

Explanatory Note to Standard Directions & Glossary

including template answer

EXPLANATORY NOTE TO STANDARD DIRECTIONS WITH GLOSSARY AND ANSWER TEMPLATE

Note:

If you are an unrepresented Respondent, please read our “Information Guide for Unrepresented Respondents”.

If you are an unrepresented Applicant, please read our “Information Guide for Unrepresented Applicants”.

This Explanatory Note replaces the version dated January 2025.

1. When the Tribunal issues proceedings it gives instructions to the parties on how they are to prepare the case. These instructions are known as “Standard Directions” [[Rule 20 SDPR 2019](#)]. They are issued in two parts: the [Part 1 Standard Directions](#) when proceedings are issued, and the [Part 2 Standard Directions](#) at or shortly after the Case Management Hearing.
2. The Standard Directions are important and must be adhered to. They assist the Tribunal in achieving the ‘Overriding Objective’: to deal with cases justly and at proportionate cost [[Rule 4 SDPR 2019](#)]. The parties are jointly responsible for ensuring the overriding objective is met. Amongst other things, they must ensure that the case does not drift and that the timetable set out in the Standard Directions is met.
3. The proceedings are prepared and listed so that the substantive hearing concludes **within 9 months of the date the Part 1 Standard Directions are issued**. That limit will be exceeded only where the Tribunal is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional, and any extension is a matter for the Tribunal alone; it is not something the parties can agree between themselves. Every date in the Standard Directions is set to achieve that limit, and the parties must conduct the proceedings, and frame any application, consistently with it.
4. The Standard Directions should be regarded as a structure designed to ensure that all matters relevant to the case are identified and available to both the Tribunal and the parties before the substantive hearing. Some of the Standard Directions will set out a date by which the Applicant and/or Respondent must complete a piece of essential case preparation. At the end of the Part 1 Standard Directions there is a Summary table, which is completed with the actual dates in your case and provides a single point of reference for the timetable as it applies.
5. There are several purposes behind the Standard Directions. One is to enable the parties to get a full understanding of each other’s case, so it becomes clear which parts of the case are disputed and which are not. The Tribunal needs to consider only the disputed parts in order to make a decision. Both the matters which are agreed and the matters which are disputed are to be set out by the Respondent in the Answer. After reading the Answer, the Applicant may submit a Reply.
6. Another purpose of the Standard Directions is to ensure that the Tribunal can make the right arrangements for the substantive hearing. This includes allowing enough time for the hearing

and ensuring that all relevant material has been uploaded to the hearing bundle on CaseLines. A Case Management Hearing will be listed in every case **not later than 12 weeks from the date proceedings are issued**, and a listed hearing will not be allowed to be derailed by late applications: any application a party intends to make at or before the substantive hearing must be notified in advance under the foreshadowing direction in the Part 2 Standard Directions (see the Glossary below).

7. Compliance with the Standard Directions makes it easier for the parties to understand each other's position. This can result in matters being shortened, resulting in a saving of time and costs for the parties. It may also result in the parties being able to reach an Agreed Outcome, which may make a substantive hearing unnecessary. An Agreed Outcome must be approved by the Tribunal. The substantive hearing is not listed while an Agreed Outcome is being pursued within the fixed window the Tribunal sets, so that no hearing date is committed and then lost if the Agreed Outcome succeeds (see the Glossary below).
8. If, after reading the Standard Directions, you believe that additional time may be required to comply with any of the actions specified, please notify the Tribunal and the other parties as soon as possible. If you want to apply to vary the directions, you must make an application using the [Application Notice](#). If you wish to vary a direction, you should apply to do so at the earliest opportunity and before the time for compliance has expired. Any variation must be consistent with the nine-month limit described in paragraph 3 above.
9. When applying to vary the Standard Directions, you should explain the reasons for the requested variation in sufficient detail to allow the Tribunal to consider and determine the application. If you are applying to adjourn the Case Management Hearing ("CMH") or the substantive hearing, please read the Tribunal's [Guidance – Rule 23 \(Adjournments\)](#).
10. You must serve your application upon every other party, as the Tribunal will require their submissions before reaching a decision. Where appropriate, you may wish to discuss the proposed application with the other parties in advance to establish whether it is opposed. You should consider whether the timetable requires amendment and provide any proposed revisions for the Tribunal to consider as part of the application.

[Related Documents](#)

Please also refer to the document listed below which are also relevant to the Standard Directions:

- [Checklist of Requirements](#)
- [CaseLines Protocol and Guidance](#)
- [CaseLines User Guide](#)
- [Forms and Application Notices](#)

GLOSSARY

This glossary is a guide to the meaning of certain expressions used in the Standard Directions and in relation to some matters associated with them. If, after reading the Standard Directions, this Explanatory Note and the Glossary, there are matters which you do not understand, please contact the Tribunal office and we will be happy to help.

Adjourn [[Rule 23 SDPR 2019](#) and [Guidance – Rule 23](#)]

To postpone or suspend a hearing until a future date. Because the timetable is set so that the substantive hearing concludes within 9 months of issue, an adjournment of the substantive hearing will be granted only where the Tribunal is satisfied the circumstances are exceptional.

Admit/Admissions

This is where you accept the truth of something.

Agreed Outcome (AO) [[Rule 25 SDPR 2019](#) and [Practice Direction 1](#)]

A statement of agreed facts and proposed outcome, agreed between the Applicant and the Respondent(s), containing: a list of allegations admitted by the Respondent; an agreement as to whether the parties intend to dispose of any allegations which are not admitted by inviting the Tribunal to withdraw them or to direct that they lie on the file; a detailed statement of agreed facts; a sanction which the parties agree to invite the Tribunal to impose by order; an agreement as to costs; and a declaration signed by the parties confirming that the facts in the statement are true and that the parties agree to the outcome. An Agreed Outcome must be approved by the Tribunal.

The substantive hearing is not listed while an Agreed Outcome is pursued within the fixed window set in the Part 1 Standard Directions: a second Case Management Hearing is listed 8 weeks after the first, by which the parties must either file an Agreed Outcome application or attend before a Panel to discuss the areas of dispute with a view to resolution. If an Agreed Outcome is approved within that window the case concludes and no hearing will have been listed; if not, the hearing is listed at or immediately after the second Case Management Hearing for the earliest date within the nine-month limit, and the Tribunal gives any further directions needed for the preparation of the case. Under Rule 25(1) SDPR an Agreed Outcome Proposal may still be submitted up to 28 days before the substantive hearing, unless the Tribunal directs otherwise. The Tribunal may reflect the stage at which an Agreed Outcome is filed in any costs order it makes.

Allegation and Rule 12 Statement [[Rule 12 SDPR 2019](#)]

An allegation is a statement setting out that the Respondent has carried out an act of professional misconduct in breach of the SRA's [Standards and Regulations](#), Codes of Conduct and Solicitors Accounts Rules. The allegations are set out in the Applicant's Rule 12 Statement, which is the statement prepared by the Applicant supporting the application.

Answer [[Rule 20\(4\) SDPR 2019](#)]

A document which sets out the Respondent's response to the Applicant's allegations. The Answer should state which allegations (if any) are admitted and which (if any) are denied; if any are denied, it must set out the reasons for the denial. The Tribunal may draw an adverse inference from a failure to file and serve an Answer. If you believe your Answer is detailed enough to stand as your evidence-in-chief you need not file a witness statement at the stage the Part 2 Standard Directions require witness

statements to be served, but you will need to add a declaration to your Answer stating that its contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief. You may find it useful to use the template Answer at the end of this document.

Applicant [[Rule 3 SDPR 2019](#)]

The person or organisation making the allegations and bringing the case to the Tribunal.

Automatic Disclosure Procedure (ADP) [[Automatic Disclosure Policy & Guidance](#)]

The procedure whereby certain documents, namely the Rule 12 Statement (excluding the anonymity schedule and exhibits), the Answer, the Reply and any Skeleton Arguments, are disclosed to the public automatically at the commencement of the substantive hearing. This procedure is separate and distinct from disclosure under [Rule 26 SDPR 2019](#) (see below) and relates to the principle of open justice: the legal principle that justice must be seen to be done, making the justice system transparent and accountable.

Burden and standard of proof [[Rule 5 SDPR 2019](#)]

The Applicant has the burden of proving that the Respondent committed the alleged professional misconduct. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities: that it is more likely than not that the Respondent committed the alleged professional misconduct.

CaseLines

A secure digital cloud-based document and evidence management system for the preparation and presentation of material used at Case Management Hearings and substantive hearings, replacing paper bundles with electronic bundles. Parties are given access to CaseLines after proceedings have been issued. Please read the Tribunal's [User Guide](#) and [Protocol](#).

Case Management Hearing (CMH) [[Rule 21 SDPR 2019](#)]

An interim hearing which takes place in advance of the substantive hearing. A CMH is listed remotely in every case on a date not later than 12 weeks from the date proceedings are issued; the parties must file an agreed checklist at least 1 week beforehand, and may ask for the CMH to be vacated if it is not needed. Where an Agreed Outcome is being pursued, a second CMH is listed 8 weeks after the first (see Agreed Outcome above). Directions made at a CMH are recorded in the Memorandum (see below).

Certification of readiness

The confirmation each party must give by email to the Tribunal and every other party, not less than 10 days before the substantive hearing, that all directions have been complied with, the time estimate requires no revision and the case is ready to proceed, together with the further details the Part 2 Standard Directions require (witnesses, special measures, interpreters, remote evidence from abroad, advocates, and any application intended at or before the hearing).

Costs in the Application [[Rule 43 SDPR 2019](#)]

The party in whose favour the Tribunal makes an order for costs at the end of the proceedings (usually at the end of the substantive hearing) is entitled to their costs of the part of the proceedings to which the order relates.

Disclosure [[Rule 26 SDPR 2019](#)]

The process that requires a party to make known to the other party the documents on which it relies or material which may undermine its case or assist the other party's case. On an application, the Tribunal may order material to be disclosed where production is necessary for the proper consideration of an issue in the case, unless there are compelling public-interest reasons not to. Any order applies only to material in a party's possession or control.

Evidence [[Rules 27–30 SDPR 2019](#)]

Material, including witness statements, expert reports and exhibits, which the parties place in the hearing bundle in support of their cases. Admissible evidence is relevant material which may be presented to the Tribunal for it to consider in deciding the case; generally, to be admissible, evidence must be relevant and not outweighed by other factors (for example, that it is unfairly prejudicial, a waste of time or inadmissible hearsay).

File and Serve [[Rule 44 SDPR 2019](#)]

To 'file' a document means sending it to the Tribunal. To 'serve' a document means sending it to every other party in the case. The purpose in both cases is to make the Tribunal and the other parties aware of the information in your document. The Tribunal is unlikely to make a decision on your case if your papers have not been served on all parties, as it would be unfair to decide without giving every party a chance to respond. Always serve within the deadlines set by the Standard Directions.

Foreshadowing of applications

The requirement in the Part 2 Standard Directions that, not less than 4 weeks before the substantive hearing, each party notifies the Tribunal and every other party in writing of any application it intends to make at or before the hearing, identifying the nature of the application, the order sought, the time it is likely to require, and whether it may affect the time estimate. An application that has not been notified may be considered only with the Tribunal's permission, and a failure to notify (or to flag an effect on the time estimate) may be reflected in costs. An application arising from a matter which could not reasonably have been anticipated must be notified as soon as practicable after it arises. The purpose is to prevent late, unheralded applications derailing a listed hearing.

Hearing Bundle, Master Bundle and Section P

The hearing bundle is the collection of documents on CaseLines which the Tribunal sees at a hearing. A single hearing bundle is created at the outset of each case and is the sole bundle used for all hearings, including Case Management Hearings, applications and substantive hearings. It mirrors the Master Bundle: once a document is uploaded to the Master Bundle it appears automatically in the hearing bundle, so documents do not need to be uploaded to multiple bundles.

The Master Bundle contains a section called Section P – Restricted Documents (For Parties Only). The parties are responsible for ensuring that all documents they wish the Panel to consider are included within the hearing bundle, and that any private, confidential, restricted or prejudicial material is not included within sections accessible to the Panel but is instead retained exclusively within Section P where appropriate. Once the Applicant has confirmed the bundle is complete, no party may remove any document from it without the Tribunal's permission. Please read the Tribunal's CaseLines [Protocol](#) and [User Guide](#).

Hybrid Hearing

A hearing in which some participants attend in person and some attend via Zoom.

In Person Hearing

A hearing where all participants attend at the Tribunal's hearing rooms at 2nd Floor, 45 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JU.

Inference and Adverse Inference [[Rule 33 SDPR 2019](#)]

A rational, sensible and logical conclusion reached on a matter based upon the available evidence. The Tribunal may draw an 'adverse inference' where a Respondent fails to (a) file or serve an Answer or (b) give evidence at a substantive hearing or submit to cross-examination. This means the Tribunal is entitled to consider the position the Respondent has chosen to adopt and to draw such unfavourable inferences from that failure as it considers appropriate.

Issue of proceedings

This takes place when allegations have been certified as showing a case to answer and the Tribunal serves all the relevant material, including the Rule 12 Statement, exhibits and the Part 1 Standard Directions, upon the Respondent(s). The 9-month period within which the substantive hearing must conclude runs from the date the Part 1 Standard Directions are issued.

Legal Representative

The person who represents a party to the proceedings. Under [Rule 48 SDPR 2019](#), "legal representative" means (a) a solicitor; (b) a barrister; or (c) a person who, for the purposes of the Legal Services Act 2007, is an authorised person in relation to an activity which constitutes the exercise of a right of audience or the conduct of litigation within the meanings given by Schedule 2 to that Act. If the person assisting you is not within this definition, you can apply for the Tribunal's permission for them to assist you at a hearing; please read [Guidance: A person assisting a party](#).

Liberty to Apply

The parties have permission to apply to amend or vary the Standard Directions. Any application must be consistent with the 9-month limit and, in the case of applications made at or before the substantive hearing, with the foreshadowing requirement (see above).

List of Issues

A short, neutral document, filed not less than 2 weeks before the substantive hearing, identifying the principal factual and legal issues the Tribunal is asked to determine. It should where possible be agreed, and must otherwise identify which issues are agreed and which remain in dispute. It is not intended to rehearse the parties' cases, summarise the evidence or set out submissions, and the Tribunal is not bound by it.

Means and Statement of Means [[Rule 43\(5\) SDPR 2019](#)]

Your 'means' is how much money you have from earned income and other sources of wealth (for example trust funds, gifts, property, savings and other assets) minus your outgoings and reasonable household expenses (for example rent, mortgage payments, food, utility bills and maintenance payments). A Statement of Means is a document in which you set out this information, supported by documentary evidence, so the Tribunal can assess your ability to pay a fine and/or costs if it finds allegations proved. It must be filed not less than 4 weeks before the substantive hearing; a failure to do

so may result in the Tribunal drawing such inference as it considers appropriate and determining sanction and/or costs without regard to your means. A [template Statement of Means form](#) is available in the Forms section of the Tribunal's website.

Memorandum

The written record of the Tribunal's decision, reasons and directions made following a Case Management Hearing, which is sent to the parties.

Nine-month limit

Proceedings are prepared and listed so that the substantive hearing concludes within 9 months of the date of issue of the Part 1 Standard Directions. The limit will be exceeded only where the Tribunal is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional; any extension is a matter for the Tribunal and not for agreement between the parties.

Notice under Rule 29 SDPR [[Rule 29 SDPR 2019](#)]

The [Civil Evidence Act 1995](#) makes provision for the admissibility of hearsay evidence in civil proceedings. 'Hearsay' is a statement made otherwise than by a person while giving oral evidence in the proceedings, which is tendered as evidence of the matters stated. A party who intends to adduce hearsay evidence must give the other party notice of their intention and, on request, particulars of the evidence. A party who fails to give notice must apply to the Tribunal for permission to use the evidence.

Prescribed form [[Rule 3 SDPR 2019](#)]

An application form. The appropriate form must be used for each application to the Tribunal; please refer to the [Tribunal's website](#) for further information.

Privilege

The right of a party to refuse to disclose or produce a document, or to refuse to answer questions, on the ground of some special interest recognised by law.

Remote Hearing

A hearing in which all participants appear virtually for the entirety of the hearing.

Reply

A response by the Applicant to the Respondent's Answer. The Applicant does not send a Reply in every case, and may do so in cases of complexity or where the Respondent raises an issue in their Answer of which the Applicant was not previously aware and on which it needs to comment.

Respondent [[Rule 3 SDPR 2019](#)]

The person or firm against whom the Applicant has made allegations and who must respond by filing an Answer with the Tribunal and serving it upon the Applicant.

Sanctions [[Rule 41 SDPR 2019](#)]

The term the Tribunal uses for the range of penalties it may impose on the Respondent if it finds some or all of the allegations proved to the required standard. The Tribunal can combine more than one sanction (for example a fine and restrictions). The sanctions are: the imposition of a reprimand; the imposition of an unlimited financial penalty payable to HM Treasury; the imposition of restrictions upon the way in which a solicitor can practise; suspension from practice indefinitely or for a specified period,

or a suspended suspension; and striking off the Roll. The Tribunal's current [Guidance Note on Sanctions](#) has further information.

SDPR

The [Solicitors \(Disciplinary Proceedings\) Rules 2019](#).

Submissions

Submissions can be made orally or in writing. They summarise the relevant facts and law relied upon by a party in making their case to the Tribunal.

Substantive Hearing

The final hearing at which the Tribunal will make findings in respect of the allegations and reach a decision as to the relevant sanction(s). An order will be prepared at the conclusion of the hearing and will usually be followed by a judgment setting out the Tribunal's reasons. The substantive hearing is listed so that it concludes within 9 months of the issue of the Part 1 Standard Directions.

Time Estimate

The likely time a substantive hearing will take, based upon the legal and factual complexity of the case, the number of witnesses and whether the Respondent is contesting the allegations in whole or in part. Each party must flag, at the 13-week confirmation and again on certification of readiness, whether the time estimate requires revision; an intended application which may affect the time estimate must be identified when it is foreshadowed.

Tribunal

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is a statutory tribunal created by [s.46 of the Solicitors Act 1974](#). A panel of three Tribunal Members will conduct all hearings. The panel may also be referred to more formally as a Division of the Tribunal and comprises two solicitor members (one of whom will be the Chair) and one Lay Member, who is not a solicitor.

Witness Statement / Statement of Truth [[Rule 3 SDPR 2019](#)]

A witness statement is a document recording the evidence of a person, signed by that person to confirm that its contents are true. At the substantive hearing the statement may be read by the Tribunal, or the witness may attend, in person or remotely, and give oral evidence after swearing an oath or affirming. The stages of giving evidence are: evidence-in-chief (the evidence given by a witness for the party who called them); cross-examination (questioning by another party); and re-examination (further questions from the party who called the witness, limited to matters arising in cross-examination).

Without prejudice

Negotiations between the parties are usually conducted 'without prejudice', which means that the circumstances in which the content of those negotiations may be revealed to the Tribunal are very restricted.

Working day

Any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday in England and Wales. Where the Standard Directions require a step to be taken not less than a number of working days before a hearing, weekends and bank holidays are not counted.

Zoom

The cloud-based video conferencing service the Tribunal uses for its remote and hybrid hearings. The Tribunal office will send the parties joining details. If you have not received them at least 48 hours before the hearing, please check your junk email and, if you cannot locate the invitation, contact the Tribunal office immediately.

TEMPLATE ANSWER

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974 Case No.

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

X

Respondent

ANSWER

I the First/Second/Third etc. Respondent to these proceedings, having read the Allegations being made against me by the Applicant as set out in its Rule 12 Statement dated and in its attendant documentary evidence, do say as follows:

ADMISSIONS

I admit, and provide reasons for my admissions to, the following parts of the Applicant's allegations:

Allegation

I accept breaches of

DENIALS

I do not admit, and provide reasons for my denials to, the following parts of the Applicant's allegations:

Allegation

I do not accept breaches of

Signed

Dated

OR (if the Respondent wants their Answer to be their witness statement also)

I confirm that the matters set out above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I wish this document to stand as my statement and evidence-in-chief in the proceedings.

Signed

Dated

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL
PART 1 STANDARD DIRECTIONS

Case No. 12345-2026

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY Ltd.

and

(Respondent's Name)

STANDARD DIRECTIONS FOR FIRST INSTANCE PROCEEDINGS

IMPORTANT NOTES TO STANDARD DIRECTIONS

The '[Protocol for the production and use of Electronic Bundles using the "CaseLines" system](#)' shall apply to these proceedings.

1. The parties are expected to assist the Tribunal in actively managing the case in accordance with the overriding objective in Rule 4 of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 ("SDPR"), dealing with the case justly and at proportionate cost.
2. Proceedings will be prepared and listed so that the substantive hearing concludes **within 9 months of the date of issue of these Part 1 Standard Directions**. That limit will be exceeded only where the Tribunal is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional; any extension is a matter for the Tribunal and not for agreement between the parties. The dates set in these and in the Part 2 Standard Directions are set to achieve that limit, and the parties must conduct the proceedings, and frame any application, consistently with it.
3. The parties are encouraged to work proactively and co-operatively in furtherance of the directions below, so that each direction is met by the date and time stated, and so that any difficulty in doing so is addressed through timely and courteous communication with each other and with the Tribunal.

4. Procedural applications and evidence should be filed by email to enquiries@solicitorsdt.com and uploaded to CaseLines. Hard copies are not required unless specifically requested or directed

The Case Management Hearing:

5. A Case Management Hearing (CMH) will be listed remotely in every case on a date not later than 12 weeks from the date proceedings are issued. The parties will be expected to complete an agreed checklist of requirements, which must be filed with the Tribunal and uploaded into the hearing bundle on CaseLines at least 1 week before the CMH. The checklist will require the parties to set out, among other things:
- dates to avoid for all advocates and their witnesses up to **(9 months from date of issue)**;
 - a realistic time estimate for the substantive hearing;
 - the parties' agreement as to the format of the substantive hearing, that is, whether an in-person or remote hearing is required;
 - whether there are other matters a party wishes to raise with the Tribunal, or other applications for the Tribunal to determine, for example disclosure, special measures, anonymity, or expert or medical evidence;
 - whether an agreed outcome is likely (if so, see paragraph 10 below); and
 - whether the CMH is still required or should be vacated (see paragraph 7 below).
6. Upon service of the checklist, the Tribunal will either:
- vacate the CMH and issue the Part 2 Standard Directions at that stage; or
 - retain the CMH in the list, at which the Tribunal will issue Part 2 Standard Directions and any other directions deemed necessary for the onward preparation of the case towards the substantive hearing

Vacating or Retaining the CMH:

7. To ensure the effective use of the Tribunal's time and resources, and to minimise costs, the parties must notify the Tribunal no fewer than 7 days before the CMH if they consider that the listed CMH is not required, for example because:

- the directions are being met and no input from the Tribunal is required;
- the time estimate for the substantive hearing has been agreed;
- the format of the substantive hearing has been agreed (remote, hybrid or in person); and
- there are no other matters, such as disclosure, special measures, anonymity or expert or medical evidence, which require a hearing before the Tribunal at a CMH.

8. Any decision to vacate a listed CMH remains with the Tribunal alone.
9. **Non-engagement.** If, due to no or limited engagement and compliance by a party, the checklist is not filed and uploaded to CaseLines, the CMH will remain listed, at which hearing the Tribunal may summarily assess the time estimate of the substantive hearing and set a date for it based on the information then available, issue Part 2 Standard Directions, and make any costs order it thinks fit under Rule 43 SDPR. The Tribunal may also, of its own volition or upon application, list a non-compliance hearing before the date of the CMH.

Agreed Outcome:

10. If the parties consider that an Agreed Outcome (AO) is a realistic prospect, the pursuit of an AO shall not delay the preparation of the case. Part 2 Standard Directions will be issued so that preparation for the substantive hearing continues; however, the substantive hearing will not be listed while the AO is being pursued within the period set out below, so that no hearing date is committed and then lost if the AO succeeds. A second CMH will be listed to take place 8 weeks from the date of the first CMH; by that hearing the parties must either file an AO application or, if areas of disagreement remain, they must address the Tribunal on the areas in dispute with a view to resolution.
- 10.1. If an AO is filed and approved within that period, the case will be concluded and no substantive hearing will have been listed. If the period closes without an approved AO, the Tribunal may, at or immediately after the second CMH, list the case for a substantive hearing (at which point Rule 25 SDPR will apply) for the earliest date consistent with the objective in paragraph 2. The parties may still submit an AO after the substantive hearing has been listed, and if it is filed and approved the hearing will be vacated. The Tribunal may reflect the stage at which an AO is filed in any costs order it makes.

Procedural Applications:

11. In accordance with Practice Direction 2 (Procedural Applications), an application for minor changes to the Standard Directions will be treated administratively if:
- each party agrees the terms of the variation sought;
 - the variation will not cause the date of the CMH (if one is listed) or the date of the substantive hearing to be altered, amended or vacated; and
 - the parties have submitted their request on the prescribed form, including a draft of the directions as amended for approval.

Open Justice and Disclosure:

12. The Tribunal views the open justice principle as an essential element of the rule of law, enabling public scrutiny of the cases before it and ensuring that the public understand how the Tribunal works and why decisions are taken. Accordingly, the parties are to follow the Automatic Disclosure Procedure (ADP), which requires the parties to permit automatic disclosure of the Rule 12 Statement (excluding the anonymity schedule and exhibits), the Answer, the Reply and any Skeleton Arguments at the commencement of the substantive hearing.
13. A party to proceedings before the Tribunal may apply at any stage for an order that no disclosure of specified documents be made.

The Case Management Hearing Listing:

14. The Case Management Hearing will take place remotely on **(between 12-14 weeks after date of issue)** with a time estimate of **30 minutes**. Joining details will be sent to the parties by email in advance of the hearing.

The parties and their representatives are encouraged to be available 30 minutes before the time fixed for the start of the hearing, for any preliminary discussion that may be appropriate and to resolve any administrative issues, in order to avoid delay to the start of the hearing.

Timetable for Case Preparation:

Each step below must be completed by 4:30 P.M. on the date stated. Dates are to be set in ascending order, consistent with the sequence of the paragraphs.

15. By **(8 weeks after date of issue)**, the Respondent shall file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party an Answer to the Applicant's Rule 12 Statement. The Answer must state which of the allegations (if any) are admitted and which (if any) are denied, and, in respect of any which are denied, must set out the reasons for the denial.
16. It is open to the Respondent to serve the Answer in condensed form, to be expanded upon in a statement filed and served at the same time as the witness statements are due under Part 2 Standard Direction 4. The Respondent need not file a witness statement if the Answer contains a Statement of Truth and includes all matters the Respondent wishes to rely on in evidence at the substantive hearing.
17. By **(8 weeks after date of issue)**, (at the same time as the Answer), the Respondent shall file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party all documents on which the Respondent intends to rely at the substantive hearing.
18. The Applicant shall upload completed Checklist, for the use of the Tribunal at the CMH, **1 week before the CMH**. Once the Applicant has confirmed all relevant documents have been uploaded to the "hearing bundle", no party shall remove any document from it without the permission of the Tribunal.
19. By **(10 weeks after date of issue)**, the Applicant may, if it chooses, file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party a Reply to the Answer.
20. By **(10 weeks after date of issue)**, the Applicant shall file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party any documents on which it intends to rely that were not included in the Rule 12 Statement.

General:

21. Costs in the Application.

22. Liberty to apply.

Dated: **(date of issue)**

Timetable:

Step	Timescale (9 months)
Proceedings issued; Part 1 Standard Directions issued	date of issue
Answer and Respondent's documents filed	8 weeks after date of issue
Reply and Applicant's further documents filed	10 weeks after date of issue
Checklist of Requirements uploaded	1 week before the CMH
Case Management Hearing	12-14 weeks after date of issue
Target date to conclude proceedings	9 months from date of issue

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL
PART 2 STANDARD DIRECTIONS

Case No. 12345-2026

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY Ltd.

and

(Respondent's Name)

STANDARD DIRECTIONS FOR FIRST INSTANCE PROCEEDINGS

IMPORTANT NOTES TO STANDARD DIRECTIONS

For CaseLines cases: the '[Protocol for the production and use of Electronic Bundles using the "CaseLines" system](#)' shall apply to these proceedings.

23. The parties are expected to assist the Tribunal in actively managing the case in accordance with the overriding objective in [Rule 4 of the Solicitors \(Disciplinary Proceedings\) Rules 2019](#) ("SDPR"), dealing with a case justly and at proportionate cost.
24. All other warnings and guidance as set out in the Part 1 Standard Directions.

The Substantive Hearing:

3. The case is listed for remote substantive hearing on (date of a Substantive hearing) at 2nd Floor, 45 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JU based on the time estimate of (length of a Substantive hearing) days as agreed by the parties. Joining details will be sent to the parties by email in advance of the hearing. The hearing is listed so that it concludes within 9 months of the issue of the Part 1 Standard Directions. Joining details will be sent to the parties by email in advance of the hearing. Where an Agreed Outcome is being pursued under paragraph 10 of the Part 1 Standard Directions, the substantive hearing will not yet have been listed; if the period for pursuing the Agreed Outcome closes without an approved Agreed Outcome, the hearing will be listed at or immediately after the second Case Management Hearing for the earliest date

consistent with the 9-month period above, and the dates in these directions are measured backwards from the date so fixed.

Note: The parties and their legal representatives are encouraged to be available 30 minutes before the time fixed for the start of the hearing for the purposes of any preliminary discussion that may be appropriate and/or to resolve any administrative issues which may arise, in order to avoid delay in the start of the hearing.

Timetable for case preparation:

Each step below must be completed by 4:30 P.M. on the date stated. The period for each step is measured backwards from the date fixed for the substantive hearing. The steps are listed in the order in which they fall.

4. By **(7 weeks before the hearing)**, the Applicant and the Respondent shall each file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party, using the prescribed form of notice, the witness statements of any witnesses on whose evidence they intend to rely at the substantive hearing and whose statements have not already been served. The Respondent need not file a witness statement if the Answer contains a Statement of Truth and includes all matters the Respondent wishes to rely on in evidence.
5. By **(7 weeks before the hearing)**, any Notice under [Rule 29 SDPR](#) (which, subject to Rule 29, applies the Civil Evidence Act 1995 to these proceedings as it applies to civil proceedings) shall be filed at the Tribunal and served on every other party.
6. When serving witness statements under paragraph 5, each party shall indicate whether any proposed witness is, or has previously been, a legal professional (including solicitors and solicitors' clerks), to enable the Tribunal to undertake conflict checks in advance of the hearing.
7. By **(6 weeks before the hearing)**, each party shall notify the other of the names of any witnesses whom they wish to attend the hearing for cross-examination.
8. By **(5 weeks before the hearing)**, if there remains a dispute about disclosure of documents or witness statements which cannot be resolved between the parties, either party is at liberty to apply to the Tribunal for further directions.

Notice of Intended Applications:

9. By **(4 weeks before the hearing)**, each party shall notify the Tribunal and every other party in writing of any application it intends to make at or before the substantive hearing, identifying the nature of the application, the order sought, the time it is likely to require, and whether it will or may require any revision to the time estimate for the substantive hearing. An application includes, but is not limited to, an application to amend, to admit or exclude evidence, to adjourn, for special measures, or as to the conduct of the hearing.
10. An application that has not been notified in accordance with paragraph 11 may be considered only with the permission of the Tribunal and on such terms as to the time it may occupy and as to costs as the Tribunal considers just. Where a party fails to notify an application, or notifies an application but fails to identify that it will or may require a revision to the time estimate, the Tribunal may take that failure into account when determining costs. Nothing in paragraph 11 prevents an application that arises out of a matter which could not reasonably have been anticipated by that date; such an application shall be notified as soon as practicable after the matter arises.
11. By **(4 weeks before the hearing)**, if the Respondent wishes their financial position to be taken into account in relation to sanction and/or costs, they shall, in accordance with [Rule 43\(5\) SDPR](#), file at the Tribunal and serve on every other party a Statement of Means, including full details of assets (including property), income and outgoings, supported by documentary evidence.
12. By **(3 weeks before the hearing)**, any party may serve written notice on any other party under [Rules 28\(6\) to 28\(8\) SDPR](#) asking that party to agree that a specified document is admitted as evidence. A party who wishes to challenge the authenticity of a document must, within 7 days of receipt of the notice, give notice that they require its authenticity to be proved at the hearing in accordance with Rule 28(7) SDPR.
13. By **(2 weeks before the hearing)**, the parties shall file and upload to CaseLines a List of Issues for determination at the substantive hearing. The List shall, where possible, be agreed, and shall otherwise identify which issues are agreed and which remain in dispute. It shall be a short, neutral document identifying the principal factual and legal issues the Tribunal is asked to determine; it is not intended to rehearse the parties' cases, summarise the evidence or set out

submissions. The Tribunal is not bound by the List of Issues and retains discretion to determine such issues as it considers necessary to dispose of the proceedings fairly and justly.

14. By **(2 weeks before the hearing)**, the parties must ensure that all documents have been uploaded to the “hearing bundle” before the Panel is invited to it 2 weeks prior to the hearing date. All prejudicial material must either be excluded or placed in Section P (Restricted Documents – For Parties Only) of the Master Bundle. Tribunal staff will provide technical support but will not undertake a substantive review. Once the Applicant has confirmed the hearing bundle is complete, no party shall remove any document from it without the permission of the Tribunal.

Certification of Readiness:

15. By **(2 weeks before the hearing)**, each party shall certify **by email** to the Tribunal and to every other party that all directions have been complied with, that the time estimate requires no revision, that the case is ready to proceed on the date set for the substantive hearing, and provide the name and contact details of their advocate (if any). Each party shall also inform the Tribunal of the following, if applicable:
 - (a) if the time estimate requires revision, the new time estimate and the reasons for the change;
 - (b) the number of witnesses to be called and their names, and, if the case is to be held remotely, confirmation that they have registered with CaseLines and provided their email address to the Tribunal;
 - (c) whether any witness is vulnerable such that they require special measures and, if so, the special measures required;
 - (d) whether arrangements have been made to instruct an interpreter;
 - (e) whether any witness will give evidence remotely from outside the jurisdiction and, if so, that the required formalities have been complied with; and
 - (f) whether the party intends to make any application at or before the substantive hearing and, if so, confirmation that it has been notified under paragraph 10, the order sought, the time it is likely to require, and whether it will or may require any revision to the time estimate; or, if no application is intended, a statement to that effect.

Skeleton Arguments:

16. By **(1 week before the hearing)**, any party wishing to rely on skeleton arguments and authorities shall file them at the Tribunal and serve them on every other party.

Standing provisions and warnings:

17. **Non-attendance by the Respondent.** If the Respondent fails to attend the substantive hearing and the Tribunal is satisfied that notice was served in accordance with [Rule 44 SDPR](#), it may proceed in their absence under [Rule 36 SDPR](#). It may also draw an appropriate inference under [Rule 33 SDPR](#) and make such findings, and such orders as to sanction and costs, as it considers appropriate, notwithstanding the Respondent's absence.
18. **Statement of Means.** Any failure to file a Statement of Means in accordance with paragraph 12 may result in the Tribunal drawing such inference as it considers appropriate, and the Tribunal will be entitled to determine sanction and/or costs without regard to the Respondent's means.
19. **Schedules of costs.** Any party seeking an order for costs against another party at a substantive hearing shall file at the Tribunal and serve on the relevant party a schedule of costs by **(1 week before the hearing)**. Any party seeking an order for costs at an interim hearing shall do so not less than 48 hours before that hearing.
20. **Compliance.** Where a party fails to comply with any direction by the date stated, the Tribunal, or the Clerk on its behalf, may notify that party in writing that, unless the direction is complied with within 5 working days, the matter will be referred to the Tribunal, which may give further directions, list a non-compliance hearing under the Part 1 Standard Directions, draw such inference as it considers appropriate, or make such order as to costs under [Rule 43 SDPR](#) as it thinks fit.

General:

21. Costs in the Application.
22. Liberty to apply, subject to paragraphs 11 and 12.

Dated: **(date of issue)**

