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**Regulations: Legal
Practitioners Ordinance,
Practice Directions and Rules**

CIRCULAR 09-780 (SD)

5 October 2009

**LEGAL PRACTITIONERS
(RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION) RULES**

Extension to Registered Foreign Lawyers in Hong Kong Law Firms

RME obligations

1. With effect from 1 November 2009, while the Legal Practitioners (Risk Management Education) Rules (“Rules”) continue to apply to principals and non-principals of Hong Kong law firms and trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commences on or after 1 November 2008, they have been extended to apply to registered foreign lawyers practising as such in Hong Kong law firms.

For registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong law firms

2. A registered foreign lawyer who has worked as such in a Hong Kong law firm for 100 days or more in an RME practice year (from 1 November to 31 October) shall be required to complete a core programme before the end of the practice year in which the Rules first apply to him and thereafter, to attend at least 3 hours of electives with each subsequent practice year or failing which, at least 6 hours of electives within the first and second succeeding practice years.
3. The core programme for registered foreign lawyers consists of two half-day modules.

For solicitors (reminder)

4. A solicitor to whom the Rules apply shall be required to complete a core programme before the end of the practice year in which the Rules first apply to him and thereafter, to attend at least 3 hours of electives with each subsequent practice year or failing which, at least 6 hours of electives within the first and second succeeding practice years.
5. The principal’s core courses consist of 4 half-day modules on the basis that the participants attending the course have already completed the non-principal’s core courses before their promotion to partnership.

6. Accordingly, with respect to the solicitors who are required to complete the principal's core courses from the 2007/08 RME practice year onwards,
 - a. those who have already completed the non-principal's core courses will proceed to complete the principal's core courses;
 - b. those who have not completed the non-principal's core courses will complete it first before proceeding to the principal's core courses.

For trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commences on or after 1 November 2008 (reminder)

7. For trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commences on or after 1 November 2008, they will be subject to the RME obligations as follows:-
 - a. During the first practice year in which the Rules apply to them, they shall complete the trainee solicitor's core courses consisting of two half-day modules.
 - b. During the second practice year in which the Rules apply to them, they shall complete a compulsory first elective for trainee solicitors consisting of two half-day modules.
8. The compliance of RME obligations including the completion of the trainee solicitor's core courses and the compulsory first elective for trainee solicitors is a condition of admission for trainee solicitors.
9. Trainee solicitors who have completed the trainee solicitor's core courses and the compulsory first elective shall be exempted from completion of the non-principal's core courses during the practice year when they start working as a non-principal in a Hong Kong firm after admission as a Hong Kong solicitor. They nevertheless remain subject to the annual RME elective obligations.

For trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commences before 1 November 2008 (reminder)

10. The Rules do not apply to trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commenced before 1 November 2008. They are not subject to any RME obligations as trainee solicitors.
11. When they work as a non-principal in Hong Kong firm after admission as a Hong Kong solicitor, they will be subject to the Rules for the first time:
 - a. during the first practice year that the Rules apply to them, they have to complete the non-principal's core courses which consist of two half-day modules;

- b. during every subsequent practice year, they will complete at least 3 hours of electives within each subsequent practice year or failing which, at least 6 hours of electives within the immediately succeeding practice year.

The RME Information Package updated with the extension of the Rules to registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong firms with effect from 1 November 2009 is posted on the Law Society website at:

http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk/pub_e/rme/home/a_legal_practitioners_rules.asp

Enrol early

12. As the end of the practice year approaches, the courses get fully subscribed quickly. You are advised to enroll as early as possible in order to secure a place on the courses of your choice. The schedule of courses is posted on the website of the Hong Kong Academy of Law at www.hklawacademy.org.

Circular 09-734 (SD) is superseded.