

Practitioners should be aware that as of today a number of changes are made to the Admiralty and Commercial Court Guide.

In particular changes are made in the following respects:

- The provisions for preparation of reading lists and estimates for reading time and skeletons for heavy applications and trials. These changes are made to reflect concerns that inadequate consideration is given to this issue by advocates.
 - It will now be clear that time estimates for hearing time and judicial reading time for applications will require to be updated; and in particular when bundles/skeletons are lodged.
 - For trials estimates for hearing time and reading time will be required at the CMC and at the time of the pre-trial checklist.
 - The times for lodging bundles (trial) and serving skeletons (trials and heavy applications) will now be geared to the reading time, so that the Claimant's skeleton will be due by the start of judicial reading time. For trials bundles will require to be lodged 10 days before that date. Thus for a trial with a five day reading time, the Claimant's skeleton will be required by 1pm on the Friday of the week before the week before the hearing, and bundles will require to have been lodged 10 days before that date.
- The provisions for dismissing section 68 Arbitration Act applications summarily on paper. This has been considered necessary given the substantial increase in the number of unmeritorious section 68 applications in recent years. The section of the Guide dealing with summary dismissal of section 68 applications has therefore been considerably expanded to reflect the Court's intention to make more use of these provisions. In future it will therefore be open to the Respondent to apply to dismiss a section 68 application on paper. If the application is dismissed the Applicant will be entitled to an oral hearing to review that decision, but is likely to be at risk of an indemnity costs order if the dismissal is upheld at the hearing.
- April 2013 CPR changes: There are also some amendments, particularly regarding disclosure, to reflect the amendments to CPR which come into effect in April (notably CPR 31.5 and costs estimates for expert evidence).
- Accessibility: Another important change is that the Guide is now accessible having been formatted to assist reading for readers with mild visual impairment, and to be capable of being read with screen reading software for those with more significant visual impairment. The Court would like to thank Sweet and Maxwell for their assistance in producing the document in this accessible format.
- Other changes include: Timings for skeleton arguments in arbitration applications have also been clarified, a question added to the CMIS regarding designated judges and some numbering anomalies eliminated.

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