



Faculty of Advocates

Annual Statement on Quality Assurance 2025

The Faculty of Advocates is the independent professional body for advocates in Scotland. It regulates professional practice, conduct and discipline, and supports the highest standards of advocacy. The Faculty's Quality Assurance (QA) Programme helps to maintain these standards by assessing advocacy skills and providing reassurance to the public, the courts and the legal profession.

Introduced in 2016, the QA Programme requires members to demonstrate effective advocacy through a structured oral submission (for example, a short debate or an application made to a court). Assessments focus on how well the advocate assists the court to deciding the issue before it. Performance is assessed against established criteria, including case analysis, structure, use of language, engagement with the decision-maker, use of legal authorities, and presentation and use of documents.

Each year, around one fifth of the practising Bar is assessed, starting with the most senior members. Advocates select an oral advocacy exercise from the choice of a civil or criminal context, reflecting their main area of practice. Presentations are video-recorded and assessed by senior advocates nominated by the Dean and trained by the Director of Training and Education.

If the required standard is not met, the advocate undertakes a second assessment using a different exercise and assessor, with feedback provided in between. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the advocate must complete the Faculty's full training and assessment programme ("devilling") in the following year before resuming practice.

In 2025, 93 members were assessed. Of these, 92 met the required standard at the initial assessment, with one member meeting the required standard on reassessment following support from the Faculty's Director of Training and Education.

The QA Programme is a key element of the Faculty's approach to maintaining high standards of advocacy. Working alongside professional rules and continuing professional development, it provides assurance that members consistently maintain high standards of advocacy. The programme has attracted interest from other legal bodies considering similar approaches to professional standards and continues to play an important role in demonstrating the Faculty's commitment to excellence and accountability in advocacy.