

## BILL

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### THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT, 2025

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PART VII - makes fees chargeable by legal practitioners, agreement on such fees, third party unaffected by agreement, contingency fees, order for delivery of statement of fees, bill of costs, taxation of costs, including payments by trustees, executors, administrators.

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Made this 23rd day of May, 2025

ALPHA SESAY  
*Attorney-General and Minister of Justice*

FREETOWN,  
SIERRA LEONE.

No.



2025

**A BILL ENTITLED**

**THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT, 2025**

Short title.

**Being an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the admission, enrolment, practice and discipline of legal practitioners and to provide for other related matters.**

[ ] Date of commencement.

ENACTED by the President and Members of Parliament in this present Parliament assembled.

## PART I – PRELIMINARY

1. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires -

"Attorney-General" means the Attorney General and Minister of Justice;

"Certificate of Good Standing" means certificate stating that a legal practitioner possesses a valid practicing certificate and that no action has been taken to suspend or delete his name from the register;

"Chairman" means, the Chairman of the General Legal Council elected under subsection (2) of section 3;

"client" includes a person who -

- (a) whether as principal or on behalf of another person, retains or employs a legal practitioner; and
- (b) is or may be liable to pay the bill of costs of the legal practitioner;

"contingency fee" means, where all or part of a legal practitioner's fee would be recovered on successful completion of a matter in the client's favour;

"Council" means the General Legal Council referred to in subsection (1) of section 2;

"Disciplinary Tribunal" means the Disciplinary Tribunal referred to in section 33;

"instrument" means a document relating to real or personal estate or an estate or interest therein, including the memorandum and articles of association of companies, and a proceeding in law or equity, but does not include -

- (a) a will or other testamentary instrument;
- (b) an agreement under hand only;
- (c) a power of attorney;
- (d) a transfer of stock not containing a trust or limitation thereof;

"legal practitioner" means a person admitted or exempted and enrolled to practice law as a barrister and solicitor in Sierra Leone;

"Secretary" means the person appointed Secretary by the Council under section 8;

"unqualified person" means a person who is not enrolled under section 10;

"Pupil Master" means a legal practitioner of, at least, 10 years standing who has been accredited by the Council to act as such;

"Roll of Court " means the Permanent Register of legal Practitioners maintained and owned by Council;

"good standing" means a legal practitioner who possess a valid practicing certificate and against whom no action has been taken to strike his name off the Roll of Court.

#### PART II - THE GENERAL LEGAL COUNCIL

General  
Legal  
Council.

2. (1) There shall continue in existence, the body known as the General Legal Council.

(2) The Council shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and capable of suing and being sued in its corporate name, of acquiring and disposing of property, both moveable and immovable, and capable, subject to this Act, of performing all such acts as bodies corporate may by law perform.

Composition  
of Council.

3. (1) The Council shall consist of the following members -

- (a) the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice or his representative, being a legal practitioner of not less than 15 years' standing;
- (b) the Solicitor-General;
- (c) 7 legal practitioners, at least 2 of whom shall be women, -
  - (i) 3 shall be of not less than 15 years' standing;
  - (ii) 3 shall be of not less than 10 years' standing; and
  - (iii) one shall be of not less than 5 years' standing,

elected by the Sierra Leone Bar Association;

(d) the President of the Court of Appeal;

(e) a Senior Advocate appointed by the Sierra Leone Bar Association; and

(f) a person of at least 15 years' experience in a profession, other than legal, appointed by the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

(2) The Council shall have a Chairman, who shall be elected from the 3 legal practitioners of not less than 15 years' standing under paragraph (c) of subsection (1).

4. (1) The Chairman and members of the Council, who are not ex-officio, shall hold office for a term of 3 years and shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further term of 3 years only. Tenure of members.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Chairman or a member of the Council, who is not ex-officio, who has held office for a term of 3 years and re-appointed for a further term of 3 years shall, after a break of at least one term, be eligible for re-appointment.

(3) A member of the Council, except an ex-officio member, may resign his office by notice in writing addressed to the Secretary.

(4) Where a member dies or resigns his office, the authority or body which appointed or elected him, as the case may be, shall appoint or elect another person to fill the vacancy created for the remainder of the term of office of the member who has died or resigned.

5. (1) The Council shall be the principal authority with regard to the conduct, promotion and enhancement of the legal profession and provision of legal services in Sierra Leone. Functions of Council.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), the Council shall be responsible, subject to this Act, for-

- (a) admission and enrolment of persons as legal practitioners;
- (b) admission to pupillage and registration of pupils in the Temporary Register;
- (c) issuing of practising certificates to legal practitioners;
- (d) prescription of standards of professional conduct and code of etiquette for legal practitioners;
- (e) assign disciplinary matters which may arise in the exercise of its functions;
- (f) initiation of disciplinary proceedings against legal practitioners on its own motion (*suo moto*);
- (g) prescription of fees for non-contentious matters;
- (h) organising training and continuing legal education, aimed at promoting and enhancing high quality specialist advocacy and advisory services;
- (i) accreditation and registration of pupil masters in private legal practice;
- (j) registration of law firms and partnerships;
- (k) issuance of Certificate of Good Standing to a legal practitioner, law firm or partnership.

(3) The Council may institute civil proceedings in the enforcement of this Act.

6. (1) The Council shall meet for the dispatch of its business at such time and place as the Chairman may determine, but shall meet at least once every 3 months. Meetings of Council.

(2) The Chairman may, at any time, convene a meeting of the Council or a minimum of 3 members of the Council, by notice in writing, signed by them, request the Chairman to summon a special meeting of the Council for such purpose as may be stated in the notice.

(3) The Chairman shall preside at every meeting of the Council and in his absence, the members of the Council present shall appoint one member among their number to preside.

(4) Decisions at meetings of the Council shall be determined by a simple majority of the members present and voting and in the event of equality of votes the Chairman or person presiding shall have a casting vote.

(5) The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be 5.

(6) The Council shall, subject to this Act, regulate the procedure for its meetings.

(7) The Council may co-opt a person to advise it at any of its meetings but such person shall not vote on a matter for decision by the Council.

7. The Council may, for the better exercise of its functions under of this Act, establish committees consisting of such members and with such powers and duties as the Council may determine. Committees of Council.

Council to  
appoint  
secretary  
and other  
employees.

8. (1) The Council shall appoint a Secretary and such other employees as may be necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and on such terms and conditions as the Council shall determine.

(2) The Secretary shall be responsible to Council for-

- (a) the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the Council;
- (b) the recording of minutes of meetings of the Council;
- (c) overseeing the work of the other employees of the Council; and
- (d) performing such other duties imposed on him by this Act or as the Council may direct.

Funds of  
Council.

9. (1) The activities of the Council shall be financed by funds consisting of -

- (a) monies accruing to the Council in the performance of its functions;
- (b) monies given to the Council by way of gifts, endowments, bequests, grants or other contributions by persons and organisations for the purposes of the Council;
- (c) returns on investment on funds of the Council;
- (d) other monies which may, from time to time, accrue to the Council.

(2) The Council shall keep proper books of account and other records in relation to the activities, property and finances of the Council in such form as shall ensure proper use of the funds of the Council.

(3) The accounts of the Council, kept under subsection (2), shall be audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Council.

### PART III-ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

10. Subject to this Act, a person shall not engage in the practice of law in Sierra Leone unless he has been admitted, enrolled or exempted under section 17.

Admission  
and  
enrollment  
as legal  
practitioner.

11. A person shall not be qualified for admission as a legal practitioner under section 10, unless -

Qualification  
for admission  
as legal  
practitioner.

(a) he is a holder of a degree in law awarded by -

- (i) a university established by law in Sierra Leone and of such level as the Council of Legal Education may prescribe;
- (ii) a recognised university or other institution of higher learning of a Commonwealth country, approved by the Council of Legal Education; or
- (iii) a recognised university or other institution of higher learning of a country with a legal system analogous to that of Sierra Leone, approved by the Council of Legal Education; and

- (b) has passed the appropriate professional examinations conducted by the Council of Legal Education and served the requisite period of pupillage specified in section 12.

Pupillage.

12. (1) A person who has passed the appropriate professional examinations conducted by the Council of Legal Education under paragraph (b) of section 11, shall, before he is admitted as a legal practitioner under this Act, serve a period of pupillage.

(2) The period of pupillage to be served shall be -

- (a) not less than 12 months with a private legal practitioner of at least 10 years' standing in Sierra Leone; or
- (b) 18 months' employment in the Judicial and Legal Service.

(3) Where, before completing the period of pupillage required under subsection (2), a person changes his pupillage from -

- (a) the service with a private legal practitioner to employment in the Judicial and Legal Service; or
- (b) employment in in the Judicial and Legal Service to service with private legal practitioner,

the remaining period of pupillage shall be reckoned on the basis of the proportion which the full periods of pupillage prescribed in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of subsection (2) bear to each other:

Provided, that the period of pupillage prescribed in paragraph (a) of subsection (2) shall remain 12 months, in the aggregate, where it is served with more than one legal practitioner.

13. (1) Subject to this Act, a person who wishes to be admitted to practice law in Sierra Leone shall make a written application to the Council in that behalf. Application for Admission.

(2) An application under subsection (1) shall be accompanied by-

- (a) 2 testimonials of good character sufficient to satisfy the Council;
- (b) copies of certificates testifying that the applicant holds the qualifications specified in section 11; and
- (c) a certificate from the relevant Pupil Master that he has served the period of pupillage in accordance with section 12.
- (d) a police clearance, from all jurisdictions where the applicant has lived or worked.

(3) On receipt of an application under subsection (1), the Secretary shall-

- (a) post a copy of the application at a conspicuous place in the main law courts building and on the websites of the Council and the Sierra Leone Bar Association for a period of 30 days;
- (b) post a notice inviting objections to the application; and
- (c) submit a copy of the application to the Chairman.

Objection to application. 14. (1) A person who wishes to object to an application posted under paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 13 shall, within 15 days of the posting, lodge a written notice of objection with the Secretary.

(2) The Secretary shall, on receipt of an objection under subsection (1) -

- (a) appoint day for the hearing of the objection; and
- (b) issue a summons to any interested party to appear before him on the day appointed under paragraph (a).

(3) An objection under subsection (1) shall be determined by Council -

- (a) in accordance with rules prescribed by the Council for that purpose;
- (b) expeditiously, and in any event, not more than 90 days from the date the objection is filed.

Admission of legal practitioner.

15. (1) The Council may, where-

- (a) an applicant has fulfilled the requirements prescribed under section 11; and
- (b) there is no objection pending before the Council against his application, admit the applicant as a legal practitioner.

(2) An applicant shall, before admission, take and subscribe, before the Chairman and the Secretary, to the oath, affirmation or declaration set out in the First Schedule.

16. (1) The Council may, upon good cause shown, refuse an application to practice law in Sierra Leone, notwithstanding that the applicant has fulfilled the requirements prescribed in section 11.

Council may refuse admission.

(2) The Council shall, where it refuses an application under subsection (1), -

- (a) notify the applicant of the reasons for the refusal;
- (b) give the applicant an opportunity to be heard in his defence and to legal representation.

(3) An applicant may, where an application for admission is refused under subsection (2), appeal to the Court of Appeal.

17. (1) The Council may, subject to subsection (2), admit to practice law in Sierra Leone any applicant who satisfies the Council that -

Exemptions.

- (a) he has been admitted and enrolled as a legal practitioner in a Commonwealth country approved by the Council; and
- (b) he has practised law in such country for a period of not less than 5 years; and
- (c) he is a fit and proper person to be granted exemption from the requirements of section 11.

(2) An application under subsection (1) shall not be granted unless the applicant is a citizen of a Commonwealth country which has legal provision for granting an exemption which is -

- (a) similar to subsection (1); and
- (b) applicable to citizens of Sierra Leone.

Roll of Court.

18. (1) There shall be a Roll of Court maintained, kept and owned by Council, in which shall be entered, by the Secretary, the names and other particulars of persons who have been admitted as legal practitioners in Sierra Leone.

(2) The Roll of Court in existence immediately before the commencement of this Act is sufficient for the purposes of subsection (1).

(3) There shall be charged for an enrolment under subsection (1) such fees as the Council may prescribe.

Certificate of enrolment.

19. The Secretary shall issue to every person enrolled as a legal practitioner a certificate of enrolment under the seal of the Council.

Status of legal practitioner.

20. (1) A legal practitioner whose name is entered in the Roll of Court under section 18 shall-

- (a) subject to section 21 and to any law precluding him from appearing in a court, tribunal or other legal proceedings, be entitled to practice in a court of law or tribunal or other legal proceedings where his services are required;
- (b) subject to section 21, be entitled to sue and recover his fees, charges and disbursements for services rendered as a legal practitioner; and

(c) have status as an officer of the court.

(2) The Council shall, notwithstanding subsection (1), require legal practitioners to undertake Continuous Professional Development in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the Council.

21. (1) A legal practitioner, shall not practise as a legal practitioner except in accordance with a practising certificate issued by the Council in the appropriate form in the Second Schedule duly stamped, entitling him to practice in the capacity or capacities specified in the certificate.

Practising certificate.

(2) A legal practitioner, shall, for every year in which he wishes to practise law, take out a practising certificate or, as the case may be, renew his practicing certificate, by appropriately completing the application form set out in the Third Schedule and by paying the fee prescribed by the Council.

(3) The Council shall, where it refuses an application for the issuance or, as the case may be, the renewal of a practising certificate, within one week of the refusal notify the applicant of its refusal, together with the reasons for its refusal.

(4) An applicant who is aggrieved by the refusal of an application under subsection (3) may appeal to the Court of Appeal and the Court of Appeal may either uphold the decision of the Council or direct the Council to issue or renew the practising certificate, as the case may be.

(5) A legal practitioner who practise in contravention of subsection (1) shall -

- (a) not be granted audience in any court in Sierra Leone and
- (b) not be capable of maintaining an action for the recovery of fee or reward on account of, or in relation to an act or proceeding done or taken by him; and
- (c) be guilty of unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct.

(6) The Secretary shall, for the purposes of subsection (5), send a notice to defaulting legal practitioners at least a month after same is due, where the contravention continues, notify the courts accordingly.

Temporary register.

22. (1) A Temporary Register shall be kept by the Council for the registration of persons serving the period of pupillage under section 12.

(2) A person who wishes to be registered in the Temporary Register shall make a written application to the Secretary for that purpose.

(3) An application under subsection (2) shall be accompanied by -

- (a) copies of certificates testifying that the applicant holds the qualification specified in section 11;
- (b) proof that he is serving pupillage under section 12.
- (c) 2 current photographs of himself;

- (d) police clearance from all applicable jurisdictions where the applicant has lived or worked

(4) A person registered in the Temporary Register shall be issued a certificate of temporary registration under the seal of the Council.

(5) Subject to subsection (6), the holder of a certificate of temporary registration issued under subsection (4) shall -

- (a) have a right of audience in any Magistrates' Court or District Appeal Court in Sierra Leone in all criminal and civil matters;
- (b) not be entitled for a period of one year immediately after such registration to practise -
  - (i) in the Superior Court of Judicature; or
  - (ii) as a solicitor or render a service or do work that is normally performed by a solicitor.

(6) Notwithstanding subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of subsection (5), the holder of a certificate of temporary registration who -

- (a) is in the Judicial and Legal Service shall be entitled to practise in the High Court; and
- (b) who has been in private practice for a period of not less than 6 months after such registration shall be entitled to appear in the High Court in interlocutory matters.

(7) The fee for registration in the Temporary Register shall be fixed from time to time by notice issued by Council.

PART IV - RESPONSIBILITIES AND OFFENCES RELATING TO LEGAL PRACTICE

Unqualified person practicing as legal practitioner prohibited.

23. (1) An unqualified person shall not -
- (a) practise or act as a legal practitioner; or
  - (b) wilfully and falsely pretend to be, take or use a name, title, addition or description implying that he is -
    - (i) qualified to practise or act as a legal practitioner;
    - (ii) recognised by law as so qualified to practise or act as a legal practitioner,

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1), commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding NLe. 1,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Practise with unqualified person prohibited.

24. (1) A person whose name has been deleted from the Roll of Court or who has been suspended from practice shall not while his name is deleted or while he is suspended, continue to practise law, directly or indirectly by himself or in partnership or association with another legal practitioner.

(2) A legal practitioner shall not employ in any capacity a person whose name has been deleted from the Roll of Court or who has been suspended from practice as a legal practitioner while his name is deleted or while he is suspended.

(3) A legal practitioner shall not make over, share or divide his professional fees with an unqualified person but nothing in this subsection shall be taken as preventing a legal practitioner from paying a salary to an unqualified person in his employ who does not practise law.

(4) A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding NLe. 1,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

25. (1) Where a legal practitioner renders to a client, professional services prescribed by the Council as those reserved for solicitors or otherwise recognised by law as such, he shall be liable to the client for loss or damage suffered by the client as a result of negligence on his part. Liability in negligence.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), a legal practitioner who -

- (a) negligently draws or prepares an instrument; or
- (b) signs his name or initials on an instrument which has been negligently drawn or prepared,

shall be liable to pay the client who suffers pecuniary loss as a result of that negligence, such damages as the Court may award.

26. (1) Notwithstanding any enactment to the contrary, an unqualified person shall not draw or prepare an instrument or endorse or cause his name or address or both to be endorsed on such instrument. Preparation of instrument by unqualified person prohibited.

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding NLe. 1,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

(3) Proceedings in respect of an offence under this section shall be brought not later than 6 months after the discovery of the offence by the Council.

Endorsement  
of instrument.

27. (1) A legal practitioner who draws or prepares an instrument shall endorse or cause to be endorsed on it, his name or the name of the firm in which he is a partner or is employed, together with the appropriate address.

(2) A legal practitioner who contravenes subsection (1) is liable to a penalty of NLe. 1,000 recoverable at the instance of the Council as a civil debt in a Magistrates' Court.

Unendorsed  
instrument  
not to be  
registered.

28. (1) Notwithstanding any enactment to the contrary, an instrument which does not comply with section 27 shall not be accepted by the Administrator and Registrar-General for registration under the Registration of Instruments Act (Cap.256).

(2) A person who knowingly or recklessly registers or causes an instrument to be registered contrary to subsection (1), commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding NLe. 1,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Receipt of  
money or  
property  
by legal  
practitioner.

29. (1) A legal practitioner who in his professional capacity receives money or property shall-

- (a) give for such money or property received, a receipt to the person from whom he receives the money or property; and

- (b) maintain, at a licensed bank in Sierra Leone, a separate account, to be called a client's account, into which he shall pay all monies received for and on behalf of a client.

(2). A legal practitioner shall, for the purposes of subsection (1), keep a commercial receipt book with folios of the receipt and its counterfoil consecutively numbered and showing -

- (a) the name of the person from whom the money or property is received;
- (b) the consideration and the amount involved; and
- (c) the date of receipt, together with any other information that may be relevant to the issuance of the receipt.

(3) A legal practitioner shall, produce the receipt book under subsection (2), if called upon by the Disciplinary Tribunal, a court, National Revenue Authority or other appropriate authority and the Disciplinary Tribunal, court, National Revenue Authority or other appropriate authority may examine the counterfoil of any receipt which is relevant to a matter before it.

(4) A legal practitioner who contravenes this section is guilty of unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct.

#### PART V - REGISTRATION OF FIRMS OR PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER RELATED PROVISIONS

30. (1) A law firm or partnership shall -

- (a) have a minimum of 2 partners;
- (b) an entry of the partnership shall be made at the Council; and

Registration  
of law firm or  
partnership.

(c) an entry of the partnership shall be made with the Master and Registrar.

(2) A law firm or partnership carrying on legal practice under a name which does not consist of the ordinary names of its partners shall apply to the Council for registration of the firm or partnership.

(3) An application for registration under subsection (2) shall be accompanied by -

- (a) the names of the legal practitioners in the firm or partnership;
- (b) the dates of call and enrolment of the legal practitioners in the firm or partnership; and
- (c) the registration fee prescribed by the Council.

(4) The Council shall, where the name under which a law firm or partnership wishes to carry on legal practice is, in the opinion of the Council,-

- (a) deceptive or objectionable, in that it contains a direct reference or otherwise to a person, body, organisation, entity, practice or institution or;
- (b) unsuitable as a name,

refuse to register such firm or partnership.

Cancellation of registration of law firm or partnership. 31. The Council may, for good cause shown, cancel the registration of a law firm or partnership and delete the name of that law firm from the register.

32. (1) A body corporate shall not carry out an activity which is of such nature or done in such a manner to imply that the body corporate is qualified or recognised by law as so qualified to act as a legal practitioner. Body corporate not qualified to act as legal practitioner.

(2) A body corporate that contravenes subsection (1), commits an offence and the liability of that body corporate shall be borne by its directors who shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding NLe. 1,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to both such fine and imprisonment.

#### PART VI - DISCIPLINE

33. (1) The Council shall have a tribunal to be known as the Disciplinary Tribunal to which it may, from time to time, assign disciplinary matters which may arise in the exercise of its functions under paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 5. Disciplinary Tribunal.

(2) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall consist of a Chairman who shall be a Judge of the Superior Court of Judicature appointed by the Chief Justice and the following other members -

- (a) a representative of the Attorney-General who is a legal practitioner of not less than 10 years standing;
- (b) 9 legal practitioners, at least 3 of whom shall be women, appointed by the Sierra Leone Bar Association, of which -
  - (i) 3 shall be not less than 10 years standing;
  - (ii) 3 shall be not less than 15 years standing;
  - (iii) 3 shall be not less than 20 years standing; and

- (c) 3 legal practitioners on whom the rank of Senior Advocate has been conferred.

(3) A member of the tribunal shall hold office for 3 years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

(4) There shall be 3 disciplinary panels of the Disciplinary Tribunal, made up of members from the Disciplinary Tribunal, which shall be empanelled by the Chairman and may sit simultaneously.

(5) The quorum for a sitting of the Disciplinary Tribunal shall be 3.

Secretary to attend on Disciplinary Tribunal.

34. (1) The Secretary shall record minutes of the sittings of the Disciplinary Tribunal and shall, subject to this Act, perform such other duties as the Chairman of the Disciplinary Tribunal may direct.

(2) The Council shall appoint persons to serve as secretaries to the panels of the Disciplinary Tribunal, who shall keep a record of the proceedings of the panels.

Complaint to Disciplinary Tribunal.

35. (1) A person who has a complaint relating to the conduct of a legal practitioner in respect of that practitioner's-

- (a) professional work; or
- (b) unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct,

shall send such complaint, supported with an affidavit setting out the facts on which the complaint is based, to the Disciplinary Tribunal through the Secretary.

(2) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall, on receiving a complaint under subsection (1), determine whether an inquiry ought to be held into the complaint and if so, hold an inquiry into the complaint.

(3) The Council shall, where it deems it appropriate, either on its own motion or at the instance of the Disciplinary Tribunal, engage the services of a legal practitioner to act on its behalf at first instance or on appeal.

36. (1) The Council may make rules as to the times and places of the sittings of the Disciplinary Tribunal, the manner of summoning members of the Disciplinary Tribunal, the procedure to be followed and rules of evidence to be observed in an inquiry and in particular for-

Rules of procedure.

- (a) ensuring that a party to the inquiry shall, if he so requires, be heard by the Disciplinary Tribunal;
- (b) enabling a party to an inquiry to be represented by a legal practitioner;
- (c) providing for the allowances to witnesses of their expenses for attending the inquiry; and
- (d) empanelling of the disciplinary panels of the Disciplinary Tribunal.

(2) The tribunal shall, on receiving the complaint, determine whether an inquiry ought to be held into the complaint; and if it so determines, it shall hold an inquiry into the complaint.

(3) The Council shall when it deems it appropriate either on its own motion or at the instance of the Disciplinary Tribunal engage the services of a legal practitioner to act on its behalf at first instance or on appeal.

(4) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall give a legal practitioner whose conduct is the subject of the inquiry, an opportunity to appear before it for the purpose of defending the allegations made against him.

(5) The Secretary shall furnish the legal practitioner with a copy of the allegations made against him together with the affidavit under subsection 2 of section 36 and all other relevant documents.

Powers of  
Disciplinary  
Tribunal.

37. (1) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall have the powers of the High Court to summon witnesses, to call for the production of documents and to examine witnesses or parties concerned on oath, which oath shall be administered by the secretaries of the disciplinary panels.

(2) A summons under subsection (1) shall be in the form set out in the Fourth Schedule.

(3) A person summoned to attend and give evidence or to produce documents at a sitting of the Disciplinary Tribunal shall be bound to obey the summons as a witness is bound by a subpoena issued from the High Court, and a person who fails, without reasonable excuse, to attend at the time and place mentioned in the summons or who withdraws without the permission of the panel or refuses, without reasonable excuse, to answer a question put to him in the course of an inquiry or refuses to produce a document, shall be guilty of contempt and the panel shall refer the matter to the High Court for trial and punishment.

Decisions of  
Disciplinary  
Tribunal.

38. (1) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall, after holding an inquiry into a disciplinary case, submit a report of the inquiry to the Council, which shall state whether the allegations inquired into have been proved and if so, make recommendation to the Council to take any of the following disciplinary measures against that legal practitioner, to -

- (a) have his name deleted from the Roll of Court permanently or for a specified period of time;
- (b) suspend him from practising as a legal practitioner for such a period as it thinks fit; or

(c) impose a fine commensurate to the seriousness of the offence, as it thinks fit, recoverable by the Secretary in the High Court as a civil debt;

(d) censure him with conditions as recommended by the disciplinary tribunal and determined by the Council; or

(e) such other penalties as the disciplinary tribunal may recommend.

(2) The Disciplinary Tribunal may, after an inquiry, make such order as to cost as it thinks fit and record its findings and recommendations to the Council in writing, which shall be signed by the members of the panel and kept by the Secretary.

(3) The Disciplinary Tribunal shall, at the end of an inquiry, record its findings in writing which shall be signed by the Chairman and kept by the Secretary.

(4) A member of the tribunal shall not be liable to any action, suit or other proceeding for anything said or done by him during an inquiry.

(5) A question before the disciplinary panel shall be decided by a majority of the votes of members present.

(6) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Council may, on its own motion, in the case of a legal practitioner who has been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty-

- (a) suspend him from practice while he pursues an appeal against such conviction; and
- (b) delete his name from the Roll of Court after he has exhausted his right of appeal against such conviction.

Rights of appeal.

39. (1) Where, upon the recommendations of the Disciplinary Tribunal, the Council decides to take disciplinary measures, the legal practitioner into whose conduct the inquiry was made shall be notified accordingly and he may, within 21 days from the date on which the decision of the Council was communicated to him, appeal to the Appellate Tribunal and the decision of the Appellate tribunal shall be final.

(2) Without prejudice to subsection (1), a party to the inquiry aggrieved by a decision of Council may also appeal to the Appellate tribunal.

Appellate Tribunal.

40. (1) There shall be an Appellate Tribunal consisting of 6 legal practitioners, of no less than 20 years standing, of which 3 shall be Senior Advocates.

(2) Any 3 members of the Appellate Tribunal, including one Senior Advocate, shall constitute a panel of the Appellate Tribunal.

(3) A member of the Appellate Tribunal shall hold office for a term of 3 years and shall be eligible for reappointment for not more than 2 consecutive terms save, that a member shall be given an additional 3 months from the date of the expiration of his term to complete part-heard matters.

(4) The Appellate Tribunal shall give its findings within 3 months of the date of the filing of an appeal.

(5) The Chairman of the Appellate Tribunal, shall be a legal practitioner of 25 years standing.

(6) An appeal under subsection (1) shall not operate as a stay of the decision appealed against.

41. (1) The following acts shall constitute unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct on the part of a legal practitioner-

Unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct.

- (a) touting; that is importuning for clients;
- (b) withholding the payment of trust money without lawful cause;
- (c) champerty;
- (d) breach of confidentiality -
  - (i) as between a client and his legal practitioner; or
  - (ii) as between or among legal practitioners in a relationship of partners or employer and employee in legal practice;
- (e) assisting, allowing or enabling an unqualified person to charge, recover or receive a fee or derive remuneration in respect of or in connection with the preparation or execution of a document or the performance of professional work which only a legal practitioner is qualified by law to prepare, execute or perform or conniving in an arrangement, agreement or understanding whereby a fee or remuneration shall be charged, recovered or received by an unqualified person;

- (f) opening, maintaining, managing or supervising a legal practice or branch as a sole legal practitioner when the legal practitioner is less than 5 years standing;
- (g) keeping the account of his practice as a legal practitioner in the books of account utilised in connection with any other business in which he may be interested jointly with an unqualified person;
- (h) remunerating an employee who is an unqualified person by way of a share in the profits of his practice as a legal practitioner;
- (i) in the case of a legal practitioner who also carries on the business of an auctioneer, referring to or mentioning any of his professional qualifications as a legal practitioner on his sale advertisements;
- (j) allowing his name with any of his qualifications as legal practitioner to appear by way of advertisement, notification or by way of information upon a business letterhead, account or other document in conjunction with the name of an unqualified person so as to convey, or be likely to convey, the impression that he is associated in the legal profession with that unqualified person;
- (k) entering into or continuing to be a party to a contract or arrangement with an unqualified person, the effect of which is to place the legal practitioner under such control on the part of the unqualified person as may interfere with his professional independence;

- (l) levying a charge or accepting a fee which is less than the minimum charge or fee prescribed in a tariff of minimum charges for non-contentious matters;
  - (m) receiving remuneration for the performance of professional work and failing, without reasonable excuse, to perform such work within a reasonable time;
  - (n) receiving without the written authority of his client or an order of the High Court, the whole or part of a party costs awarded to his client, other than a taxed or agreed costs for which he has a lien;
  - (o) deducting or retaining, without the written authority of his client or an order of the High Court, from monies recovered or received on behalf of his client a sum other than taxed or agreed costs for which he has a lien;
  - (p) engaging in legal practice without a practising certificate;
  - (q) not informing Council when the legal practitioner has been charged and convicted of an indictable offence, including fraud, dishonesty and sexual offences.
- (2) Nothing in subsection (1) shall prevent -
- (a) the Council from prescribing any other acts which constitute unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct on the part of a legal practitioner; or

- (b) the Disciplinary Tribunal or the Appellate Tribunal from determining whether or not an act on the part of a legal practitioner, but which has not been mentioned in subsection (1), constitutes unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct.

(3) In determining a question under paragraph (b) of subsection (2), the Disciplinary Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal, as the case may be, shall have regard to the code of conduct or rules of etiquette applicable to the legal profession in Sierra Leone.

(4) Where a court determines that an act on the part of a legal practitioner is a dishonourable or unworthy conduct, it shall direct the Council to impose the disciplinary measures prescribed in section 38.

(5) Where the name of a legal practitioner is removed from the Roll of Court, a practising certificate issued to him shall cease to be in force and be withdrawn.

(6) During the period of suspension of a legal practitioner, a practising certificate shall not be issued to him and a practising certificate issued to him prior to such suspension shall cease to be in force and shall be withdrawn.

#### PART VII-FEES CHARGEABLE BY LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

Agreement  
on fees  
chargeable.

42. A legal practitioner may make an agreement in writing with his client as to his fees in respect of a contentious business done or to be done by him, that he shall be paid either by a gross sum or by salary or otherwise and at either a greater or a lesser rate than that at which he would otherwise have been entitled to be paid:

Provided that where such gross sum is stipulated otherwise than in respect of a complete proceeding, the work for which such gross sum is stipulated shall be clearly specified, and any ambiguity in such specification shall be construed in favour of the client.

43. (1) An agreement made under section 42 -

Third party  
unaffected by  
agreement.

- (a) shall not affect the amount of, or a right or remedies for the recovery of costs payable by the client to or to the client by a person other than the legal practitioner and that person may, unless he has otherwise agreed, require such costs to be taxed according to the rules for the time being in force for the taxation of costs:

Provided that the client shall not be entitled to recover from any other person under an agreement, costs more than the amount payable by him to his legal practitioner under this agreement;

- (b) shall be deemed to exclude a claim by the legal practitioner in respect of the business to which it relates other than a claim for -

(i) the agreed costs; or

(ii) such costs as are expressly exempted therefrom.

(2) A provision in an agreement that the legal practitioner shall not be liable for negligence for which he would otherwise be liable or that he shall be relieved from a responsibility to which he would otherwise be subject, shall be void.

(3) A provision in an agreement seeking to oust the jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Tribunal, shall be void.

(4) The High Court may, acting in relation to an agreement made under section 42, on the application by motion or petition of a person who is a party to, or representative of a party to the agreement or who is, or who is alleged to be, liable to pay or who is or claims to be entitled to be paid, the costs due or alleged to be due in respect of the business to which the agreement relates, enforce or set aside the agreement and determine every question as to the validity or effect of the agreement.

(5) The High Court may where it sets aside the agreement, order that the costs be taxed as if the agreement had never been made.

Court may  
reopen  
agreement.

44. Where the amount agreed to under an agreement has been paid, by or on behalf of the client or by a person entitled to do so, the person making the payment may at any time, within 12 months after payment, apply to the High Court and the court if it appears that the special circumstances of the case require the agreement to be reopened may, on such term as may be just, reopen the agreement and order the costs covered thereby to be taxed and the whole or a part of the amount received by the legal practitioner to be repaid by him.

Agreement  
to be laid  
before Master.

45. (1) Where an agreement is made by the client as the guardian or trustee under a deed or will for a person whose property will be chargeable with the whole or a part of the amount payable under the agreement, the agreement shall, before payment be laid before the Master and the Master shall examine the agreement and may disallow the agreement or a part of it.

(2) Where a party to the agreement is dissatisfied with the decision of the Master, the Master shall at the request of such party submit the agreement to the High Court which shall make such order on it as it may think just.

46. Nothing in this part shall give validity to a purchase by a legal practitioner of the interest or a part of the interest of his client in an action, suit or other contentious proceedings. Purchase of interest of client invalid.

47. (1) A legal practitioner may enter into a fee arrangement with a client and can charge his fees on contingency basis. Contingency fees.

(2) The Council shall make regulations with regards contingency fees.

48. The High Court may, order a legal practitioner to deliver a statement of - Order for delivery of statement of fees, etc.

(a) fees, charges, disbursements, expenses and remuneration for work done by him on behalf of a client in a non-contentious matter;

(b) taxation of costs of the legal practitioner in a contentious or non-contentious matter; and

(c) a deed, document or paper in his possession, custody or power.

49. Subject to section 21 and to this Part, a legal practitioner shall be entitled to sue for and recover his taxed bill of costs. Bill of costs.

50. Where a legal practitioner is employed to prosecute or defend an action in court, the court may declare such legal practitioner entitled in respect of his payment thereof, to a charge upon property recovered or preserved as a result of the efforts of the legal practitioner and the court may make such order for taxation of and for raising and payment of such costs, charges and expenses out of the property as appears just to the court. Entitlement to property recovered.

Action for recovery.

51. Action shall be brought to recover costs, fees, charges or disbursements due to a legal practitioner for work done by him, after the expiration of one month after he has served on the party to be charged, a bill of the fees, charges and disbursements signed by the legal practitioner or enclosed in or accompanied by a letter signed by him referring to the bill.

Taxation of costs.

52. (1) The court may, on the application by the party chargeable with a bill made within one month of the delivery of the bill, order that the bill shall be taxed and that action shall not be commenced on the bill until the taxation is completed.

(2) The court may, where an application is not made within the period referred to in subsection (1), on the application of either the legal practitioner or the party chargeable with the bill and upon such terms as it may consider fit, order that the bill be taxed.

Payments by trustees or administrators.

53. The High Court may, where a trustee, executor or administrator is liable to pay the bill of a legal practitioner, upon the application of a person interested in a property out of which the trustee, executor or administrator has paid or is to pay the bill and upon such terms as may seem fit, order the bill to be taxed and may order such payments in respect of the amount found due to or by the legal practitioner and in respect of the costs of the taxation to be made to or by the application or to the legal practitioner or to the executor, administrator or trustee as the court may deem fit.

Scale of fees.

54. A legal practitioner shall, subject to this Part, not charge fees-

- (a) for drawing, preparing or endorsing his name and address on an instrument; or
- (b) for any other non-contentious matter dealt with or to be dealt with by him,

- (c) in an amount exceeding such fees as may be specified in a scale of fees that the Council may, from time to time, by Government Notice prescribe.

#### PART VIII-SENIOR ADVOCATES OF SIERRALEONE

55. (1) The Council may, subject to subsection (2), after consultation the Legal Practitioner's Privileges Committee established by subsection (3), by statutory instrument confer on a legal practitioner the rank of Senior Advocate of Sierra Leone:

Senior Advocate of Sierra Leone.

Provided that the rank of Senior Advocate of Sierra Leone is hereby conferred on a person who holds or has held the position of Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Solicitor-General or Director of Public prosecutions.

(2) The rank of Senior Advocate of Sierra Leone shall not be conferred on a person unless-

- (a) he is of not less than 15 years' standing as a legal practitioner; and
- (b) he has practised as a legal practitioner for not less than 12 years; and
- (c) his selection for the conferment of the rank complies with the selection criteria prescribed in regulations made by the Council in that behalf.

(3) There is hereby established a Committee to be known as the Legal Practitioners' Privileges Committee which shall consist of -

- (a) the Chief Justice who shall be Chairman and who shall have a casting vote;
- (b) a Justice of the Court of Appeal nominated by the Chief Justice;
- (c) a Judge of the High Court nominated by the Chief Justice;
- (d) 3 legal practitioners of not less than 15 years' standing elected by the Sierra Leone Bar Association.

(4) The Council may make regulations prescribing the functions of the Legal Practitioners' Privileges Committee.

Rules and regulations.

56. The Council may, by statutory instrument, make rules prescribing anything required by this Act to be prescribed and generally for carrying out the provisions of this Act, including rules for the imposition of fees for practising certificates.

Repeal and savings.

57. The Legal Practitioners Act, 2000 (Act No. 15 of 2000) is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), rules, regulations, orders, notices, prescriptions and other instruments or directives issued under the repealed Act and in existence immediately before the commencement of this Act, shall continue in operation until their expiration or until their express repeal or revocation.

FIRST SCHEDULE

(Section 15(2))

OATH, DECLARATION OR AFFIRMATION

I, (name of legal practitioner) do swear (or solemnly, sincerely and truly declare/affirm) that I will truly and honestly discharge my duties as a legal practitioner in the capacity of barrister or solicitor or both to the best of my knowledge and ability.

SECOND SCHEDULE (Section) 21(1))

PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

Section 21. Pursuant to the Legal Practitioners Act, 2025, it is hereby certified that..... whose name is enrolled in the Roll of -Court of Sierra Leone is entitled to practice as..... (insert the capacity) or capacities in which the holder is enrolled to practise) in the year ending the 31st day of December, 20..... on this certificate being duly stamped.

Dated this ..... day of....., 20.....

.....  
*Secretary to the General Legal Council.*

THIRD SCHEDULE (Section 21 (2))

APPLICATION TO TAKE OUT OR RENEW PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

1. I.....of.....

(Name of applicant) (Address of applicant)

Who was enrolled in the Roll of Court

in.....

(Year of enrolment)

Hereby wish to take out a practising certificate/renew my practising certificate No... for the year

20.....

2. I have enclosed the fee of Le.....

Signed .....

Applicant.

Dated.....

FOURTH SCHEDULE

Section 37 (2))

SUMMONS TO WITNESS

In the Matter of .....AB..... a legal practitioner.

and

In the Matter of the Legal Practitioners Act, 2025.

To.....CD\*

You are hereby summoned to attend before the Disciplinary Committee at ..... on the ..... day of .....20.....at the hour .....and so from day to day until the above matter is heard to give evidence respecting such matter and also to bring with you and produce at the time and place mentioned above .....

Given under my hand this ..... day of .....20.....

..... Chairman of Committee

MEMORANDUM OF OBJECT AND REASON

The purpose of this bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the admission, enrolment, practice and discipline of legal practitioners and to provide for other related matters.

The Bill is divided into 8 parts -

PART I - provides for the interpretation of certain words and expressions in the Bill.

PART II - creates provision for the establishment of the General Legal Council, its composition, tenure of members, functions of the Council, creation of a Disciplinary Tribunal, and funds of the Council.

PART III - deals with the admission of persons as legal practitioners, enrollment into the registers, qualification for admission, pupillage, the roll of Court, certificate of enrolment etc.

PART IV - contains the responsibilities of legal practitioners and offences relating to legal practice in Sierra Leone, unqualified person practicing as legal practitioner, liability in negligence, preparation and endorsement of instrument and receipt of money or property by legal practitioners.

PART V - arranges on the registration of firms or partnerships, names on letterheads of practitioners, cancellation of registration and offence by body corporate.

PART VI - deals with the discipline of the profession in relation to the composition of the Disciplinary Tribunal, complaint of practitioners, rules of procedure for the tribunal, powers and decisions of the tribunal, rights of appeal, and detailed expressions on unprofessional, dishonourable or unworthy conduct of practitioners.