

Annual Report



For the period from 1 January 2020
to 31 December 2020



HONG KONG
ACADEMY of LAW
香港法律專業學會

AIMS

Hong Kong Academy of Law Limited (“Academy”) was incorporated on 2 September 2008 as a company limited by guarantee and its charitable status was confirmed by the Inland Revenue Department shortly after its incorporation.

The Academy is promoted by The Law Society of Hong Kong (“Society”) and is dedicated to reaching out and promoting law through education and training to the Society Members and to the local and international communities.

The main aims of the Academy are:

- (i) to raise public awareness of the rule of law and other core values of the legal profession;
- (ii) to enhance public interest in the learning of law and to promote law as a “public profession”;
- (iii) to nurture social awareness of the connection between law and other community development; and
- (iv) to provide pathway guidance to law students and quality development programmes for the profession.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Article 37 of the Articles of Association of the Academy provides that the management of the Academy and its funds and properties is vested in the Board.



Incumbent Directors of the Academy are: (first row from left to right) Ms. Melissa K. Pang, Chairperson; Mr. Brian W. Gilchrist, Vice-Chairperson; Mr. Denis G. Brock; (second row from left to right) Mr. C. M. Chan; Mr. Pierre T. H. Chan; Ms. Heidi K. P. Chu; (third row from left to right) Mr. Warren P. Ganesh; Mr. Roden M. L. Tong and Ms. Careen H. Y. Wong.

COURSES CONDUCTED

In fulfillment of its aims, the Academy conducted 248 Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) and Risk Management Education (“RME”) courses during the year which were presented by 66 presenters and attended by 19,252 participants.

The courses may be broken down into the following categories:

- (i) New or amended legislation and legal developments: A webinar on the New China Individual Income Tax Law, the New Cyber ID in the Expanding Digital Market.
- (ii) Updates on existing law and practice: These included updates on the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance Cap .615 (“AMLO”)*, the *Companies Ordinance Cap.622*, the revised *Practice Direction P (“PD P”)*, the *Building Management Ordinance Cap. 344*, the *Professional Indemnity Scheme*, the competition law, formulating a disaster recovery plan due to COVID-19, remote court hearings, updated judgments on torts, property law, contract law, conveyancing, intestate succession and testate succession, professional conduct cases, property management, and property fraud cases.
- (iii) Apart from providing courses on new legislation and updates on existing law and practice, the Academy provided courses covering different areas of practice to empower practitioners to maintain their competitive edge in legal practice and opportunities for networking and exchange of experiences with local, foreign professionals, and to promote and explore new business opportunities. The practice areas covered by the courses included, legal tech, company, commercial and corporate finance, civil litigation and procedure, professional conduct, risk management, advocacy, probate and conveyancing, practice management, Islamic finance and insurance.

Please click [here](#) for details of the presenters and the courses.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce the risk of transmission, the majority of the CPD and RME on-site courses were suspended from March onwards and the courses have since been conducted via webinars. In addition, the Council of the Society resolved to waive the registration fees of all general CPD courses as part of the relief measures for the COVID-19 pandemic to alleviate the financial burden of legal practitioners arising from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

Some of the highlights of the courses are:

Anti-Money Laundering (“AML”)

The Law Society and the Academy held two seminars on AML jointly with the Narcotics Division, Security Bureau of the HKSAR Government on 5 June and 24 November. The seminars briefed practitioners on the major provisions of *AMLO*, their statutory client due diligence and record keeping requirements when they are engaged in specified transactions, and their statutory obligations on suspicious transaction reporting. The seminars also provided practitioners with an overview of the latest developments on international and domestic AML and counter-terrorist financing. Approximately 700 participants attended the seminars.



Mr. Michael Lintern-Smith, Chairman of the AML Committee of the Society (left) and Mr. Alan Linning, Member of the AML Committee of the Society (right) spoke at the “AML Seminar for Lawyers” on 24 November.

COVID-19

A seminar on “Cybersecurity in the COVID-19 Era” on 23 May was conducted on 23 May to discuss the security issues relating to the use of remote court hearings during the pandemic, and identify the major cybersecurity risks for practitioners, firms, clients, courts and third parties. Another seminar to discuss the doctrine of frustration and the operation of force majeure in Hong Kong in the light of pandemic was conducted on 24 July. Besides, a seminar on “Starting and Managing your Professional Practice” was held on 15 April to, inter alia, brief practitioners on the points to be pondered when formulating a disaster recovery plan during the pandemic. The three seminars were attended by 880 participants.



Mr. Amirali Naisir, Solicitor, Nasirs, spoke at the seminar “Cybersecurity in the COVID-19 Era” on 23 May.

Legal Tech

The Academy conducted 31 seminars and workshops on Legal Tech on topics covering emerging technology, machine learning, robotics process automation, Python, natural language processing, artificial intelligence in the legal sector, data analysis, digital forensic, bitcoin, blockchain, Fintech and its regulation and compliance, technology support for legal operations, technology and regulations for cyber identity, big data in e-discovery and document review, InsurTech, e-discovery in litigation and preservation of evidence for courts, cybersecurity and managing data breach. Over 4,670 participants attended the seminars and workshops.



Ms. Frankie Tam, Of Counsel, Commercial & TMT, Eversheds Sutherland, spoke at the seminar “New Cyber ID in the Expanding Digital Market” on 19 June.

Civil Advocacy

The Academy conducted a 2-day workshop on civil practical advocacy on 3 and 4 July and a half-day workshop on civil written advocacy on 23 June to improve and enhance the advocacy skills of practitioners in conducting interlocutory applications and trials. 11 and 16 participants attended the workshops on civil practical advocacy and civil written advocacy respectively.



Professor Anselmo Reyes, delivered the “Training Course on Civil Practical Advocacy” on 3 and 4 July.

Another training course on civil advocacy was conducted on 9 June on drafting summonses, consent orders, judgments and on how to obtain default judgment involving claims arising from internet scams or banking frauds, how to prepare a 3-minute summons before a Master in Chambers and pursue a claim for summary judgment and garnishee applications. The course was attended by over 230 participants.

Company and Commercial Law

The Academy conducted six seminars on company law. Topics covered included insider dealing, directors’ duties and liabilities, connected transactions, growth of shareholder activism in Hong Kong, securities and quasi-securities, and warranty and indemnity insurance and its strategic uses in merger and acquisition transactions. The seminars attracted 2,090 participants.



Ms. Julianne Doe, Partner of Dentons Hong Kong LLP, delivered the seminar “Connected Transactions” on 11 June.

Contract Law

Three seminars on contract law on topics covering update on contract cases, the cultural aspects of Muslims when negotiating and drafting contracts relating to Islamic banking, finance and insurance, dispute resolution clauses in cross border contracts were conducted during the year. The seminars attracted over 710 participants.



Mr. Philipp Hanusch, Special Counsel of Baker & McKenzie, spoke at a seminar “Dispute Resolution Clauses in Cross Border Contracts” on 9 October.

Property Law and Trust Law

A seminar on trust cases was conducted on 1 June to discuss the recent judgments on all types of trusts including the common intention of constructive trust, the role of trustees, charitable trusts, family management trust, and creation of a trust as an alternative transaction. Another seminar on property law cases was conducted on 17 June to discuss the recent judgements on various interests on property law including easements by prescription and as rights of way, licenses, legal and equitable charges, proprietary estoppels, and charging order. The two seminars attracted over 730 participants.



Ms. Judith Sihombing, Adjunct Associate Professor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, presented at the seminar “Property Law Cases 2020” on 17 June.

Pathway Guidance

A sharing session with law students working as interns in law firms was conducted on 23 July. A panel of speakers from private practice, the Judiciary, the Department of Justice and the commercial sector shared their insights in the many career options open to law students. 42 interns and trainee solicitors participated in the sharing session.



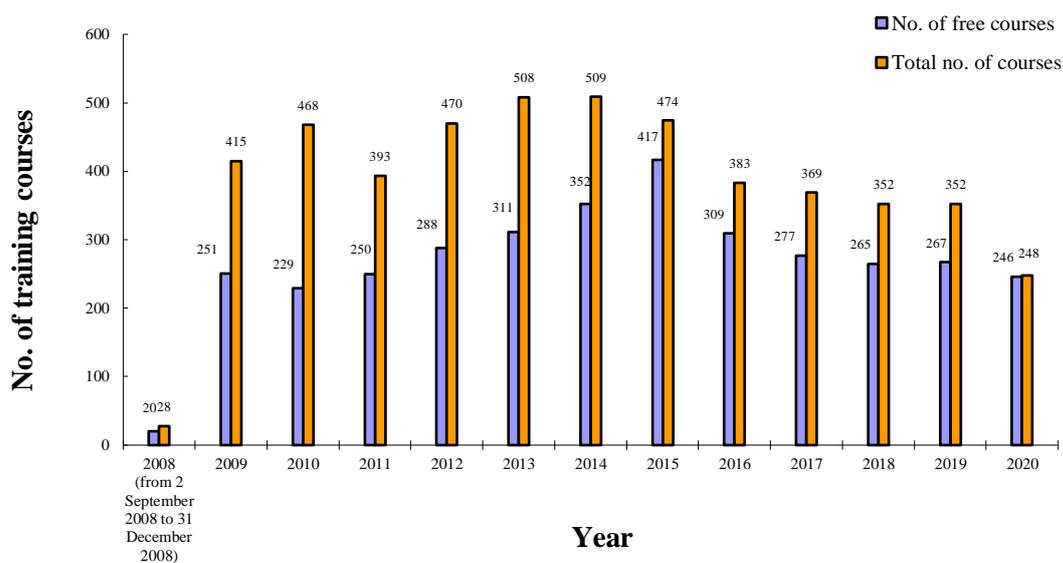
Ms. Veronica Heung, Magistrate of the Eastern Magistrates' Courts (first from left), Ms. Gloria Cheung, Legal Officer, ESSAR Insurance Services Limited (second from left), Mr. Wesley Wong, SC, JP, Solicitor General, Legal Policy Division, Department of Justice (second from right) and Mr. Amirali B. Nasir, Vice-President of the Society (first from right) shared their experiences as a practitioner in their respective fields in the "Sharing Session with Law Firm Interns" on 24 July.

STATISTICS

RME electives under the *RME Programme* have since 1 November 2008 been offered free of charge to those participants who have to fulfil their RME obligations in the relevant RME practice year and who have not attended any other RME electives during that year. Free core courses have also been offered by the Academy to all trainee solicitors since 1 November 2009. With effect from 1 November 2014, to mark the 10th Anniversary of the *RME Programme*, the Principals' Core Courses, Non-Principals' Core Courses, Registered Foreign Lawyers' Core Courses and the Compulsory First Elective Courses for Trainee Solicitors are also offered free of charge. Accordingly, all courses within the *RME Programme* are free.

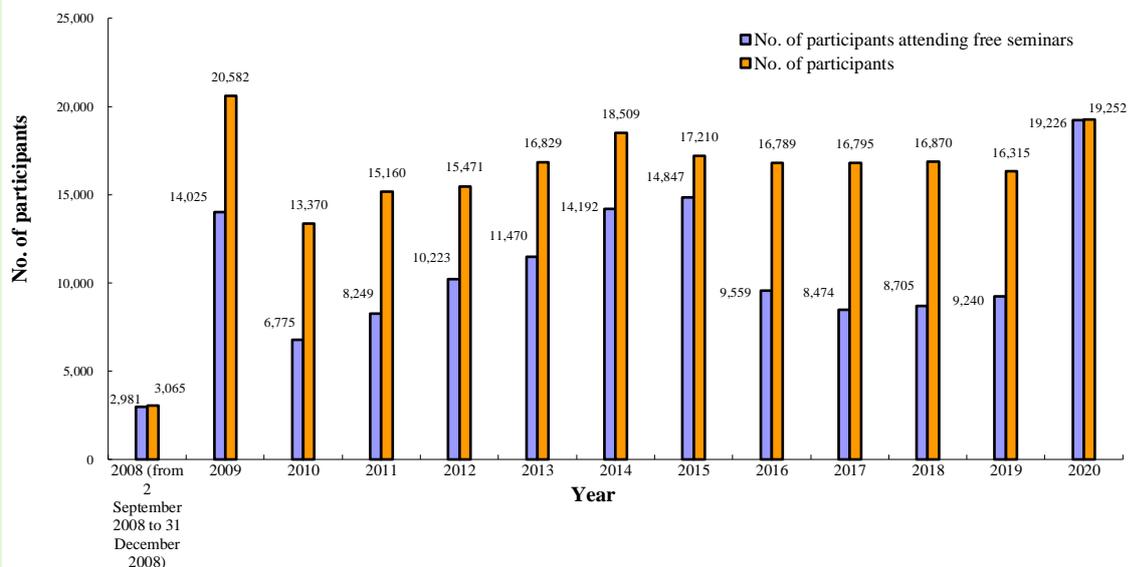
The total number of courses and free courses in each of the 13 years from 2008 to 2020 are as follows:

No. of courses organised by the Academy from 2008 to 2020



The total number of participants and the number of participants attending free courses organized by the Academy in each of the 13 years from 2008 to 2020 are as follow:

No. of participants in the courses organised by the Academy from 2008 to 2020



SPONSORSHIPS, DONATIONS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

In fulfilment of its aim of promoting the learning of law, the Academy made available the following:

- (i) The Peter Alan Lee Vine Memorial Scholarship;
- (ii) Bursaries;
- (iii) Sponsorships for attending local and international conferences.

Details of the applications and the eligibility criteria for applying for sponsorships, scholarships and bursaries are posted on the website of the Acade.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Academy continues to explore ways to enhance the effectiveness of the *RME Programme*.

The Academy has appointed a course provider to review the core courses, to develop international best practices for incorporation into the course materials with the aim of raising the Programme to international standard. Recommendations made by the consultants such as standardization of the course accreditation process, implementation of a quality management system and establishment of a curriculum advisory committee are being considered. The Academy has also commissioned a course provider to develop checklists to help practitioners focus on the ethical requirements set out in the core courses and electives and to inculcate a risk – averse and compliant practice environment. 18 checklists have been prepared and are being considered by the specialist Committees of the Society with feedback to the course providers to refine the checklists.

The Academy, in collaboration with the Society, is stepping up its efforts to export the *RME Programme* to overseas jurisdictions, in particular, the ASEAN countries. The Academy has registered its trademark in Macao, Taiwan and Mainland China.

Apart from the 26 regular courses provided under the *RME Programme*, the Academy is developing a course on high risk issues in legal practice which will be based on the statistical information on common types of unethical conduct revealed in complaints, investigations, interventions and disciplinary proceedings.

The Academy is scheduled to move into the Legal Hub, Justice Place, West Wing, 11 Ice House Street, Central, Hong Kong with effect from 1 March 2021. The Academy's objective of promoting the learning of law amongst the legal and wider community aligns with the objectives of the Legal Hub in promoting Hong Kong as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre in the Asia-Pacific region. The Academy will be able to make use of its strategic position in the Legal Hub to advance its objective.