



SQE2 sample question and discussion of answer

Legal writing (Property Practice)

Reviewed 2 December 2024

Candidates will undertake 16 assessments in SQE2. To pass SQE2 candidates will need to obtain the overall pass mark for SQE2.

This sample question and discussion of answer is an example of a legal writing assessment. This is a computer-based assessment and candidates will have 30 minutes to complete the task.

For further detail see the SQE2 Assessment Specification.

Please note that the sample questions are provided to give an indication of the type of tasks that candidates could be set. They do not represent all the material that will be covered in SQE2.

Future questions may not take exactly the same format.

Question and additional candidate papers

Email to Candidate

From: Partner
Sent: 23 May 202#
To: Candidate
Subject: Mrs Sonia Lowe – Purchase of 43 Hill Road, Woking GU22 3KL

I am acting for Mrs Sonia Lowe in the purchase of 43 Hill Road, Woking GU22 3KL for £300,000 from Mr Johan Pudsey. Contracts were exchanged a few weeks ago and Mrs Lowe paid a deposit of £30,000, now held by Mr Pudsey's solicitors. The contract incorporates the Standard Conditions of Sale (Fifth Edition – 2018 Revision) with no amendments or special conditions, other than inclusion of 30 May 202# as the completion date and a contract rate of 5%.

Mrs Lowe is buying the property without a mortgage by using her own funds and does not have a dependent sale. Mr Pudsey has told her he has no related purchase and has already vacated 43 Hill Road, having moved to another house he already owns.

In anticipation of completion on 30 May, I sent Mrs Lowe a completion statement but early this morning she phoned me in some distress. She cannot complete on 30 May because her funds are within a managed investment portfolio requiring 21 days' notice to sell the necessary stock units to release the money she requires.

She thought she had given sufficient notice to the fund manager, but an administrative error means her money will not be available for us to complete until 5 June.

Understandably, our client is worried that if she does not complete on 30 May, Mr Pudsey can withdraw from the sale but keep her deposit.

I explained to Mrs Lowe the contractual position if she cannot complete the purchase on 30 May. However, she was so upset that I do not think she was able to appreciate fully what I told her. I therefore promised to write a letter to her explaining the likely consequences of not completing on 30 May so that she understands her position.

In her distress, Mrs Lowe asked me if I could give confirmation that the completion money will be forthcoming on 5 June, as she thought on that basis it might be possible to persuade Mr Pudsey to complete on 30 May.

Unfortunately, I have been called to deal with another urgent matter, so I need you to write the letter for me.

I would like you to explain the following to Mrs Lowe:

- **The legal implications for her if she does not complete the purchase on 30 May;**
- **What action Mr Pudsey is likely to take to protect his position if Mrs Lowe cannot complete on 30 May and what the consequences of such action are for her; and**
- **Why it will not be possible to complete on 30 May with confirmation from me that the completion money will be forthcoming on 5 June.**

Mrs Lowe is not a lawyer, so it is important that your explanation is clear and simple. However, she is intelligent and astute and will insist on understanding everything, so you will need to provide brief legal explanations where appropriate.

I attach a copy of the Standard Conditions of Sale (Fifth Edition – 2018 Revision) for you to refer to.

Thanks

Partner

ATTACHMENT:

Standard Conditions of Sale (Fifth Edition – 2018 Revision)

Note to Candidates:

Please assume that all issues in relation to client care/money laundering have already been dealt with by the partner. You do not need to make enquiries about the client's source of funds.

You should write your answer on the electronic template provided. The template includes the recipient's contact details.¹

The template has been produced solely for the purposes of this assessment and does not fulfil all the legal requirements for business stationery of an LLP. You should not attempt to amend it to reflect those requirements.

¹ Not provided as a template for the purposes of the sample questions. The sample answer is written on the template.

STANDARD CONDITIONS OF SALE (FIFTH EDITION - 2018 REVISION)
(NATIONAL CONDITIONS OF SALE 25TH EDITION, LAW SOCIETY'S CONDITIONS OF SALE 2011)

- 1. GENERAL**
- 1.1 Definitions**
- 1.1.1** In these conditions:
- (a) 'accrued interest' means:
- (i) If money has been placed on deposit or in a building society share account, the interest actually earned
- (ii) otherwise, the interest which might reasonably have been earned by depositing the money at interest on seven days' notice of withdrawal with a clearing bank less, in either case, any proper charges for handling the money
- (b) 'clearing bank' means a bank admitted by the Bank of England as a direct participant in its CHAPS system
- (c) 'completion date' has the meaning given in condition 6.1.1
- (d) 'contents price' means any separate amount payable for contents included in the contract
- (e) 'contract rate' means the Law Society's interest rate from time to time in force
- (f) 'conveyancer' means a solicitor, barrister, duly certified notary public, licensed conveyancer or recognised body under sections 9 or 23 of the Administration of Justice Act 1985
- (g) 'lease' includes sub-lease, tenancy and agreement for a lease or sub-lease
- (h) 'mortgage' means a mortgage or charge securing the repayment of money
- (i) 'notice to complete' means a notice requiring completion of the contract in accordance with condition 6.8
- (j) 'public requirement' means any notice, order or proposal given or made (whether before or after the date of the contract) by a body acting on statutory authority
- (k) 'requisition' includes objection
- (l) 'transfer' includes conveyance and assignment
- (m) 'working day' means any day from Monday to Friday (inclusive) which is not Christmas Day, Good Friday or a statutory Bank Holiday.
- 1.1.2** In these conditions the terms 'absolute title' and 'official copies' have the special meanings given to them by the Land Registration Act 2002.
- 1.1.3** A party is ready, able and willing to complete:
- (a) if he could be, but for the default of the other party, and
- (b) in the case of the seller, even though the property remains subject to a mortgage, if the amount to be paid on completion enables the property to be transferred freed of all mortgages (except any to which the sale is expressly subject).
- 1.1.4** These conditions apply except as varied or excluded by the contract.
- 1.2 Joint parties**
- If there is more than one seller or more than one buyer, the obligations which they undertake can be enforced against them all jointly or against each individually.
- 1.3 Notices and documents**
- 1.3.1** A notice required or authorised by the contract must be in writing.
- 1.3.2** Giving a notice or delivering a document to a party's conveyancer has the same effect as giving or delivering it to that party.
- 1.3.3** Where delivery of the original document is not essential, a notice or document is validly given or sent if it is sent:
- (a) by fax, or
- (b) by e-mail to an e-mail address for the intended recipient given in the contract
- 1.3.4** Subject to conditions 1.3.5 to 1.3.7, a notice is given and a document is delivered when it is received
- 1.3.5** (a) A notice or document sent through a document exchange is received when it is available for collection.
- (b) A notice or document which is received after 4.00pm on a working day, or on a day which is not a working day, is to be treated as having been received on the next working day.
- (c) An automated response to a notice or document sent by e-mail that the intended recipient is out of the office is to be treated as proof that the notice or document was not received.
- 1.3.6** Condition 1.3.7 applies unless there is proof:
- (a) that a notice or document has not been received, or
- (b) of when it was received.
- 1.3.7** A notice or document sent by the following means is treated as having been received as follows:
- (a) by first-class post: before 4.00pm on the second working day after posting
- (b) by second-class post: before 4.00pm on the third working day after posting
- (c) through a document exchange: before 4.00pm on the first working day after the day on which it would normally be available for collection by the addressee
- (d) by fax: one hour after dispatch
- (e) by e-mail: before 4.00pm on the first working day after despatch
- 1.4 VAT**
- 1.4.1** The purchase price and the contents price are inclusive of any value added tax.
- 1.4.2** All other sums made payable by the contract are exclusive of any value added tax and where a supply is made which is chargeable to value added tax, the recipient of the supply is to pay the supplier (in addition to any other amounts payable under the contract) a sum equal to the value added tax chargeable on that supply.
- 1.5 Assignment and sub-sales**
- 1.5.1** The buyer is not entitled to transfer the benefit of the contract.
- 1.5.2** The seller cannot be required to transfer the property in parts or to any person other than the buyer.
- 1.6 Third party rights**
- Unless otherwise expressly stated nothing in this contract will create rights pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 in favour of anyone other than the parties to the contract.
- 2. FORMATION**
- 2.1 Date**
- 2.1.1** If the parties intend to make a contract by exchanging duplicate copies by post or through a document exchange, the contract is made when the last copy is posted or deposited at the document exchange.
- 2.1.2** If the parties' conveyancers agree to treat exchange as taking place before duplicate copies are actually exchanged, the contract is made as so agreed.
- 2.2 Deposit**
- 2.2.1** The buyer is to pay or send a deposit of 10 per cent of the purchase price no later than the date of the contract.
- 2.2.2** If a cheque tendered in payment of all or part of the deposit is dishonoured when first presented, the seller may, within seven working days of being notified that the cheque has been dishonoured, give notice to the buyer that the contract is discharged by the buyer's breach.
- 2.2.3** Conditions 2.2.4 to 2.2.6 do not apply on a sale by auction.
- 2.2.4** The deposit is to be paid:
- (a) by electronic means from an account held in the name of a conveyancer at a clearing bank to an account in the name of the seller's conveyancer or (in a case where condition 2.2.5 applies) a conveyancer nominated by him and maintained at a clearing bank or
- (b) to the seller's conveyancer or (in a case where condition 2.2.5 applies) a conveyancer nominated by him by cheque drawn on a solicitor's or licensed conveyancer's client account
- 2.2.5** If before completion date the seller agrees to buy another property in England and Wales for his residence, he may use all or any part of the deposit as a deposit in that transaction to be held on terms to the same effect as this condition and condition 2.2.6.
- 2.2.6** Any deposit or part of a deposit not being used in accordance with condition 2.2.5 is to be held by the seller's conveyancer as stakeholder on terms that on completion it is paid to the seller with accrued interest.
- 2.3 Auctions**
- 2.3.1** On a sale by auction the following conditions apply to the property and, if it is sold in lots, to each lot.
- 2.3.2** The sale is subject to a reserve price.
- 2.3.3** The seller, or a person on his behalf, may bid up to the reserve price.
- 2.3.4** The auctioneer may refuse any bid.
- 2.3.5** If there is a dispute about a bid, the auctioneer may resolve the dispute or restart the auction at the last undisputed bid.
- 2.3.6** The deposit is to be paid to the auctioneer as agent for the seller.
- 3. MATTERS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY**
- 3.1 Freedom from incumbrances**
- 3.1.1** The seller is selling the property free from incumbrances, other than those mentioned in condition 3.1.2.
- 3.1.2** The incumbrances subject to which the property is sold are:
- (a) those specified in the contract
- (b) those discoverable by inspection of the property before the date of the contract
- (c) those the seller does not and could not reasonably know about
- (d) those, other than mortgages, which the buyer knows about
- (e) entries made before the date of the contract in any public register except those maintained by the Land Registry or its Land Charges Department or by Companies House
- (f) public requirements.
- 3.1.3** After the contract is made, the seller is to give the buyer written details without delay of any new public requirement and of anything in writing which he learns about concerning a matter covered by condition 3.1.2.
- 3.1.4** The buyer is to bear the cost of complying with any outstanding public requirement and is to indemnify the seller against any liability resulting from a public requirement.
- 3.2 Physical state**
- 3.2.1** The buyer accepts the property in the physical state it is in at the date of the contract unless the seller is building or converting it.
- 3.2.2** A leasehold property is sold subject to any subsisting breach of a condition or tenant's obligation relating to the physical state of the property which renders the lease liable to forfeiture.
- 3.2.3** A sub-lease is granted subject to any subsisting breach of a condition or tenant's obligation relating to the physical state of the property which renders the seller's own lease liable to forfeiture.
- 3.3 Leases affecting the property**
- 3.3.1** The following provisions apply if any part of the property is sold subject to a lease.
- 3.3.2** (a) The seller having provided the buyer with full details of each lease or copies of the documents embodying the lease terms, the buyer is treated as entering into the contract knowing and fully accepting those terms.
- (b) The seller is to inform the buyer without delay if the lease ends or if the seller learns of any application by the tenant in connection with the lease; the seller is then to act as the buyer reasonably directs, and the buyer is to indemnify him against all consequent loss and expense.
- (c) Except with the buyer's consent, the seller is not to agree to any proposal to change the lease terms nor to take any step to end the lease.
- (d) The seller is to inform the buyer without delay of any change to the lease terms which may be proposed or agreed.
- (e) The buyer is to indemnify the seller against all claims arising from the lease after actual completion; this includes claims which are unenforceable against a buyer for want of registration.
- (f) The seller takes no responsibility for what rent is lawfully recoverable, nor for whether or how any legislation affects the lease.
- (g) If the let land is not wholly within the property, the seller may apportion the rent.
- 4. TITLE AND TRANSFER**
- 4.1 Proof of title**
- 4.1.1** Without cost to the buyer, the seller is to provide the buyer with proof of the title to the property and of his ability to transfer it, or to procure its transfer.
- 4.1.2** Where the property has a registered title the proof is to include official copies of the items referred to in rules 134(1)(a) and (b) and 135(1)(a) of the Land Registration Rules 2003, so far as they are not to be discharged or overridden at or before completion.
- 4.1.3** Where the property has an unregistered title, the proof is to include:
- (a) an abstract of title or an epitome of title with photocopies of the documents, and
- (b) production of every document or an abstract, epitome or copy of it with an original marking by a conveyancer either against the original or an examined abstract or an examined copy.
- 4.2 Requisitions**
- 4.2.1** The buyer may not raise requisitions:
- (a) on any title shown by the seller before the contract was made
- (b) in relation to the matters covered by condition 3.1.2.
- 4.2.2** Notwithstanding condition 4.2.1, the buyer may, within six working days of a matter coming to his attention after the contract was made, raise written requisitions on that matter. In that event, steps 3 and 4 in condition 4.3.1 apply.
- 4.2.3** On the expiry of the relevant time limit under condition 4.2.2 or condition 4.3.1, the buyer loses his right to raise requisitions or to make observations.
- 4.3 Timetable**
- 4.3.1** Subject to condition 4.2 and to the extent that the seller did not take the steps described in condition 4.1.1 before the contract was made, the following are the steps for deducing and investigating the title to the property to be taken within the following time limits:
- | Step | Time Limit |
|--|---|
| 1. The seller is to comply with condition 4.1.1 | Immediately after making the contract |
| 2. The buyer may raise written requisitions | Six working days after either the date of the contract or the date of delivery of the seller's evidence of title on which the requisitions are raised, whichever is the later |
| 3. The seller is to reply in writing to any requisitions raised | Four working days after receiving the requisitions |
| 4. The buyer may make written observations on the seller's replies | Three working days after receiving the replies |
- The time limit on the buyer's right to raise requisitions applies even where the seller supplies incomplete evidence of his title, but the buyer may, within six working days from delivery of any further evidence, raise further requisitions resulting from that evidence.
- 4.3.2** The parties are to take the following steps to prepare and agree the transfer of the property within the following time limits:
- | Step | Time Limit |
|---|--|
| A. The buyer is to send the seller a draft transfer | At least twelve working days before completion date |
| B. The seller is to approve or revise that draft and either return it or retain it for use as the actual transfer | Four working days after delivery of the draft transfer |
| C. If the draft is returned the buyer is to send an engrossment to the seller date | At least five working days before completion |
- 4.3.3** Periods of time under conditions 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 may run concurrently.
- 4.3.4** If the period between the date of the contract and completion date is less than 15 working days, the time limits in conditions 4.2.2, 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 are to be reduced by the same proportion as that period bears to the period of 15 working days. Fractions of a working day are to be rounded down except that the time to perform any step is not to be less than one working day.
- 4.4 Defining the property**
- The seller need not:
- (a) prove the exact boundaries of the property
- (b) prove who owns fences, ditches, hedges or walls
- (c) separately identify parts of the property with different titles further than he may be able to do from information in his possession.
- 4.5 Rents and rentcharges**
- The fact that a rent or rentcharge, whether payable or receivable by the owner of the property, has been, or will on completion be, informally apportioned is not to be regarded as a defect in title.
- 4.6 Transfer**
- 4.6.1** The buyer does not prejudice his right to raise requisitions, or to require replies to any raised, by taking any steps in relation to preparing or agreeing the transfer.
- 4.6.2** Subject to condition 4.6.3, the seller is to transfer the property with full title guarantee.

- 4.6.3 The transfer is to have effect as if the disposition is expressly made subject to all matters covered by condition 3.1.2 and, if the property is leasehold, is to contain a statement that the covenants set out in section 4 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1994 will not extend to any breach of the tenant's covenants in the lease relating to the physical state of the property.
- 4.6.4 If after completion the seller will remain bound by any obligation affecting the property which was disclosed to the buyer before the contract was made, but the law does not imply any covenant by the buyer to indemnify the seller against liability for future breaches of it:
- the buyer is to covenant in the transfer to indemnify the seller against liability for any future breach of the obligation and to perform it from then on, and
 - if required by the seller, the buyer is to execute and deliver to the seller on completion a duplicate transfer prepared by the buyer.
- 4.6.5 The seller is to arrange at his expense that, in relation to every document of title which the buyer does not receive on completion, the buyer is to have the benefit of:
- a written acknowledgement of his right to its production, and
 - a written undertaking for its safe custody (except while it is held by a mortgagee or by someone in a fiduciary capacity).
- 4.7 **Membership of company**
Where the seller is, or is required to be, a member of a company that has an interest in the property or has management responsibilities for the property or the surrounding areas, the seller is, without cost to the buyer, to provide such documents on completion as will enable the buyer to become a member of that company.
5. **RISK, INSURANCE AND OCCUPATION PENDING COMPLETION**
- 5.1.1 The property is at the risk of the buyer from the date of the contract.
- 5.1.2 The seller is under no obligation to the buyer to insure the property unless:
- the contract provides that a policy effected by or for the seller and insuring the property or any part of it against liability for loss or damage is to continue in force, or
 - the property or any part of it is let on terms under which the seller (whether as landlord or as tenant) is obliged to insure against loss or damage.
- 5.1.3 If the seller is obliged to insure the property under condition 5.1.2, the seller is to:
- do everything necessary to maintain the policy
 - permit the buyer to inspect the policy or evidence of its terms if before completion the property suffers loss or damage:
 - pay to the buyer on completion the amount of the policy monies which the seller has received, so far as not applied in repairing or reinstating the property, and
 - if no final payment has then been received, assign to the buyer, at the buyer's expense, all rights to claim under the policy in such form as the buyer reasonably requires and pending execution of the assignment hold any policy monies received in trust for the buyer - cancel the policy on completion.
- 5.1.4 Where the property is leasehold and the property, or any building containing it, is insured by a reversioner or other third party, the seller is to use reasonable efforts to ensure that the insurance is maintained until completion and if, before completion, the property or building suffers loss or damage the seller is to assign to the buyer on completion, at the buyer's expense, such rights as the seller may have in the policy monies, in such form as the buyer reasonably requires.
- 5.1.5 If payment under a policy effected by or for the buyer is reduced, because the property is covered against loss or damage by an insurance policy effected by or on behalf of the seller, then, unless the seller is obliged to insure the property under condition 5.1.2, the purchase price is to be abated by the amount of that reduction.
- 5.1.6 Section 47 of the Law of Property Act 1925 does not apply.
- 5.2 **Occupation by buyer**
- 5.2.1 If the buyer is not already lawfully in the property, and the seller agrees to let him into occupation, the buyer occupies on the following terms.
- 5.2.2 The buyer is a licensee and not a tenant. The terms of the licence are that the buyer:
- cannot transfer it
 - may permit members of his household to occupy the property
 - is to pay or indemnify the seller against all outgoings and other expenses in respect of the property
 - is to pay the seller a fee calculated at the contract rate on a sum equal to the purchase price (less any deposit paid) for the period of the licence
 - is entitled to any rents and profits from any part of the property which he does not occupy
 - is to keep the property in as good a state of repair as it was in when he went into occupation (except for fair wear and tear) and is not to alter it
 - if the property is leasehold, is not to do anything which puts the seller in breach of his obligations in the lease, and
 - is to quit the property when the licence ends.
- 5.2.3 The buyer is not in occupation for the purposes of this condition if he merely exercises rights of access given solely to do work agreed by the seller.
- 5.2.4 The buyer's licence ends on the earliest of: completion date, rescission of the contract or when five working days' notice given by one party to the other takes effect.
- 5.2.5 If the buyer is in occupation of the property after his licence has come to an end and the contract is subsequently completed he is to pay the seller compensation for his continued occupation calculated at the same rate as the fee mentioned in condition 5.2.2(d).
- 5.2.6 The buyer's right to raise requisitions is unaffected.
6. **COMPLETION**
- 6.1 **Date**
- 6.1.1 Completion date is twenty working days after the date of the contract but time is not of the essence of the contract unless a notice to complete has been served.
- 6.1.2 If the money due on completion is received after 2.00pm, completion is to be treated, for the purposes only of conditions 6.3 and 7.2, as taking place on the next working day as a result of the buyer's default.
- 6.1.3 Condition 6.1.2 does not apply and the seller is treated as in default if:
- the sale is with vacant possession of the property or any part of it, and
 - the buyer is ready, able and willing to complete but does not pay the money due on completion until after 2.00pm because the seller has not vacated the property or that part by that time.
- 6.2 **Arrangements and place**
- 6.2.1 The buyer's conveyancer and the seller's conveyancer are to co-operate in agreeing arrangements for completing the contract.
- 6.2.2 Completion is to take place in England and Wales, either at the seller's conveyancer's office or at some other place which the seller reasonably specifies.
- 6.3 **Apportionments**
- 6.3.1 On evidence of proper payment being made, income and outgoings of the property are to be apportioned between the parties so far as the change of ownership on completion will affect entitlement to receive or liability to pay them.
- 6.3.2 If the whole property is sold with vacant possession or the seller exercises his option in condition 7.2.4, apportionment is to be made with effect from the date of actual completion; otherwise, it is to be made from completion date.
- 6.3.3 In apportioning any sum, it is to be assumed that the seller owns the property until the end of the day from which apportionment is made and that the sum accrues from day to day at the rate at which it is payable on that day.
- 6.3.4 For the purpose of apportioning income and outgoings, it is to be assumed that they accrue at an equal daily rate throughout the year.
- 6.3.5 When a sum to be apportioned is not known or easily ascertainable at completion, a provisional apportionment is to be made according to the best estimate available. As soon as the amount is known, a final apportionment is to be made and notified to the other party. Any resulting balance is to be paid no more than ten working days later, and if not then paid the balance is to bear interest at the contract rate from then until payment.
- 6.3.6 Compensation payable under condition 5.2.5 is not to be apportioned.
- 6.4 **Amount payable**
The amount payable by the buyer on completion is the purchase price and the contents price (less any deposit already paid to the seller or his agent) adjusted to take account of:
- apportionments made under condition 6.3
 - any compensation to be paid or allowed under condition 7.2
 - any sum payable under condition 5.1.3.
- 6.5 **Title deeds**
- 6.5.1 As soon as the buyer has complied with all his obligations under this contract on completion the seller must hand over the documents of title.
- 6.5.2 Condition 6.5.1 does not apply to any documents of title relating to land being retained by the seller after completion.
- 6.6 **Rent receipts**
The buyer is to assume that whoever gave any receipt for a payment of rent or service charge which the seller produces was the person or the agent of the person then entitled to that rent or service charge.
- 6.7 **Means of payment**
The buyer is to pay the money due on completion by a direct transfer of cleared funds from an account held in the name of a conveyancer at a clearing bank and, if appropriate, an unconditional release of a deposit held by a stakeholder.
- 6.8 **Notice to complete**
- 6.8.1 At any time after the time applicable under condition 6.1.2 on completion date, a party who is ready, able and willing to complete may give the other a notice to complete.
- 6.8.2 The parties are to complete the contract within ten working days of giving a notice to complete, excluding the day on which the notice is given. For this purpose, time is of the essence of the contract.
- 6.8.3 On receipt of a notice to complete:
- if the buyer paid no deposit, he is forthwith to pay a deposit of 10 per cent
 - if the buyer paid a deposit of less than 10 per cent, he is forthwith to pay a further deposit equal to the balance of that 10 per cent.
7. **REMEDIES**
- 7.1 **Errors and omissions**
- 7.1.1 If any plan or statement in the contract, or in the negotiations leading to it, is or was misleading or inaccurate due to an error or omission by the seller, the remedies available to the buyer are as follows.
- When there is a material difference between the description or value of the property, or of any of the contents included in the contract, as represented and as it is, the buyer is entitled to damages.
 - An error or omission only entitles the buyer to rescind the contract:
 - where it results from fraud or recklessness, or
 - where he would be obliged, to his prejudice, to accept property differing substantially (in quantity, quality or tenure) from what the error or omission had led him to expect.
- 7.1.2 If either party rescinds the contract:
- unless the rescission is a result of the buyer's breach of contract the deposit is to be repaid to the buyer with accrued interest
 - the buyer is to return any documents he received from the seller and is to cancel any registration of the contract.
- 7.2 **Late completion**
- 7.2.1 If there is default by either or both of the parties in performing their obligations under the contract and completion is delayed, the party whose total period of default is the greater is to pay compensation to the other party.
- 7.2.2 Compensation is calculated at the contract rate on an amount equal to the purchase price, less (where the buyer is the paying party) any deposit paid, for the period by which the paying party's default exceeds that of the receiving party, or, if shorter, the period between completion date and actual completion.
- 7.2.3 Any claim for loss resulting from delayed completion is to be reduced by any compensation paid under this contract.
- 7.2.4 Where the buyer holds the property as tenant of the seller and completion is delayed, the seller may give notice to the buyer, before the date of actual completion, that he intends to take the net income from the property until completion. If he does so, he cannot claim compensation under condition 7.2.1 as well.
- 7.3 **After completion**
Completion does not cancel liability to perform any outstanding obligation under this contract.
- 7.4 **Buyer's failure to comply with notice to complete**
- 7.4.1 If the buyer fails to complete in accordance with a notice to complete, the following terms apply.
- 7.4.2 The seller may rescind the contract, and if he does so:
- he may:
 - forfeit and keep any deposit and accrued interest
 - resell the property and any contents included in the contract
 - claim damages
 - the buyer is to return any documents he received from the seller and is to cancel any registration of the contract.
- 7.4.3 The seller retains his other rights and remedies.
- 7.5 **Seller's failure to comply with notice to complete**
- 7.5.1 If the seller fails to complete in accordance with a notice to complete, the following terms apply.
- 7.5.2 The buyer may rescind the contract, and if he does so:
- the deposit is to be repaid to the buyer with accrued interest
 - the buyer is to return any documents he received from the seller and is, at the seller's expense, to cancel any registration of the contract.
- 7.5.3 The buyer retains his other rights and remedies.
8. **LEASEHOLD PROPERTY**
- 8.1 **Existing leases**
- 8.1.1 The following provisions apply to a sale of leasehold land.
- 8.1.2 The seller having provided the buyer with copies of the documents embodying the lease terms, the buyer is treated as entering into the contract knowing and fully accepting those terms.
- 8.2 **New leases**
- 8.2.1 The following provisions apply to a contract to grant a new lease.
- 8.2.2 The conditions apply so that:
- 'seller' means the proposed landlord 'buyer' means the proposed tenant 'purchase price' means the premium to be paid on the grant of a lease.
- 8.2.3 The lease is to be in the form of the draft attached to the contract.
- 8.2.4 If the term of the new lease will exceed seven years, the seller is to deduce a title which will enable the buyer to register the lease at the Land Registry with an absolute title.
- 8.2.5 The seller is to engross the lease and a counterpart of it and is to send the counterpart to the buyer at least five working days before completion date.
- 8.2.6 The buyer is to execute the counterpart and deliver it to the seller on completion.
- 8.3 **Consent**
- 8.3.1 (a) The following provisions apply if a consent to let, assign or sub-let is required to complete the contract
- (b) In this condition 'consent' means consent in the form which satisfies the requirement to obtain it.
- 8.3.2 (a) The seller is to apply for the consent at his expense, and to use all reasonable efforts to obtain it
- (b) The buyer is to provide all information and references reasonably required.
- 8.3.3 Unless he is in breach of his obligation under condition 8.3.2, either party may rescind the contract by notice to the other party if three working days before completion date (or before a later date on which the parties have agreed to complete the contract):
- the consent has not been given, or
 - the consent has been given subject to a condition to which a party reasonably objects. In that case, neither party is to be treated as in breach of contract and condition 7.1.2 applies.
9. **CONTENTS**
- 9.1 The following provisions apply to any contents which are included in the contract, whether or not a separate price is to be paid for them.
- 9.2 The contract takes effect as a contract for sale of goods.
- 9.3 The buyer takes the contents in the physical state they are in at the date of the contract.
- 9.4 Ownership of the contents passes to the buyer on actual completion.

Discussion of answer

Legal Writing

KEY LEGAL POINTS

These include the following:

Note that whilst citations (e.g. paragraphs of the Standard Conditions of Sale ('SC')) are included below to explain the legal position, it is not appropriate to include citations in your answer letter to the client.

Notice to Complete - (available under SC 6.8 and see also SC 7.4 for the consequences of the client's possible failure to comply with the notice to complete) with some application explaining that given the proposed length of necessary delay it should be possible to complete before any notice to complete expires so that the possibility of the contract being rescinded or the client possibly losing her deposit should never arise.

Compensation - (available under SC 7.2.1/2) with some application calculating how much compensation is likely to be payable using the information provided about the contract rate and the length of the possible delay.

Damages - (see SC 7.2.3) with some application examining whether the seller will sustain any loss for which damages could be claimed (as the seller has told the client that he has no related purchase and has already vacated the property being sold, having moved to another house he already owns).

Undertakings - an explanation of why it will not be possible to complete on 30 May with confirmation from the solicitor that the completion money will be forthcoming on 5 June, by correctly identifying this as an issue of professional conduct (an undertaking) and exercising judgement in explaining that an undertaking should not be given here as the subject matter of the undertaking is outside the solicitor's control.

SAMPLE ANSWER

A sample answer is provided below. This answer is an example of a candidate who would be assessed as clearly passing the competency requirements of the Legal Writing assessment. This answer is not perfect nor a model answer and there are further points which could be made.

Sample Answer

NHJF Law LLP

1 The Churchyard London EC1 4PP
Tel:+44 (0)20 7349 1600
Fax:+44(0)20 7349 1601

www.nhjflawllp.com

Mrs S Lowe
5 Addison Street
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 1DJ

23 May 202#

Dear Mrs Lowe

Purchase of 43 Hill Road, Woking GU22 3KL

I refer to our recent telephone conversation and I am writing to confirm the position in connection with the delay in completion of this purchase as we discussed. Most importantly, if you are not able to complete on 30 May it does not mean Mr Pudsey will be able to cancel the contract immediately and keep your deposit. You will still be able to complete by a given later date, although you may have to pay a small amount of compensation.

Notice to complete

If you are not in a position to complete on 30 May, probably one of the first things that the seller's solicitors will do is serve on you a notice to complete. The first date that the seller's solicitors could serve this would be 30 May and the notice would give you ten working days (two weeks) to complete i.e. if it were to be served on 30 May then you will have to complete by 13 June. From what we discussed, you anticipate being in a position to complete by 5 June so you should be able to comply with any notice to complete received by you.

Compensation

The delay will give to the seller the automatic right to compensation under the Standard Conditions (which were incorporated in the contract). If you are able to complete on 5 June there will be 6 days' delay. This will attract compensation calculated at the contract rate of 5% which will result in you

having to pay to the seller an amount of £221.92.

Damages

There is also the possibility of the seller being able to claim damages from you for breach of contract in addition to the compensation mentioned above. This will depend upon whether the seller sustains any loss as a result of your delay. However, as the seller has told you that he has no related purchase and has already vacated the property, having moved to another house he already owns, it seems unlikely that a short delay to 5 June would give rise to any substantial loss to the seller.

If you are not able to comply with the notice to complete

However, if you were not able to comply with the notice (i.e. not complete by 5 June) then please note that the seller would be able to cancel the contract, and if he does so he may:

- (i) keep any deposit and accrued interest;
- (ii) resell the property; and
- (iii) claim damages.

Undertaking

You asked me if it might be possible to persuade the seller and his solicitors to complete on 30 May with confirmation from me that the completion money will be forthcoming on 5 June. Unfortunately, this will not be possible as if I do this it would be construed as an undertaking and a solicitor should only give an undertaking for something within his or her control. In this case, I could only give this undertaking if the completion monies were in my firm's client account on 30 May which will not be possible.

Yours sincerely

Partner

ANALYSIS

Why has the sample answer clearly passed the assessment?

The following guidance is not intended to be prescriptive but will help you to understand why the sample answer would be graded as clearly passing in relation to the assessment criteria for the assessment.

The assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for legal writing are as follows:

Skills

- 1. Include relevant facts.
- 2. Use a logical structure.
- 3. Advice/content is client and recipient focused.
- 4. Use clear, precise, concise and acceptable language which is appropriate to the recipient.

Application of law

- 5. Apply the law correctly to the client’s situation.
- 6. Apply the law comprehensively to the client’s situation, identifying any ethical and professional conduct issues and exercising judgement to resolve them honestly and with integrity.

The sample answer in relation to the criteria above was clearly competent for the following reasons:

SKILLS CRITERIA	
Include relevant facts	The candidate has identified the key facts that are relevant to the legal analysis, for example the fact that the Standard Conditions of Sale are incorporated into the contract, the contractual completion date, the contract rate, the date the client believes she will be in a position to complete by and the seller not having a related purchase etc.
Use a logical structure	The candidate has presented the information in a logical and coherent way, for example there is an appropriate greeting, a main heading, an introductory and concluding paragraph, the legal issues are presented in a logical structure and the partner has signed off appropriately.

<p>Advice/content is client and recipient focused</p>	<p>As well as answering all of the client's concerns, the candidate has clearly appreciated that the client is worried about losing the property and her deposit. The candidate reassures the client that this will not be the case provided completion occurs before the expiry of the notice to complete.</p>
<p>Use clear, precise, concise and acceptable language which is appropriate to the recipient</p>	<p>The candidate has set out the advice and analysis in a clear and comprehensible way (avoiding the use of unnecessary technical terms and specific paragraphs of the Standard Conditions of Sale) to form the basis of a letter to the client, bearing in mind the recipient of the letter is a lay person.</p>
<p><i>LAW CRITERIA</i></p>	
<p>Apply the law correctly to the client's situation</p>	<p>The candidate has identified all of the relevant Standard Conditions of Sale and applied them correctly to the facts of the client's case. For example, the candidate has discussed when a notice to complete can be served and the consequences of not complying with the notice, i.e. forfeiting the deposit, losing the property etc. The candidate has also correctly understood how compensation for delay is calculated in the contract.</p>
<p>Apply the law comprehensively to the client's situation, identifying any ethical and professional conduct issues and exercising judgement to resolve them honestly and with integrity</p>	<p>The candidate's legal analysis is sufficiently detailed in the context of the client's case. For example, the candidate explains to the client that if the client completes on the date that she believes her funds are available and a notice to complete is served (by the seller's solicitor) on the contractual completion date, she will not lose the deposit or the property, as the notice to complete would not have expired. The candidate has considered whether the seller will claim damages and concluded, by examining the known facts of the matter, that little loss could be sustained given the seller has no related purchase and has already vacated the property. The candidate has also explained how compensation is calculated and has taken the contract rate and the deposit figure provided in the candidate email to provide the client with a calculation. The candidate has correctly identified the professional conduct issue which concerns a solicitor's undertaking and has concluded that it would not be possible to give this undertaking.</p>