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**Law Society: General**

**CIRCULAR 10-5 (SD)**

**4 January 2010**

**LEGAL PRACTITIONERS  
(RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION) RULES  
(Reminder of RME Obligations)**

With effect from the 2009/2010 RME practice year, the Hong Kong Academy of Law will offer the RME core courses for trainees free of charge to those who are required to complete them within the practice year in which the courses are held.

For those trainee solicitors who completed the core courses, they shall complete the trainee solicitors' compulsory first elective which consist of two half-day modules during the second practice year in which they are subject to the RME obligations.

**Reminder of RME obligations**

1. With effect from 1 November 2009, while the Legal Practitioners (Risk Management Education) Rules ("Rules") continue to apply to the principals and non-principals working in 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 solicitors and registered foreign lawyers**

2. A solicitor and a registered foreign lawyer practising as such in a Hong Kong law firm 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 each of them 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. For solicitors, there are two types of core courses designed for principals and non-principals respectively. 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.
4. 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 them first before proceeding to the principal's core courses.
5. For registered foreign lawyers, the core courses consist of 2 half-day modules.

**For trainee solicitors whose first trainee solicitor contract commences on or after 1 November 2008**

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 commenced before 1 November 2008**

9. 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.
10. 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.

### **Reminder of the expansion of the scope of RME electives**

11. With effect from 1 May 2009, the Rules have been amended so that the definition of “RME course” is expanded to include not only courses, but also such activities as approved by the Law Society.
12. Writing articles and books, undertaking legal research, writing a dissertation and participation in approved committees are accredited RME electives provided that these activities satisfy the RME accreditation criteria that they deal primarily with matters related to risk management in legal practice and be of significant intellectual and practical content.
13. A list of approved committees and working parties that deal with matters related to risk management in legal practice and hence accredited for RME purposes is included in the RME Information Package which is posted on the Society website at [www.hklawsoc.org.hk](http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk).

### **Enrolment**

14. The schedule of RME courses on offer is posted on the website of the Hong Kong Academy of Law at [www.hklawacademy.org](http://www.hklawacademy.org).

Circular 09-963 is superseded.