



Admissions Policy Academic Year 2023-2024

1. Introduction

The Association of Costs Lawyer Training (ACLT) is accredited by the Costs Lawyer Standards Board (CLSB) as an Accredited Study Provider to deliver the Costs Lawyer Professional Qualification (CLPQ)¹. The CLPQ is a course of study in costs law and practice, which is delivered by ACLT. The purpose of the CLPQ is to develop and assess the legal and technical knowledge and skills set out in **the CLSB Competency Statement**, to ensure that all Costs Lawyers meet the requisite standard of competency for authorisation.

ACLT's Admissions Policy is informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the *Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access*. The QAA's Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities is assured and enhanced. This policy sits within ACLT's Quality Framework which is designed to safeguard the academic standards of ACLT and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the Quality Framework.

This document outlines the admissions process for the ACLT CLPQ. It is approved by the ACLT Board and is reviewed annually.

¹ACLT's accreditation from the CLSB is subject to periodic renewal and is due to be renewed during 2023. Offers issued for admission in September 2023 are made subject to accreditation from the CLSB being renewed.

2. Entry Requirements

The CLSB Training Rules 2023 and the CLSB Accredited Study Provider Handbook 2023 does not stipulate minimum entry requirements for the CLPQ. However, ACLT must ensure that its admissions and entry criteria safeguard students from enrolling in a course of study that they are unlikely to complete or that does not meet their needs.

A prior qualification is not required for entry onto the CLPQ. However, as the CLPQ is assessed at the equivalence of Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Level 6 it is recommended that students are able to demonstrate prior qualification to at least Level 3 on the RQF and at least a Grade C or 4 in GCSE English Language and Mathematics or equivalent. Candidates unable to demonstrate qualification higher than Level 2, but with very good work experience relevant to costs law may also be eligible.

Students must submit electronic (scanned) documentary evidence of entry level qualifications with an application, if they are not submitting evidence of higher-level qualifications for exemption purposes. See ACLT's Exemption policy for further details.

If you have any questions relating to entry requirements specific to your situation, please contact support@acltraining.co.uk so that we can advise you.

3. Age

The recommended minimum age of an applicant to start the Costs Lawyer Professional Qualification is 18. Students must be 18 at the date on which study will commence with ACLT. This recommendation is in line with courses of a similar equivalent academic level e.g. undergraduate law degree. If requested by ACLT, applicants will need to provide proof of their date of birth before their application is considered.

4. Employment details and references

Applicants are required to provide information about their work experience starting with their current employment details (or most recent). This information may be used to assess an applicant's suitability to study the Costs Lawyer Professional Qualification (CLPQ).

Applicants are required to provide the contact details of two referees (one professional and one character) who would be prepared to write in support of their application. The personal referee should be a person who has known the applicant for at least three years. The professional referee should be a professional person who has worked with the applicant, preferably as the applicant's manager/supervisor. Each referee must know the applicant well enough to vouch for their character and know of any problems the applicant may have had, for example, convictions, disciplinary issues and plagiarism.

ACLT may routinely request references where those will assist in determining an applicant's suitability to study the CLPQ.

Applicants should note that in order to qualify as a Costs Lawyer, and in addition to successful completion of the CLPQ you must have completed, or be currently undertaking, two years of Qualifying Experience.

Qualifying Experience is work undertaken in costs law and practice for a period of two years under the supervision of a suitably qualified person. This can be carried out before, during or after studying for the CLPQ, subject to certain conditions.

Whilst it is not compulsory to be currently working in a setting appropriate for Qualifying Experience prior to admission on the CLPQ, applicants should have plans to obtain employment permissible for Qualifying Experience and be able to demonstrate they understand the CLSB's requirements for the same. ACLT reserves the right to interview applicants who are not working in a setting relevant to Costs Law as part of the application process.

5. Applicants from overseas

ACLT does not hold a licence from the **UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI)** to sponsor students for a Student visa (formerly known as Tier 4 (general) Student visa), therefore cannot sponsor international students onto its programmes who require a student visa to study in the UK.

Applicants who do not require sponsorship to study in the UK, but whose first language is not English, must be able to demonstrate a level of English language proficiency above C1 level on the Common European Framework. This is due to the linguistic complexity of the subject matter. If you are an applicant whose first language is not English, or are not a national of a majority speaking English country and / or have not completed secondary or degree level study in English, you will need to demonstrate that you have a recognised English Language qualification equivalent to a minimum overall IELTS Academic score of 7.5 with a minimum of 7.0 in each area.

ACLT uses data from ECCTIS organisations: UK ENIC (formerly UK NARIC) and the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (UK CPQ) to assess overseas academic and professional qualifications. Applicants may be required to obtain a Statement of Comparability for the purposes of their application at their own cost.

Applicants should ordinarily be domiciled in England and Wales. For those working in a relevant legal overseas setting seeking to qualify as a Costs Lawyer, ACLT reserves the right to take advice from the CLSB to deem eligibility for entry onto our courses, and not withstanding any issues pertaining to right to study in the UK.

6. Guidance for disabled students

ACLT welcomes applications from students with disabilities and makes reasonable adjustments to facilitate their access to courses.

Any applications from students with disabilities will be considered on the same academic grounds as those for other candidates.

Disabled students are advised to notify ACLT of any disability as part of the application process that may impact upon their engagement with the programme so that reasonable adjustments can be made during their studies. Applicants may wish to refer to the ACLT Student Learning Support policy.

7. Association of Costs Lawyers membership

Applicants will automatically be enrolled as a trainee Costs Lawyer member of the Association of Costs Lawyers (ACL) as a benefit of being admitted to the Costs Lawyer Professional Qualification. This membership will be renewed annually for students on the course. Subscriptions for membership are paid by ACLT as a benefit of studying with ACLT.

An application for membership of the ACL as a trainee costs lawyer is incorporated into the application process for the CLPQ. It is not a requirement that ACLT students

are members of ACL and it is open to applicants to indicate their wish to opt out of ACL trainee membership at any point during their course. If a student wishes to terminate their membership of ACL at any time during the course, they may do so by contacting the ACL office (enquiries@costslawyer.co.uk).

8. Timing of applications

Applications must be completed and submitted with the required electronic documentation by the published closing date for the respective intake.

Applications after the published closing date will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be considered until the following academic year's intake. The application form must be completed in full, with the correct information, and should be accompanied by the following:

- Electronic (scanned) documentary evidence of entry level qualifications or higher-level qualifications relied upon for exemptions.
- Payment of the application administration fee in line with ACLT payment due dates.

Applications will not be processed until all payments and documentary evidence has been received by ACLT.

9. Character and suitability

The Costs Lawyers Standards Board (CLSB) is responsible for setting and ensuring standards for all Costs Lawyers practising in England and Wales and the Association of Costs Lawyers is responsible for setting and maintaining standards for trainee Costs Lawyers.

Applicants are not required to make any declarations to ACLT as part of the admissions process for our courses but should be aware that they must disclose to the CLSB the events set out in Rule 4.2 of the **CLSB Practising Rules** which form part of the Costs Lawyers Handbook – see <https://clsb.info/for-costs-lawyers/costs-lawyer-handbook/> including:

- a) when making an application for a Practising Certificate;
- b) when making an application to remove a condition on a Practising Certificate (including to remove a condition imposed under an interim suspension order pursuant to the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures); and
- c) at any other time as soon as reasonably practicable after the event has occurred

10. Declarations

In the event of any declarations made to the CLSB and notified to ACLT, ACLT will consider the applicant's suitability and whether any conditions should be imposed.

A failure to disclose, or the provision of misleading information on an application, can be taken into account by ACLT when considering the suitability of an applicant to be admitted to the ACLT course.

If matters arise during the course regarding a student's character and suitability, the student must notify ACLT of this forthwith to enable consideration to be given. A failure to make such a disclosure may result in enrolment being suspended or, in appropriate cases, terminated.

11. Equality and diversity

ACLT values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Admissions are conducted in accordance with the ACLT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

12. Consideration of applications

Once the application has been received, it will be reviewed by ACLT to ensure all entry requirements are met.

Applications can only be considered if completed in full and accompanied with relevant electronic documentation and payment of the application fee.

ACLT charges a one-off, non-refundable application fee payment of £50 per application.

In determining the outcome of the application ACLT will consider whether an applicant has demonstrated they have the:

- attitude, motivation, and commitment to study the qualification;
- skills, achievements and work experience that relate to the course;
- capacity to undertake independent working and their ability to adapt to new situations and circumstances; and
- experience of digital working.

Where ACLT needs clarification in determining that an applicant has demonstrated the above they may seek further information from the applicant, a reference from the applicant's named referee and/or from the CLSB.

A decision should be made in respect of an application, and communicated to the applicant, by ACLT within four weeks of receipt of payment and application. Where further information is required, these timescales may be extended.

13. Appealing a decision

If an applicant wishes to request a review against an application decision, then this should be done in accordance with the requirements set out in this policy, by emailing support@acltraining.co.uk.

Where reasonably practicable, your appeal request will be acknowledged within three working days and will then be processed in accordance with the ACLT Appeals policy. In the event an application is refused by ACLT and an appeal is unsuccessful the applicant may, within 14 days of notification of the appeal decision, make a written appeal to the CLSB.

14. Right of refusal

ACLT reserves the right to reject applicants to its programmes for any lawful reason where it considers it is in its interests to do so. Admissions may also be refused, or enrolment withdrawn to applicants or students whom it judges may constitute a present or future risk to staff, students or others, or whose evidenced behaviour is such that they would be subject to Disciplinary Procedures under ACLT Regulations if they had been enrolled.

15. Enrolment and registration

The commencement date of a course is taken as the enrolment date. These dates are the 1 September before you commence studying in September and 1 February before you commence studying in February or the nearest following working day.

Successful applicants are issued with an offer letter confirming their place on their chosen course. Students are considered to have accepted their offer and enrolled when all conditions of admission have been met e.g. proof of relevant qualifications, ID, right to study, course offer made, payment of fees.

ACLT's admissions process is subject to the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013. Once you have applied for a place on an ACLT course, have been offered a place and you are sent the invoice for the forthcoming academic year's fees, you have the right to cancel your acceptance by informing ACLT in writing within 14 calendar days of having been sent the invoice.

Students will be issued with an invoice for their course fees within one month of the start date of the course, payment of which must have been received as per payment terms. Payment of invoices must be received by the commencement date of the course (usually 1 September and 1 February or the nearest following working day).

If you decide not to take up your place on the course, you should notify us as soon as possible. Refunds will be considered subject to the terms of the ACLT Refund and Withdrawal policy.

Changes to, withdrawal and discontinuation of courses

ACLT aims to provide its advertised courses. However, if there is any significant change to the course between the time at which an offer is made and the course is due to start, ACLT will inform applicants (and or their employers if appropriate) of the options available to them and their best course of action. Such changes may include but are not limited to:

- Failure to recruit a viable cohort of students to run a course or module.
- A major subject content change to a course, which means the introduction of one or more new and/or withdrawal of one or more existing modules.
- A change in status of a module e.g., making a module optional.
- Significant changes to the assessment on the course, e.g., adding or removing a type of assessment (moving from exam based to coursework-based assessment or vice versa, or adding in a presentation as a mode of assessment).
- Suspension or closure/withdrawal of a course (programme).
- Change to a course (programme) or module title.
- Changes in accreditation of a degree course e.g., loss or gaining of an accreditation, decision to allow accreditation to elapse/not apply for re-accreditation from a professional statutory or regulatory body.
- A significant change to the extra costs associated with a course, e.g., the addition of costs of £100 or more where no extra costs currently exist, or £100 or more in addition to the existing costs already specified.
- Any changes to the academic regulations which impact significantly on progression or award requirements.
- Changes to location of delivery or mode of delivery

Where ACLT receives insufficient applicants for a viable cohort, we may choose to reschedule delivery of the course for a future date. Applicants will then be offered the option to defer their entry to the next sitting or receive a refund subject to the terms of the ACLT Refund and Withdrawal policy.