney and client] {natural and juristic persons}
- Cession, delegation and assignment
- Option: right of pre-emption

- Sale of business
- Lease of movable and immovable property
- Letters of demand
- Pledge
- Cancellation of an agreement
- Indemnity
- Acknowledgment of debt
- Arbitration clauses in an agreement

Relevance of legislation and the protection it allows, as well as the requirements pertaining to the drafting of contracts in so far as they are applicable, such as the National Credit Act 34 of 2005, the Consumer Protection Act No. 68 of 2008, Financial Intelligence Centre Act 38 of 2001, and Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013.

### 3.4 **Paper 4: Legal Practitioner's Accounting [bookkeeping]**

This entails a test concerning the practical skills necessary for keeping Legal Practitioner's books of account. This, therefore, entails the following:

Candidates must thoroughly know the concept of trust money, the essential requirements of the double-entry bookkeeping system as applied to Legal practitioners' bookkeeping, and the functions of the various books of account. They must have sufficient practical knowledge of the supervision of bookkeeping to maintain the books of account required in a Legal Practitioner's office. They must be able to apply accepted measures, controls, and ethical standards to bookkeeping and financial matters.

The following are the fundamental practical skills to be tested:

- To understand the double entry system and capture these as ledger accounts.
  - To know the various books of prime entry [this is where the transactions are initially captured before transferring to the ledger.
- To know the difference between business accounts [including bank accounts] and ledger) compared to Trust accounts [including bank accounts] and ledger.
- To understand the difference and nature of the fees journal, trust journal, transfer journal and general (business) journals
- The treatment of Trust creditors and the difference compared to business creditors.
- Able to do a bank reconciliation of the business and Trust bank accounts.
- Understand the nature and accounting treatment of correspondent attorneys, including acting as a correspondent attorney.
- To know the treatment of the interest in terms of the various Trust account investments:

**Section 86(2)** 100 % of interest vests in and is due to the Fund -S86 (5)(a) | **Section 86(3)** -100 % of interest vests in and is due to the Fund -S86 (5)(a) | **Section 86(4)** - 5% of interest vests in and is due to the Fund -S86 (5)(b)

- Questions on the treatment of VAT in financial transactions are included in this paper.

**Please note:** No bookkeeping [accounting] paper stationery will be provided in the answer books. Candidates must draw the necessary columns for the various books of account required. Calculators may be brought along and utilised for this paper.

#### 4. LEGISLATION

Apart from the other relevant Acts mentioned above, the undermentioned additional acts, as amended, including rules and regulations where applicable, are relevant in all papers but particularly in legal practitioners' practice. **It is essential to know the application of these Acts in practical terms rather than the detailed content.**

- Apportionment of Damages Act, 34 of 1956
- Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of Oaths Act, 16 of 1963
- National Credit Act No 34 of 2005
- Credit Agreements Act, 75 of 1980 (as far as it relates to the recovery of goods and the payment of monies owing)
- Conventional Penalties Act, 15 of 1962
- Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988
- Prescription Act, 68 of 1969
- Legal Practice Act, 28 of 2014
- Insolvency Act, 24 of 1936
- Divorce Act, 70 of 1979
- Matrimonial Property Act, 88 of 1984
- Maintenance Act, 23 of 1963
- Constitution Act, 1996 Consumer Protection Act
- Prevention of Illegal Eviction (PIE) and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act No. 19 of 1998
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
- Legal Practice Act 28 of 2014.
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
- Alienation of Land Act 68 of 1981
- Institution of Legal Proceedings against Certain Organs of State Act, No. 40 of 2002