

I mprove professionalism and reduce risk within your practice through Lexcel, the Law Profession's quality standard

The legal profession is constantly evolving and changing, therefore keeping ahead and ensuring you continue to hold your clients' confidence is crucial.

It is anticipated that the Solicitors' Practice Rules will shortly be amended to require all firms to prove that they are managing themselves correctly. The easiest way to prove this internally and externally is by having the Lexcel quality mark.

What is Lexcel?

Lexcel is the formal mark of sound practice management in the legal profession, demonstrating that your organisation meets all the mandatory aspects of the Law Society's Practice Management Standards. Written specifically for the legal profession it is applicable to any size and type of law firm, from a sole practitioner, to a large multi-sited city firm, to an in-house legal department.

Lexcel covers the eight areas of practice management:

- Structure and Policies
- Strategy, the Provision of Services and Marketing
- Financial Management
- Facilities and IT
- People Management
- Supervision and Operational Risk Management
- Client Care
- File and Case Management

The Lexcel Standard has gained acceptance as a valuable aid to good business practice and improved customer satisfaction.

What are the benefits?

In times of increased competition and demand from clients for good value and a quality service, Lexcel can provide a competitive advantage and peace of mind for clients. Research has shown that failures in administration and service delivery, rather than a lack of legal knowledge tend to lead to most complaints and claims against solicitors. This - coupled with the increasing pressures to meet and comply with certain legislative provisions - means Lexcel will provide you with a framework to take preventative action and put systems and procedures in place which will help you to minimise mistakes and meet those legislative requirements.

Benefits that could be achieved by working with Lexcel include:

- Increased profitability
- Minimise mistakes
- Effective risk management
- Improved client care leading to increased client retention
- Assist with compliance against the proposed new practice management rules
- Reduced premiums on your professional indemnity insurance
- Provides a competitive advantage and improved marketability
- Management efficiency, excellence will become standard
- Assistance with Best Value compliance for local authorities

The Lexcel quality mark unequivocally demonstrates that service levels are high and clients can expect to be very satisfied. Lexcel helps attract high calibre employees who will enhance the practice's reputation and earning power.

If you are an organisation working within the legal profession, external recognition to the Law Society's Lexcel quality mark is a valuable indicator of your commitment to providing a quality customer service.

Lexcel Implementation

It is essential that this 'Best Practice' standard has effective processes to support it. This is where Blackmores can help you. We are experts on quality standards within the Law profession. With our dedicated team of professional consultants we can identify, develop, document and add value to your core process.

It is essential that these core process and practices are firmly embedded within your law firm to improve efficiency, reduce risk and delight your clients. Therefore we can assist you to develop clear, user-friendly processes that will help you to achieve Lexcel accreditation.

How does Lexcel compare with other standards?

Lexcel overlaps with other management quality standards, such as ISO 9001, the Legal Services Commission's Specialist Quality Mark and Investors in People. If you already have one of these, you will get exemptions for your Lexcel assessment, and Blackmores can help you to seamlessly integrate the systems to avoid duplication and unnecessary paperwork.

Practices can undergo simultaneous assessment for IIP and ISO during the Lexcel process.

If you are interested in implementing the Lexcel standard, or would like further information

on **Blackmores** call +44 (0)1462 450591 or e-mail enquiries@blackmoresuk.com

Further information can also be found on www.blackmoresuk.com