

Date of Issue: September 2024



The United Kingdom Singapore Law Students' Society Guide to Part A and Relevant Legal Training (RLT)

Introductions

The UKSLSS is proud to present you with our guide to Part A and RLT! If you don't know what either of those mean, we hope this guide helps you figure that out and clarify any doubts you might have as to what hoops UK-educated law students have to jump through to get called to the Singapore Bar.

Many thanks to our contributors, Adalia Yeo, Matthew Tan, Nikhita Nair, Patricia Wang, Sharon Chan and Yufu Zhang for sharing their insights and experiences with preparing for and sitting for Part A.

To all law students who have yet to sit for Part A, we wish you the best of luck, and hope this guide helps!

Part A Examinations

What is the Part A Examination?

The Part A Examination (“**Part A**”) is an examination that Singaporean/Singapore PR students who graduate from overseas universities with an applicable law degree are required to sit for, as part of the process of becoming a qualified person who may be admitted to the Singapore Bar.

Part A consists of five modules that make up the foundation of Singapore law, and is essential for those who want to be certified to practise law in Singapore.

You can think of it this way: local university students have to undergo 4 years of university before taking the Part B Examination to get called, so Relevant Legal Training and Part A makes up another year of school for UK-educated students who only did 3 years of university to get their law degrees.

Why do I have to sit for Part A?

If you have graduated from an overseas scheduled university with an applicable law degree¹ and want to get called to the Singapore Bar and practise law in Singapore, you must first pass Part A.

Persons who graduate with at least a lower second-class honours from an approved university must first pass the Part A Examination **AND** have received Relevant Legal Training (“**RLT**”) for a period of not less than 6 months within a continuous period of 8 months². Following this, they must take the Part B Course and pass the Part B Examination to be admitted as a Lawyer Non-Practitioner. To be admitted as an Advocate & Solicitor (with a practising certificate), they must go on to complete a Training Contract (“**TC**”) as well.

¹If you are taking an undergraduate law degree in the UK you will probably fulfil this requirement. The 11 universities with applicable law degrees are listed on the Singapore Institute of Legal Education's website and, as at publication of this document in September 2024, are Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, KCL, LSE, Nottingham, Oxford, QMUL, UCL and Warwick. <https://www.sile.edu.sg/united-kingdom-approved-universities>

² S8 of the Legal Profession (Qualified Persons) Rules

What modules do I have to take in Part A?

Students are required to take five modules.

1. Singapore Legal Systems
2. Evidence Law
3. Land Law
4. Criminal Law
5. Company Law

What is the format of the examination papers in Part A?

All papers consist of Multiple-Choice Questions (“**MCQ**”), and each of the papers are 2 hours long. The examination is **open book**, but internet access is not allowed.

The number of questions ranges from 45-60, depending on the module. The number of options (i.e. a, b, c, d etc.) ranges from 4-8, depending on the module.

Internet access is not allowed during the examination, thus it is key that you have comprehensive notes to help you sit for the exam successfully.

How do I prepare for Part A?

There is a lot of content, so do start early. On average, it may take you 2-3 months to comfortably cover everything.

You can use:

1. Seniors’ notes;
2. Resources from colleagues; or
3. Course material if you decide to take preparation courses (further elaborated below).

Regardless, do make sure that you annotate them and make your own notes to ensure that you really absorb and familiarise yourself with the course material.

You also need to understand the legislation, where it applies, and how it applies. The principles laid out in cases, as well as the *ratio decidendi*, are key as well, as some questions are case specific.

It is recommended that students download all the cases and statutes in the reading list for easy reference during your preparation and the actual examination.

Studying for Part A is more similar to studying for “typical Singapore exams” like O-Level or A-Level exams than preparing for an essay-based exam like the ones you might have had in law school.

What preparatory courses are available for Part A?		
Name	Singapore Institute of Legal Education (“SILE”) Course	Singapore Management University - RHT Course
Format	Online webinars	Online webinars
When is it held?	Offered only to Session 1 exam-takers	Available during Session 1 and Session 2
Other details	<p>Offers sample questions after every seminar.</p> <p>Most sample questions are similar to what is tested in the examination.</p> <p>Some classes provided by SILE may require updating. For instance, some contributors shared that certain classes went through hypothetical long-answer questions, which was not reflective of the type of questions being tested during the actual examination³.</p>	<p>According to the course overview, it consists of eight 3-hour sessions for each of the five modules.</p> <p>The lectures are held online at 7pm Singapore time. Participants can attend after work or while abroad.</p> <p>Contributors have shared that the sample MCQ provided at the end of the course are quite similar to the actual exam papers, save for the Singapore Legal Systems questions which are said to be more analytical than the sample questions provided.</p> <p>Reviews from contributors: “pretty good to teach content”. However, students are advised that a “significant” amount of self-study is still required.</p> <p>Conducted by Prof. Walter Woon SC and team.</p>
Cost for Singapore Citizens/PR < 40 years old	\$3,815.00 (inclusive of examination fees)	\$1,635.00 (exclusive of examination fees)

When do I sit for Part A?		
Students can choose to sit for Part A during their RLT, in Session 2, or after their RLT, in Session 1 of the next year following their completion of their RLT.		
Question	Session 1	Session 2
Timeline (Taking 2025 as year of graduation)	<p>Graduation: July 2025</p> <p>RLT: August 2025 - January 2026</p> <p>Study Break: January-April; study for Part A -</p>	<p>Graduation: July 2025</p> <p>RLT: August 2025 - September 2025</p> <p>Study Break + Part A: Oct-Nov 2025</p> <p>RLT continued: Nov/Dec-March 2026</p>

³ The teaching style and content may change for future batches of SILE’s Part A course.

(timeline diagram available at last page)	Part A Exam: April/May 2026 Part B: July - December 2026 TC: January - December 2027 Call Date: ~ Early 2028	Part A Exam (if reattempting): April/May 2026 Part B: July - December 2026 TC: January - December 2027 Call Date: ~ Early 2028
When is the exam?	April-May, after completing your RLT	October-November, during your RLT
When do I register?	Late August-September in the preceding year	April-May in the same year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you intend to attempt Part A immediately after you graduate, during your RLT, you need to register for it before you have graduated. Please refer to SILE's website for more details, which will likely be available around April.
What happens if I fail?	If you fail Session 1, you will not be able to sit for Part B in the same year. This may cause delays to your TC, and even your eventual call date.	If you fail Session 2, you will be able to re-sit Part A in Session 1 in the next year. If you pass your next attempt during Session 1, you will be able to sit for Part B in the same year. Your call date will be unaffected by Part A.
Other details	Sitting for Session 1 following your RLT allows you to dedicate yourself fully to studying for the examination. However, if you do not pass on your first attempt in Session 1, you will not be able to sit for Part B in the same year. This may cause delays to the start of your TC, and even your call date.	Sitting for Session 2 during your RLT means you will have to take a study break of around 4-6 weeks. This will delay the end of your RLT. Part A is content heavy, and it might be difficult to balance RLT with studying. If you fail Session 2, you can re-attempt in Session 1 in the next year, and start your TC/get called "on schedule", assuming you do not fail again/fail Part B.

What is Relevant Legal Training?

Relevant Legal Training (“**RLT**”) is a period of supervised training in relation to the practice of Singapore law that students who graduated with an applicable law degree from overseas universities are required to undergo as part of the process of getting called to the Singapore Bar.

RLT is typically done via a formal training arrangement with a Singapore law practice. RLT can also be fulfilled by working as a Judicial Service Officer, or a Legal Service Officer or both, or through working under the supervision of a relevant legal officer.⁴

All students who graduate with an applicable law degree from an eligible UK university must undergo RLT after passing the final examination for their degree.

How long is RLT?

RLT is minimally 6 months long. The 6 months must be completed within a continuous period of 8 months. This means that you can take breaks or leave during your RLT, but doing so will delay your end date as you will be required to “pay back” the days of leave or break you took. This includes medical leave, even if you have a medical certificate.

Delaying the end of your RLT may affect the amount of time you have to study for Part A, if you are sitting for Session 1. As mentioned above, it is not recommended to rush the study process as there is a lot of content to cover and failing Session 1 will prevent you from being able to sit for Part B in the same year.

If you have already passed Part A and are not sitting for Session 1, delaying the end of your RLT will give you a shorter break before the Part B course begins.

Is RLT the same as my Training Contract (“**TC**”)?

No, the RLT and TC are different. The training period of RLT does not count towards the training period of your TC.

To clarify doubts, this means that UK students do have a longer training period than local students, as they are required to undergo an extra 6 months’ of training during RLT. In a way, this makes up for the additional year of university studies that Singapore-educated students have, compared to UK-educated students.

What is RLT like?⁵

RLT is more similar to a TC than an internship.

In general, trainees are given more responsibilities and work than interns, and it is similar to what you would undergo during a TC. It might even be similar to associate-level work.

⁴ Please refer to the Legal Profession (Qualified Persons) Rules, under s2 “Definitions” and s8 “Persons conferred degrees of Bachelor of Laws by institutions in United Kingdom”, for more details about the various types of RLT one can undergo to become a qualified person.

⁵ Based on personal accounts of those who have completed their RLT.

Since it is over a longer period than an internship, you can expect to be involved in more files or deals. Tasks will probably be less on an ad-hoc basis, and will have more continuity.

You will probably still be asked to do things like proofreading or legal research but you can expect more exposure and responsibilities, as well as higher expectations than during your internships.

When do I apply for my RLT?


Generally, students apply for their RLT concurrently with their TC, during the summer break of their second year. In other words, students apply for it when they are rising third-year law students.

Do note, however, that it is not a given that you are offered RLT and TC at the same time. It is not uncommon for firms to offer them separately.

The firm may choose to offer you a TC based on a few factors, such as your performance during your RLT or whether you pass Part A, but this is up to their discretion.

You do not need to do your RLT and your TC at the same firm to get called to the bar.

Links and Resources

Legal Profession (Qualified Persons) Rules	Definition of “relevant legal training”; s8 for requirements for UK graduates	https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/LPA1966-R15?DocDate=20240716#pr9-
Legal Profession Act 1966	Definition of “qualified person”	https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/LPA1966#pr2-
SMU-RHT Part A Course	General Details and information about the Part A preparation course.	https://academy.smu.edu.sg/courses/part-bar-course#calculate
SILE Part A	General details and information relating to Part A. Please refer to SILE’s website under “Current and Upcoming Sessions” of Part A for the most updated information and dates.	https://www.sile.edu.sg/part-a
PART A BAR EXAM: guide + vlog 	Helpful video from one of our contributors, Zhang Yufu, about her personal experience taking Part A. Yufu sat for Session 2 and did not take any of the preparatory courses. Do check out her YouTube channel for other videos on her experiences with RLT and choosing a TC too!	https://youtu.be/UJ1E-o0fkrw?si=bp_xPiG68hjTM4WT

Indemnities and Disclaimers:

This document compiles information and materials that are readily available on the relevant websites, as well as the opinions of those who have sat for the Part A Examination in 2023 and 2024. This document does not claim to have completely factually accurate or updated information, nor is it intended to constitute professional advice. Readers are strongly advised to double-check the relevant sources.

[The rest of this page is deliberately left blank]

TIMELINE FROM GRADUATION, RLТ, PART A, PART B TO GETTING CALLED

