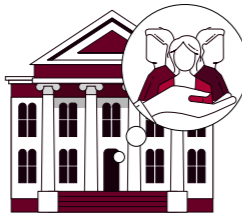


1. Strengthening the Courts' systemic function

The Courts play an essential role in developing and operating a system of administering justice that is accessible to all. In tandem with efforts to enhance access to justice, the Courts are innovating our systems, processes and hardware, and striving to foster an organisational culture in which our Judges, judicial officers and court administrators are committed to securing the fair and efficient administration of justice for all users. Highlights include:

A. One Judiciary initiatives

- i. Unification of the Supreme Court, the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts under the One Judiciary framework, sharing a common vision and core values – Fairness, Accessibility, Integrity and Respect.
- ii. Reorganisation of the Judiciary Administration, with the establishment of the Access to Justice Programme Office and the Judicial Policy Division.



C. Family Justice initiatives

- i. Extending touch-points within the community through the availability of some family justice services in the community at selected ServiceSG Centres.
- ii. Introduction of the new Family Justice Rules, which will have a simplified structure and simpler terminology and the complete digitalisation of the more commonly used Court Forms.
- iii. Introduction of a triage process to apply a therapeutic, problem-solving approach to divorce and guardianship matters.
- iv. Establishment of three specialist divisions focusing on vulnerable parties: the Court of Protection, the Maintenance and Enforcement Court and the Youth Court.

B. Civil Justice initiatives

- i. Extension of the simplified process for civil proceedings in Magistrate's Courts proceedings to District Court proceedings, where all parties consent. This will help save time and costs and so enhance access to justice.
- ii. Ongoing development of costs guidelines for civil cases in the District Courts, to promote transparency on likely costs awards.
- iii. Ongoing development of an express track scheme for civil proceedings to provide a template of clear and identifiable rules aimed at achieving the speedy and more expeditious resolution of compact trials.
- iv. Introduction of a new alternative dispute resolution service under the Singapore Mediation Centre known as the Integrated Appropriate Dispute Resolution Framework, which will enable parties to apply one or more modes of dispute resolution solutions to different aspects of a dispute.
- v. Conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding with Harvey, one of the pioneers in law-related artificial intelligence (AI), to develop an AI-enabled tool that will help users in cases before the Small Claims Tribunal.



D. Enhancement of judicial training and education

- i. Establishment of specialist centres and allied education specialists within the Singapore Judicial College (SJC), as well as subject-matter advisory panels to periodically review its curriculum.
- ii. Appointment of new Dean at the SJC.



2. Initiatives to support the sustained vitality of the legal profession

The profession needs to be future-ready in the face of the many challenges it will be facing, including technological advancements such as the rapidly advancing capabilities of generative AI.



A. Reform of Legal Education (RLE)

- i. Legal education will play a vital role to prepare the profession for these developments. The recommendations of the Working Group for the RLE are significant in this regard. These recommendations include that:
 - Professional ethics and conduct standards be included as part of the mandatory law school curriculum;
 - The law school curriculum be broadened to equip lawyers with sufficient knowledge of substantive civil law concepts to deal with cross-border matters competently, and skills needed to meet client requirements, such as an understanding of fundamental accounting and financial concepts, drafting and communication skills, and technology and data literacy skills;
 - A legal sector competency framework be introduced together with a training roadmap setting out the recommended programmes to enable a lawyer to achieve the identified competencies at different stages of their professional careers;
 - Continuing professional development requirements should be harmonised to a 16-point requirement for all practising lawyers; and
 - Formation of a Standing Committee comprising representatives from the key stakeholders.
- ii. Singapore Academy of Law's (SAL) plans to support the Working Group's recommendations include:
 - Introduction of the Junior Lawyers Professional Certification Programme to equip young lawyers of less than five years Post-Qualification Experience, with practical skills in either disputes or corporate work, as well as in management and professional ethics; and
 - Increase in the annual credit dollars given to eligible SAL members, from C\$35 to C\$250, and expansion of the list of credit dollar redeemable products and services.



B. Ethics and Professional standards

- i. To ensure the long-term vitality of the profession and Singapore's standing as an excellent centre for law, ethical and professional standards should be strengthened. The interim report of the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee will include the following proposals:
 - Core values to be distilled, including devising sound aspirational codes to build up good habits and best practices;
 - Ethics education to be a focus beginning in law school; continuing in Part A and Part B of the qualifying process; and on through the Continuing Professional Development scheme; and in certification programmes and specialist accreditation schemes; and
 - Effective mentoring of young lawyers by seniors such as introduction of a new Ethics Line managed by the Law Society for lawyers to receive guidance on the ethical issues.
- ii. The interim report forms the first layer of spadework. In the Final Report, the Committee will study the changing expectations of the next generation, including the desire for structured mentoring.

C. Nurturing the next generation of the profession

- i. Law firms must recognise the changing expectations of young lawyers and strive to cultivate environments conducive to high professional standards and to retaining talent within the legal profession.
- ii. Historically, the profession had a strong tradition of apprenticeship. It is essential to bridge the generational gap between junior and senior practitioners for the profession's sustained vitality and renewal.
- iii. On the domestic front, good and conscientious legal minds are required to assist individuals, social entities, businesses and the Government.
- iv. On the international front, the best legal advice should be available to ensure that Singapore thrives as a trusted global node for legal services.

