

Legal Aid Online Attachments Guidance - December 2009

We recently improved the Legal Aid Online system so that you can send us attachments (such as statements) to applications and accounts both electronically and by post or fax. Now that solicitors have had time to get used to this, we've identified a few problem areas, and this guidance is intended to help you and us when you send us attachments.

You have the option to attach electronic or paper attachments.

Electronic

You can send us electronically documents that:

- you have already created and stored on your system
- you have scanned and stored electronically on your system.

Paper attachments:

If you don't want to send documents electronically, but want to post or fax them, the system allows you to print off a sheet with a barcode, which you can attach to the paper documents so that we match them with your Legal Aid Online application or account.

PLEASE WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE ALL PAPER DOCUMENTS BEFORE YOU SEND THEM USING A BARCODE. WE CANNOT START ASSESSING YOUR CASE UNTIL WE RECEIVE ALL RELEVANT ATTACHMENTS.

Attachments DO'S and DON'T'S

DO	DON'T
Where possible, scan attachments and send them to us electronically as this is where you will gain the most benefits online	✗ Use a highlighter pen on any documents you are going to scan as this appears as blacked out by the time it reaches us.
Select the correct form type when adding add hoc attachments or generating a bar code from search case	✗ Send us a message confirming you have sent documents either as electronic attachments or using the bar code
Scan your documents the correct way up and in the right order	✗ Send documents with embedded files (such as emails with Word or PDF attachments). Save the attachment first and send that as a separate document
Check scanned documents to ensure they are legible	✗ Send scanned documents that have no valid file extension
Save your scanned documents with meaningful filenames so that you don't attach duplicate documents	✗ Send or fax any paper attachments without a bar code
Use the printed barcode for that specific case and only use it once (you can print a new barcode using view case)	✗ (Criminal Only) Fax attachments to us unless they are urgent
Where possible, scan each document individually and enter their individual descriptions in the attachment screen (for example, copy complaint, applicant's statement). However, where you are sending us financial verification documents (such as the applicant's bank statements and benefits letters), you can scan these as one document, and enter them as financial verification	

You can add attachments at the following points:

1. when you submit an application
2. in response to any requests for further information
3. if we ask for information through the "view case" function.

Important– Civil only

When you submit the initial application, the screen will show you the option of adding electronic attachments. You should add the electronic attachments, and then submit the application.

Once we have checked your submission and attachments, you will receive a further notification (within, at the most, 24 hours) which will quote the legal aid reference number and either:

1. confirm your submission or
2. show that the application is still pending, and give you a link to an electronic copy of a letter explaining why. You then have the option to either
 - select Generate Barcode and print a header sheet to attach to any paper supporting documents, or
 - add electronic attachments.

Technical guidance on scanning documents (*you may need to speak to your technical support to assist with this*)

When you are scanning documents:

- If possible save them as .pdf or failing that .tif files (most scanners will scan to pdf).
- Set your scanner to scan in black and white and to a maximum of 300 dpi – this will save you time when you upload them to Legal Aid Online.