

Assessing Advocacy Skills

International Advocacy Conference
2014

Kenneth Campbell QC

Context

- The Faculty of Advocates
- Approximately 470 practising members
- Intake of intrants: 12-24 p.a.
- Route to qualification

Context

- Level of qualification of intrants
- The Faculty's skills training programme:
 - 8-9 months
 - 3 skills training courses
 - 1-to-1 working with devilmaster

The Problem

- A well-developed skills training programme, but no objective measure of competence in key advocacy skills

Our solution

- The Scheme for Assessment of Devils
- http://www.advocates.org.uk/downloads/becoming_training/devilshandbook13_14.pdf

What are we assessing?

- Drafting a written opinion
- Drafting written pleading
- Examining a witness
- Making a submission to a judge

What are we assessing?

- Competence
- Not relative quality
- Public interest dimension

What are we assessing?

- Analysis, purpose & structure
- Presentation techniques
- Questioning skills

What do the intrants bring?

- Analytical skills developed at university and the workplace
- Skills developed on the Foundation Course
- Skills developed with devilmaster

Methodology

- Midpoint of devilling
- Conducted over one week
- Published criteria
- Different assessor for each skill
- Involvement in skills training programme

Standards

- Benchmark: reasonably competent newly-admitted advocate
- Outcomes:
- Feb: Competent/Working Towards Competence
- May: Competent/Not Competent

Working Towards Competence

- Notes from assessor
- Role of devilmaster
- Further assessment in May

Review

- Review after assessment in February
- On request of devil found to be working towards competence (in 1 or more area)
- Written submission within 14 days of notification of assessment
- Review by 3 person sub-committee
- Tight timetable

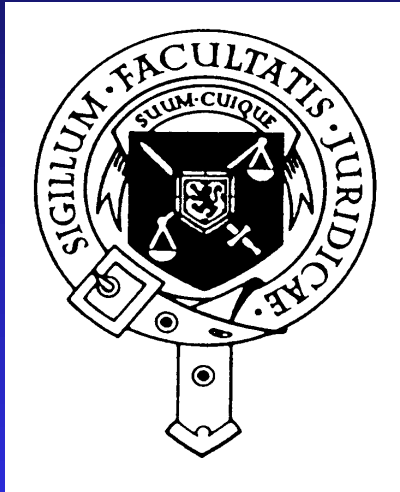
Review

- Review after assessment in May
- Preliminary review by Board of Assessors
- Full review at request of devil
- Written submissions
- Tight timetable
- Test applied by the Board

Process review

- Board of Assessors
- Judicial input
- Review of process
- Assessor feedback
- Feedback to training process

Does it work?



Kenneth Campbell QC
Advocates Library
Parliament House
Edinburgh EH1 1RF

0131 226 5071

Kenneth.campbell@advocates.org.uk