

The members of the UCD Legal Office include very experienced solicitors all of whom hold practicing certificates. The head of the Legal Office qualified over 22 years ago and is a former partner of a notable Dublin solicitors practice as well as running in- house legal departments for a number of years.

Notwithstanding this the solicitors of the Legal Office are not permitted to engage legal counsel (i.e. barristers) directly. This is an anomaly as they regularly briefed counsel before moving from private practice to in- house positions.

Whilst there are occasions when the Legal Office would choose to engage a private law firm to act for the University and to retain legal counsel there are occasions when this is not required and the solicitors of the Legal Office would directly instruct legal counsel if permitted.

They are eminently qualified to do this and we do not see any conflict arising and if there is a risk this is upon the institution.

This is a similar situation for many in house legal offices and we submit that once a solicitor who is employed in house holds a practicing certificate they should be able to instruct legal counsel directly of they wish.

This would lead to significant costs savings for organisations, greater efficiencies as well as greater competition.