

**CPQ PROFESSIONAL STAGE
REPORT BY THE STAGE CHAIR ON CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE
IN JANUARY 2025 EXAMINATIONS**

Overview

Total number of attempts	Number of Passes	Overall Pass Rate
59	57	95.6%

General comments

This is the third Professional Stage examination session. Candidate numbers continue to increase, particularly for Module P1 – Professional Skills Project, although they are still not high enough to form a basis for constructive feedback or to reach firm conclusions.

Of the 10 modules, there were entries in seven areas:

- P1 Professional Skills Project
- P2 Dispute Resolution
- P3 Criminal Law and Litigation
- P4 Residential Conveyancing
- P5 Commercial Conveyancing
- P6 Wills, Probate and Private Client
- P9 Business and Commercial Law and Practice.

P3 and P4 were being attempted for the first time.

The pass rate represents a strong improvement compared with January and June 2024; of particular note was a strong performance in Module P2 (Dispute Resolution).

This is a significant achievement. The candidates who passed are to be congratulated, and they and the training providers who presented them are to be commended on their effort and excellent results.

Professional Stage Modules 2-10 are examiner-marked assessments in individual practice areas. Candidates are supplied with files of materials on the morning of the assessment. In the afternoon they then sit a 3½ hour written examination consisting of problem questions based both on the materials provided in the morning and on new materials, and in many cases, new scenarios, introduced in the afternoon paper.

The focus is as much on professional skills as it is on technical knowledge. For the longer questions, candidates are graded on Information Gathering (which includes both their technical knowledge and their ability to extract relevant information from the materials provided), Developing Solutions (ability to analyse the scenario and propose an appropriate course of action) and Communication (which can include drafting and completing forms as well as communicating advice).

Professional Stage Modules 2-10 are marked on a pass/fail basis.

Many of the Professional Stage modules build on the skills and knowledge gained from the underpinning Advanced and Foundation stage modules. Providers are reminded that candidates should revisit the Advanced and Foundation stages as part of their revision/exam preparations.

The Professional Stage P1 Professional Skills module requires candidates to produce an independent research-based report of up to 7,000 words that directly contributes to the strategic objectives of their legal practice or organisation. This is the only Professional Stage module for which distinction marks are available, in addition to the usual pass/fail grades.

Grade boundaries

CILEX takes every precaution to ensure that the CPQ examinations are fair, accurate and set at the right level. Prior to releasing results, CILEX scrutinises the performance of each examination question to identify and address any issues. The notional pass boundary at Professional Stage is set at 50%. Remedial action is taken to address any performance issues, to ensure that the results issued to students are fair. Remedial action may include, but is not limited to, adjusting the grade boundaries.

Individual module reports

Given the low candidate numbers, there is still very limited scope for commenting on candidate or module performance, apart from noting that we did see evidence of strong performances, even from such a very small cohort, with the vast majority achieving a pass mark.

Because of the low candidate numbers, specific comments will again be limited to Modules P1 and P2.

P1 Professional Skills Project

There was a notable increase in candidate numbers for the Module P1 Professional Skills Project. All candidates achieved a pass. However, and in contrast to both January and June 2024, no distinction grades were awarded in this session.

Across the submissions, candidates perform most poorly against criterion GD2 (Research Methodology). This has also been noted at past sessions.

It may be useful, here, to remind candidates that the published guidance provides detail of the support that can be provided by training providers; namely, *whilst your tutor should not write or change any content you present to them, they may ask questions for clarification, provide challenge to help clarify your thoughts, provide guidance on the scope to achieve the assessment outcomes and finally, comment on your report structure.*

P2 Dispute Resolution

In previous sessions, the P2 Module Lead has commented that failed candidates had written very little in their answers or had made no attempt to apply the law to the facts of the scenarios, and that their communications sometimes lacked a level of appropriateness and professionalism. It is therefore particularly pleasing to see that all candidates passed this module in January 2025. It is hoped that this improvement will be sustained.

Conclusion

The results of this third round of Professional Stage assessments show a welcome continued improvement, particularly in areas where previously there had been some weakness. We hope that providers can now consolidate this achievement, so that it can be sustained as learner numbers increase further.