STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR

PANEL ADVOCATES: 2026



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S. No	Abbreviation	Full form
1	NALSA	National Legal Services Authority
2	UKSLSA	Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority
3	HCLSC	High Court Legal Services Committee
4	DLSA	District Legal Services Authority
5	TLSC	Tehsil Legal Services Committee
6	LSI	Legal Services Institutions
7	JVL	Jail Visiting Lawyer
8	LADCS	Legal Aid Defence Counsel System
9	PLV	Para Legal Volunteer
10	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
11	Act	Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987
12	Authority	Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority
13	NALSA Regulations, 2010	National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010
14	CWC	Child Welfare Committee
15	JJB	Juvenile Justice Board
16	BNSS	Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita
17	LSMS	Legal Services Management System

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In furtherance of the directions, regulations, schemes and guidelines issued by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), including the NALSA Manual for District Legal Services Authorities, 2023, the National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 and other applicable circulars and advisories, the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority (UKSLSA) hereby issues the following Standard Operating Procedure for Panel Advocates: 2026, for uniform implementation by all legal service institutions in the State of Uttarakhand.

1. **Short Title, Extent and commencement - (1)** This Procedure shall be called the "UKSLSA Standard Operating Procedure for Panel Advocates, 2026" (hereinafter referred to as the "SOP") and shall apply to all District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) and advocates engaged or empanelled by them as Panel Advocates.

(2) It shall come into force from the date of its approval by the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, UKSLSA*.

2. **Definitions - (1)** In this procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, -

a) 'Act' means the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

b) 'Authority' means the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority.

c) 'Legal Services Institution' or 'LSI' means UKSLSA, HCLSC, DLSA or TLSC, as the case may be.

d) "Panel Advocate" means a legal practitioner empanelled under Regulation 8 of the National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010, to provide free and competent legal services to eligible beneficiaries.

e) 'Retainer Lawyer' means a Panel Advocate designated as a Retainer Lawyer under the applicable NALSA Regulations.

f) 'Duty Lawyer' means a Panel Advocate deputed for legal assistance at the pre-arrest, arrest or police-station stage.

g) 'Remand Advocate' means a Panel Advocate deputed to assist persons produced before criminal Courts at the remand stage.

* Approved by the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, UKSLSA on 30.09.2026

h) ‘Jail Visiting Lawyer’ or ‘JVL’ means an advocate assigned to provide legal services in prisons or jails.

i) ‘PLV’ means a Para-Legal Volunteer trained and engaged under the applicable NALSA scheme.

j) ‘LSMS’ means the NALSA Legal Services Management System or any successor digital platform.

k) ‘Front Office’ means the facility established by an LSI for receiving applications, providing legal advice and facilitating access to legal services as per NALSA Regulations.

l) ‘Beneficiary’ means a person eligible for receiving or seeking legal services under the Act.

m) ‘Competent Authority’ means the authority competent under law, NALSA Regulations, UKSLSA directions or the relevant terms of appointment.

(2) All other words and expressions used but not defined in this procedure and defined in the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 or its Rules and Regulations framed thereunder, shall have the same meanings assigned to them in the said Act or the Rules or the Regulations.

3. Objectives- This SOP aims to:

(a) Standardise the empanelment, assignment, monitoring and evaluation of Panel Advocates across all District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) or other Legal Services Institutions in Uttarakhand;

(b) Ensure free, competent, timely and ethical legal representation to eligible beneficiaries under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987;

(c) Establish clear accountability mechanisms, performance metrics and grievance-redressal procedures for Panel Advocates;

(d) Promote uniformity in legal-aid service delivery, documentation and reporting as per NALSA's standardisation framework;

(e) Strengthen the quality of legal aid through training, feedback and periodic review of Panel Advocates.

4. Procedure for Empanelment of Panel Advocates

I. Application and Experience: The DLSA shall invite applications from legal practitioners for their empanelment as panel lawyers and such application shall

be accompanied with proof of the professional experience with special reference to the type of the cases which the applicant-legal practitioner may prefer to be entrusted with. No legal practitioner having less than three years' experience at the Bar shall ordinarily be empanelled.

II. **Selection Committee:** The applications received for empanelment shall be scrutinised and selection of the panel lawyers shall be made by the Chairman, DLSA in consultation with the District Attorney or Government Pleader and the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee.

III. **Separate Panels:** The Secretary/Chairman, DLSA may maintain separate panels for dealing with different types of cases like Civil, Criminal, Constitutional Law, Environmental Law, Labour Laws, Matrimonial disputes, Juvenile Justice, etc. Panel listings may also specify expertise for taking up cases in the different courts, sessions trial, civil suits, juvenile cases etc. The DLSA may maintain a separate panel of senior lawyers, law firms, retired judicial officers, mediators, conciliators and law professors in the law universities or law colleges for providing legal advice and other legal services like drafting and conveyancing. The DLSA may maintain a separate panel of retired senior bureaucrats, senior executives, retired police officials, doctors, engineers, psychiatrists, marriage counsellors, charted accountants, educationists and other experts of the specialised field for legal services and honorarium payable to them shall be decided by the Executive Chairman of State Legal Services Authority.

IV. **The size of the panel:** The size of the panel should be optimized so that each lawyer can be allotted sufficient cases.

V. **Selection Criteria:** The Chairman, DLSA shall take into consideration the competency, integrity, suitability and experience of lawyers for the empanelment.

a) Some specific qualities such as professional competence, client centred advocacy, court craft, sensitivity towards marginalised persons and responsive attitude may be considered while selecting lawyers for empanelment.

b) A letter of reference may/should be sought demonstrating qualities sought from the legal practitioners.

c) The following role of panel lawyers should be kept in mind in decision making.

- To represent persons in court when assigned by the legal service institutions.
- To submit reports whenever called for by the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee of the concerned LSI in the prescribed format.
- If the client is in prison, then to visit him/her in prison or communicate with him/her through Video Conferencing regularly and meet him/her in the court complex for a substantial period to interact with prisoner in order to have a better understanding of the case in hand and to seek instructions with regard to the case and to apprise him/her about the progress of the case. Efforts should be made to visit such clients or communicate through Video Conferencing every 15 days in between hearings to apprise them of the progress in their cases and ascertain their well-being while in detention.
- The panel lawyer assigned a particular case shall inform the next date of hearing and the purpose of the same to the Secretary, DLSA, within 3 days of the date of hearing in the Court.
- To update the Front Office about the proceedings in the Court.
- To submit the report of completion of proceedings in prescribed format/LSMS Portal after the conclusion of each case.
- To state reasons to the Member Secretary/Secretary of the LSI if desirous of withdrawing from a case assigned.
- Not ask for or receive any fee or consideration from your client assigned to you through LSI or court.

VI. **Inclusive representation:** The empanelment process endeavours towards inclusive representation in the panel of lawyers as well. Competent lawyers would be included to the panel from Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, women transgenders, and persons with disability in the panel.

VII. ***Suo moto* empanelment:** The Chairman, DLSA may also *suo moto* empanel any legal practitioner.

VIII. **Approval of the panel:** The DLSA shall get the panel approved from the Executive Chairman of the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority.

IX. **Tenure of the empanelment**: The Panel prepared will be for the period of three years and shall also be reviewed and updated periodically by the DLSA, as the

case may be, keeping in view the quality, attendance, reporting, beneficiary feedback, conduct, training, workload and performance of the panel lawyers.

X. The process of empanelment should be initiated at least 6 months prior to the date wherein the previous empanelment term is due for expiration/completion.

XI. **Letter of Empanelment:** The Secretary, DLSA shall issue a letter of empanelment to the lawyers within a week of approval as per format given in the NALSA's Handbook of Formats, Section 1, Part I 'Panel Lawyers', Format "A" Empanelment Letter. The letter shall be accompanied by duty notes, reporting formats as provided in the Handbook of Formats and any other relevant documents.

XII. **Re-appointment:** Where a lawyer is considered for re-empanelment, the following criteria may be kept in mind:

a) Lawyer has actively participated in training programmes organized.

b) Lawyer has conducted himself/herself professionally and with utmost integrity in past deputations.

c) No complaints have been received against the lawyer, wherein no lawyer should be empanelled until all complaints filed are resolved as per prescribed procedure.

5. Assignment of Cases

a) The Secretary, DLSA must send an intimation letter to the concerned lawyer informing them of their assignment for the specific activity, duty notes and formats for reporting and documenting. These must be as per format prescribed (NALSA Handbook of Formats).

b) The Panel Advocate shall acknowledge the assignment immediately.

c) The advocate shall initiate action without delay.

d) No advocate shall refuse an assignment without sufficient written reasons.

e) Allocation shall consider:

- A case may be assigned outside the advocate's preferred category where necessary.
- The LSI shall avoid excessive concentration of cases with a small number of advocates.
- A request by the beneficiary for a particular advocate may be considered, subject to availability, competence, conflict of interest and administrative requirements.

f) The allocation order shall specify the case, Court, beneficiary, stage of proceedings, duty required and reporting requirements.

6. Duties and Responsibilities of Panel Advocates:

6.1 Core Duties of Every Panel Advocate: -

a) **Provide Competent Representation:** Deliver effective, diligent, and professional legal representation in the lawful best interests of the beneficiary at all stages of the case.

b) **Ensure Punctual Attendance:** Appear in court on every scheduled date, reaching sufficiently in advance, and avoid unnecessary adjournments.

c) **Adequate Case Preparation:** Examine the complete record, identify relevant facts and applicable law, prepare pleadings and applications, identify witnesses and documentary evidence, and file necessary interlocutory applications.

d) **Maintain Communication:** Keep the beneficiary informed of case developments, obtain instructions, explain legal rights and remedies and inform the beneficiary promptly of all important orders and results.

e) **Maintain Confidentiality:** Preserve the confidentiality of all beneficiary information and case details.

f) **Monitor Court Proceedings:** Track court orders, pursue pending applications, make appropriate submissions and ensure no adverse order is passed due to absence or lack of preparation.

g) **Document Management:** Obtain certified copies of important orders, maintain prescribed records, and maintain a case diary documenting all interactions, filings, and hearings.

h) **Timely Appellate Action:** Take promptly and timely steps for filing appeals, revisions, and other remedial proceedings as required.

i) **Reporting and Coordination:** Submit reports when required, coordinate with the Legal Services Institution (LSI) and Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) and disclose any conflicts of interest immediately.

j) **Training and Professionalism:** Participate in mandatory training programmes, maintain professional dignity and ethics, and follow all lawful directions of the competent authority.

k) **Case Strategy:** Prepare a hearing plan for each matter, identify witnesses and evidence, and file necessary interlocutory applications.

l) **Post-Hearing Compliance:** Obtain copies of important orders, inform the beneficiary of results and immediately inform the LSI of any material development.

6.2 Mandatory Reporting Timeline: -

a) The panel lawyer assigned a particular case shall inform the next date of hearing and the purpose of the same to the Secretary, DLSA, within 3 days of the date of hearing in the Court.

b) To update the Front Office about the proceedings in the Court.

c) To submit the report of completion of proceedings in prescribed format/LSMS Portal or another authorised system within the period prescribed by NALSA or UKSLSA after the conclusion of each case.

6.3 Special Duties in Custodial Matters

In every custodial matter involving arrest or detention, the Panel Advocate shall:

a) **Immediate Client Meeting:** Meet the person in custody at the earliest opportunity preferably within 48 hours to ascertain the circumstances of arrest and detention.

b) **Rights Explanation:** Explain the legal rights and available remedies to the detained person, including bail, default bail, and protection against prolonged detention. Bail application shall ordinarily be filed within 3 working days of receiving complete papers.

c) **Remand Representation:** Ensure representation at all remand proceedings and coordinate closely with the DLSA.

d) **Regular Communication:** Maintain regular communication with the detained client and make efforts to meet or communicate through Video Conferencing every fifteen (15) days between hearings, subject to prison access and applicable court directions.

e) **Urgent Issue Reporting:** Immediately report to the DLSA and concerned authorities any urgent issues involving:

(i) Health or medical emergencies;

(ii) Safety concerns or threats;

(iii) Allegations of torture or ill-treatment;

(iv) Illegal detention or custody violations;

(v) Denial of access to counsel or legal aid.

(f) Bail and Release Efforts: Proactively pursue all available bail, default bail, and release mechanisms, including filing appropriate applications and seeking early hearing where warranted.

6.4 Prohibited Conduct-Panel Advocates shall NOT:

(a) Charge any fee, gratification or benefit from the beneficiary for legal-aid services;

(b) Delegate legal-aid cases to juniors or assistants without prior written permission from the DLSA;

(c) Accept private briefs in the same matter against the legal-aid beneficiary;

(d) Disclose beneficiary information to third parties without consent;

(e) Use legal-aid cases for publicity, personal gain or professional advancement;

(f) Engage in any conduct that undermines the reputation of the Legal Services Institution or the legal-aid system.

7. Withdrawal and non-abandonment

7.1 Withdrawal of Case by DLSA

The Secretary, DLSA, in consultation with the Chairman, DLSA, may withdraw any case from a Panel Advocate at any stage on the following grounds:

(a) Unsatisfactory performance or negligence;

(b) Violation of this SOP, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 or applicable regulations;

(c) Justified complaints from beneficiary, court or stakeholders;

(d) Conflict of interest or ethical misconduct;

(e) Prolonged absence or repeated failure to appear;

(f) Any other reason compromising the beneficiary's interests or the legal-aid system.

7.2 Voluntary Withdrawal by Panel Advocate

A Panel Advocate seeking withdrawal from a case shall:

(a) Submit a written application to the Secretary, DLSA, stating clear and sufficient reasons (e.g., serious illness, unavoidable professional conflict);

(b) Obtain written permission from the Secretary, DLSA, who shall permit withdrawal only if satisfied that:

(i) Reasons are genuine and unavoidable;

(ii) Withdrawal will not prejudice the beneficiary;

(iii) Adequate time exists for assigning an alternate advocate.

(c) Continue to act until the withdrawal order is passed and alternate arrangements are communicated, unless the Court directs otherwise;

(d) Treat voluntary withdrawal without permission as abandonment, attracting disciplinary action including removal from the panel.

7.3 Non-Abandonment Obligation-No Panel Advocate shall abandon a case without following the procedure prescribed in this SOP.

(a) Abandonment includes failure to appear, failure to file required pleadings, non-communication with beneficiary or DLSA or any conduct leaving the beneficiary unrepresented.

(b) In case of abandonment, the Secretary, DLSA, shall:

(i) Issue an immediate show-cause notice;

(ii) Assign an alternate advocate to protect the beneficiary's interests;

(iii) Initiate removal proceedings as prescribed in this SOP.

7.4 Procedure for Removal from the Panel

Stage 1: Initiation- Removal proceedings may be initiated by Secretary, DLSA on grounds including:

(a) Persistent unsatisfactory performance;

(b) Charging fees from beneficiaries;

(c) Professional misconduct, ethical violations or conflict of interest;

(d) Disciplinary action by Bar Council or Court;

(e) Abandonment of legal-aid cases;

(f) Any other ground rendering the advocate unfit.

Stage 2: Show Cause Notice- The Secretary, DLSA, shall issue a Show Cause Notice specifying:

(a) Grounds for proposed removal;

(b) Supporting facts, documents or complaints;

(c) Minimum 15 days to submit written explanation.

Note- Notice shall be served through registered post, email, and personal delivery where possible.

Stage 3: Inquiry and Hearing

(a) Upon receipt of the advocate's explanation (or expiry of the 15-day period), the Secretary, DLSA, shall refer the matter to Chairman, DLSA, who shall designate Inquiry Officer. The following Officers may be designated as Inquiry Officer:

(i) The Secretary, DLSA or

(ii) Chairman, Monitoring and Mentoring Committee; or

(iii) Any other judicial officer as deemed appropriate by the Chairman, DLSA.

(b) The designated Inquiry Officer shall:

(i) Conduct a fair and time-bound inquiry within 15 days;

(ii) Grant the advocate a reasonable opportunity of personal hearing (physical or virtual);

(iii) Examine all relevant records, complaints and performance data,

(iv) Record findings and recommend appropriate action (removal, warning, suspension for a specified period or mandatory retraining), depending on the severity of the lapse.

(c) The inquiry report, along with recommendations, shall be submitted to the Chairman, DLSA, for passing the final order.

Stage 4: Final Order

(a) The Chairman, DLSA, shall pass a final order within 15 days of receipt of the inquiry report.

(b) The order shall state:

(i) Whether the advocate is removed or subjected to alternative disciplinary action;

(ii) Effective date of removal (if applicable);

(iii) Eligibility to reapply after the cooling-off period.

Stage 5: Consequences of Removal-

Upon removal:

(a) The advocate shall cease to be assigned new legal-aid cases immediately;

(b) All pending cases shall be withdrawn and reassigned;

(c) All case files, documents and records shall be submitted to the DLSA within 7 days;

(d) The advocate shall not be eligible for re-empanelment for 2 (two) years from the date of removal, unless otherwise specified;

(e) After the cooling-off period, the advocate may reapply subject to fresh screening.

8. Deputation of Panel Lawyers

Every lawyer empanelled with the DLSA shall be termed as a panel lawyer. The Secretary DLSA, in consultation with the Chairperson, DLSA shall depute from among the lawyers so empanelled, to act as retainer, duty, remand, jail visiting lawyers and for specific activities as required for effective delivery of legal services.

9. Retainer Lawyers

a) Retainer Lawyers/Reserve Retainer Lawyer shall be selected from among Panel Advocates by the competent authority, in consultation with and approval of the Executive Chairman, UKSLSA, for a fixed period on rotation basis or by any other method specified by the Hon'ble Executive Chairman. The number of Retainer Lawyers shall not exceed the minimum requirement determined by the competent authority {(NALSA Regulations, 2010 & Letter No. 1488/UKSLSA/2025-26 dated 11.07.2025)}.

b) The DLSA, Secretary shall select retainer lawyers, keeping in mind their competency for fulfilling the following roles and responsibilities of a retainer lawyer:

- To be present at the Front Office of the Legal Services Institution.
- To render services like drafting of applications, notices, written statements, provide free legal advice, render legal opinions etc. to persons approaching Legal Services Institution for assistance, including to perform any other function assigned to him/her by Secretary, DLSA.
- To abide by the provisions of the NALSA (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations 2010.
- To assist the Legal Services Institutions in setup of legal literacy clubs and implementation of other legal aid schemes by the Legal Services Institutions.
- If assigned, to attend Court during remand hours and assist under-trials who are unrepresented where remand lawyer has not been appointed.
- To assist the legal service institutions in mentoring and evaluating the work of PLVs and dealing with legal aid work at the front office.
- To assist the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee of the legal services institution in its functioning.

- To maintain a diary and maintain a record of work undertaken and submit the report of the work to the legal service institutions by the 10th of each month as per prescribed format.

10. Duty Lawyers

i. Duty Lawyers may remain available on call during assigned duty.

ii. They shall coordinate with PLVs and DLSAs.

iii. The Secretary, DLSA shall depute duty lawyers for providing legal assistance at the pre-arrest, arrest stages and police station legal assistance.

iv. The engagement of duty lawyers should proportionate to the requirement. Duty roaster may also spell out the duties at different periods of the day i.e. during office hours and non-office hours.

v. DLSA shall assign panel lawyers or retainer lawyers to all legal aid clinics established within its jurisdiction.

vi. Lawyers with skills for amicable settlement of disputes should be considered for assignment to the clinic/front office. Preference may be given to women lawyers having practice of at least three years.

vii. DLSA shall assign lawyers as and when required for other activities such as Lok Adalats, outreach and awareness activities such legal awareness camps, mediation camps or for Juvenile Justice Boards, Tribunals etc.

viii. Upon receiving approval for such deputation, the Secretary, DLSA shall issue deputation letters, within a week of such approval, as per format given. Duty notes, reporting formats shall also be shared with the lawyers so appointed.

ix. For jail, Jail Visiting Lawyers, as deputed by the DLSA must be assigned.

x. A duty roster of duty lawyers should be prepared for each police station in the district. This duty roster must be shared with the concerned police station.

xi. While assigning duty lawyers, it must be ensured that each police station is covered, and every police station has at least 2-3 lawyers assigned.

xii. One lawyer may be assigned for two or more police stations, keeping in view the distance and workload.

xiii. Upon receiving an intimation of request by the suspect or arrested person for free legal assistance during questioning and interrogation, the DLSA shall as per the duty roster prepared with regard to various police stations, inform the deputed lawyer. Since, duty rosters are expected to be given in advance to the police stations so that police

authorities may be able to directly intimate the lawyer. Upon intimation, the lawyer shall go to the concerned police station for providing legal assistance.

xiv. While selecting the duty lawyers, the DLSA, Secretary should keep in mind their competency in fulfilling the following roles and responsibilities of the duty lawyer towards providing legal assistance to suspects and arrested persons:

a) For Suspects:

- The lawyer shall apprise himself of the allegations against the person called for interrogation.
- He shall explain the alleged offence and the matter for which the person has been called for interrogation.
- He shall provide legal advice and assistance as sought and required in the situation.
- He shall not interrupt or obstruct interrogation.
- He shall appropriately advice the police, if it proceeds to arrest the suspect unnecessarily and without any basis. In this regard, he shall put the position of law before police officials keeping in view the circumstances of the case.
- In case the suspect is a foreigner, the duty lawyer shall inform the police to intimate the concerned High Commission, Embassy/Consulate.
- In case, the suspect does not understand the language then arrangement be made for an interpreter, the expenses of which may be borne by the DLSA from Grants in Aid.
- He shall ensure that women are not called to the police station or to any place other than their place of residence for questioning.
- In case a child has been called to the Police Station, the lawyer shall take necessary steps to safeguard his rights as provided under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Act) 2015.

b) For Arrested Person:

- He shall apprise himself of the allegations against the accused and the grounds of arrest.
- He shall explain to the arrestee, the alleged offence and the grounds of arrest.
- He shall provide legal advice and assistance as sought and required in the situation.
- He shall not interrupt or obstruct interrogation.

- In case of bailable offences, he shall take necessary steps for securing the bail of the arrestee at the Police Station itself. Wherever necessary and feasible, family members or friends of the arrestee be contacted through PLVs for this purpose.
- In case the arrestee is a foreigner, the duty lawyer shall inform the police to intimate the High Commission, Embassy/Consulate.
- In case, the arrestee does not understand the language then arrangement be made for an interpreter, the expenses of which may be borne by the DLSA from Grants in Aid.
- He shall ensure that the distinctive needs of women arrestees are met by seeking to ensure that procedures of criminal justice are complied with. This may include ensuring that they are detained separately from males and that female police officer remains present during interrogation.
- In case arrested persons apparently appears to be a child, the lawyer shall take necessary steps to safeguard his rights as provided under Juvenile Justice (care and Protection Act) 2015.
- He shall submit a duty report in the prescribed format.

11. Remand Lawyers

Remand Lawyers may be deputed in Magistrate Courts, Sessions Courts and Executive Magistrate Courts.

i. Deployment shall be proportionate to workload. A court wise list of lawyers so assigned must be prepared and sent in advance to the concerned courts.

ii. The number of lawyers assigned should proportionate to the actual requirement which should be periodically reviewed. One advocate may cover more than one Court where workload permits.

iii. The Remand Lawyer shall interact with the arrestee.

iv. The Remand Lawyer shall challenge the arrest of a person before the Court, if arrest is made unnecessarily in a routine manner.

v. Bail applications shall be filed wherever required.

vi. Representation shall be ensured on every production date.

vii. Production may be physical or through Video Conferencing where legally permissible.

viii. Unrepresented persons shall be referred immediately to the appropriate legal-aid mechanism.

ix. If the arrestee is a resident of some other place and obtaining of local surety may be difficult for him, a submission may be made before the court not to order furnishing of local sureties.

x. In case the arrestee or the lawyer does not understand the language in which the documents have been prepared by the police, submission be made before the court to provide the translated documents.

xi. In case the arrestee is a foreigner, the remand lawyer shall request the court to direct the police to intimate the concerned High Commission, Embassy/Consulate.

xii. If a person in judicial custody is neither produced in person nor through video conferencing on a subsequent remand then the submission may be made before the court to give remand only on production. The submission be made before the court concerned to direct the concerned authorities to produce the accused.

xiii. Person who are produced before Executive Magistrate for the purpose of detention be effectively represented, in case legal aid is required by any such person. In such a case, interaction with such person, obtaining the copy of application and other documents, preparing a case for resisting preventive detention are some of the pre-requisite steps for effective representation. If the order for preventive detention is passed, the detainee will be apprised of his rights to move higher authorities/court. In case the legal aid is required for moving higher courts, the requisite steps be taken by Legal Services Authorities in this regard.

xiv. Remand Advocates shall be duly trained in Juvenile Justice Law. In case the arrested person apparently appears to be a child in conflict with law, submission be made before Magistrate to take the steps as per Juvenile Justice Law. Application in this regard be moved before the court. Efforts be also made in coordination with the family members of such a person to collect the documents reflecting about his date of birth.

xv. Whenever a person of unsound mind is produced for a remand, the Remand Lawyer shall take steps in accordance with chapter XXVII of BNSS, 2023. Submission for his bail be made in accordance with section 369 BNSS, 2023. His rights provided under Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 be also secured such as right to access Mental Healthcare, right to protection from cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. In this regard office of DLSA shall be duly intimated so that the protections under Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 be actualized.

xvi. A remand register and report shall be maintained.

12. Jail Visiting Lawyers

i. The Secretary, DLSA shall in consultation with the Chairman, DLSA depute some panel lawyers as jail visiting lawyers proportionate to inmate population and workload. The possibility of taking the services of retired Judicial Officers as jail visiting lawyers can also be explored and honorarium for them can be fixed by the Hon'ble Executive Chairman of the UKSLSA.

ii. While selecting jail visiting lawyers, the Secretary, DLSA shall bear in mind their competency in fulfilling the following roles and responsibilities:

- The jail visiting lawyers shall regularly interact with the inmates and especially the new inmates to find out if they are represented by any lawyer and if not, they should inform the inmate about their right to get a legal aid lawyer. They should also inform the Secretary, DLSA so that a legal aid lawyer can be appointed to represent the inmate in court.
- The jail visiting lawyers shall also facilitate contact of the prisoner with the legal aid lawyer.
- The jail visiting lawyers shall identify urgent matters and check whether legal-aid applications have been forwarded.
- The jail visiting lawyers should prepare a brief summary of each interaction and send the same to the Secretary, DLSA along with contact details of the family of the accused, if available so that the penal lawyer can coordinate with them.
- The jail visiting lawyers should also keep track of non-production of any inmate in the court as per the date given or of the cases where on next date is available and inform the Secretary, DLSA.
- The Jail visiting lawyers shall communicate to the Secretary, DLSA whenever bail application has to be filed on behalf of an inmate or if subsequently it comes to their notice that an undertrial is not being represented by a lawyer in the court, who shall issue appropriate directions for a lawyer to be appointed in the case. They should also bring to the notice of the Secretary, DLSA cases where bail orders have been issued but bail bonds could not be furnished due to various reasons.
- A Jail Legal Services visit shall ordinarily be for not less than three hours and may extend up to four hours or such other duration as specified by the DLSA in consultation with Jail Administration.

13. Front Office Deployment

Panel Advocates may be deputed to Front Offices through a monthly roaster. Full-day Front Office duty shall ordinarily be: 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The Secretary, DLSA may alter the timings because of Court hours, local requirements, weather, special programmes or accessibility.

14. Front Office Functions

The advocate shall:

a) Receive persons seeking assistance and provide preliminary legal advice;
b) Conduct interviews and Scrutinise applications;
c) Assist in form filling and Draft simple applications;
d) Identify urgent matters;
e) Refer matters to mediation or Lok Adalat;
f) Coordinate with PLVs and Facilitate Government-scheme linkages;
g) Maintain the intake register;
h) Provide information regarding case status; and
i) Ensure follow-up or
j) Any other functions assigned by Secretary, DLSA.

15. Legal Services Clinics

Panel Advocates may be deputed to Legal Service Clinics. A normal Clinic sitting shall ordinarily be not less than three hours. The advocate shall:

a) Provide legal advice and Conduct beneficiary interviews;
b) Assist in drafting applications;
c) Identify persons requiring formal legal aid;
d) Assist vulnerable persons;
e) Facilitate Government schemes;
f) Promote mediation and Lok Adalat and Conduct legal literacy,
g) Maintain Clinic records.

Note:- During landslides, floods, cloudbursts, heavy snowfall, earthquakes, forest fires, major accidents or any other emergency or disaster, the Secretary, DLSA may deploy Panel Advocates to provide legal aid and assistance, undertake necessary legal activities, and coordinate with the concerned Authorities and agencies for ensuring timely and effective legal support to affected persons.

16. JJB, CWC and Child Care Institutions

Panel Advocates assigned to Juvenile Justice Boards, Child Welfare Committees or Child Care Institutions shall:

a) Provide child-friendly assistance;

b) Protect the child's dignity, safety, participation and best interests;

c) Explain proceedings in an age-appropriate manner;

d) Maintain confidentiality;

e) Coordinate with the DLSA, CWC, LADCS or other competent authority and

f) Report urgent protection concerns immediately.

17. Legal Services Camps

A full-day Legal Services Camp shall ordinarily be conducted from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. During the camp, Panel Advocates may provide legal advice and assistance, facilitate legal-aid applications, make referrals for mediation and Lok Adalat, provide information and assistance regarding welfare schemes and victim compensation, undertake legal literacy and awareness activities, assist women and children, and make necessary follow-up referrals to the appropriate authorities or services.

18. Monthly Duty Roster

As per requirement, every DLSA shall prepare and maintain a duty roster for Panel Advocates covering Front Office duties, Legal Services Clinics, Jail Legal Services, police-station legal aid, institutional duties, outreach activities, Legal Services Camps, and such other authorised duties as may be assigned from time to time.

19. Roster Contents

The roster shall specify:

Name of Panel Advocate	Place of duty	Date	Nature of duty	Duty period	Contact person, wherever required

20. Modification of Roster

The Secretary, DLSA may modify the duty roster, as necessary, to accommodate court or jail administration requirements, adverse weather conditions, landslides or road closures, emergencies or disasters, illness or unavoidable absence, special campaigns, or any directions issued by the UKSLSA or NALSA.

21. Attendance

Attendance shall be recorded through digital attendance, a duty register, or any other method approved by the competent authority. In respect of prison and institutional duties, the attendance of the Panel Advocate shall be duly verified and certified by the competent officer of the concerned institution.

22. Monthly Report

The monthly report shall ordinarily be submitted by the 10th day of the following month and shall include:

Name of the Panel Advocate: -							
Cases assigned	Cases disposed	Cases pending	Bail and remand matters	Appeals and revisions	Duties at Front Office and other institutions	Jail visits	Outreach activities

23. Monitoring Functions

The Secretary, DLSA or the Committee shall periodically review the performance of Panel Advocates with regard to the quality of legal representation, court attendance, case preparation, timeliness, communication with beneficiaries, progress of cases, compliance with reporting requirements, performance in prisons and Legal Services Clinics, professional conduct, beneficiary feedback, and compliance with digital reporting requirements.

24. Conditions of Payment

Payment shall be subject to authorised assignment, actual performance, verified attendance, submission of the prescribed report and completion of all required records,

timely submission of the claim, availability of budgetary provision, approval and sanction by the competent authority, compliance with audit requirements, and adherence to the applicable NALSA and UKSLSA guidelines and financial rules and directions.

25. Processing of Claims

i. Claims shall be submitted in the prescribed format, along with all requisite supporting documents and proofs.

ii. The concerned LSI shall scrutinise the claims promptly and ensure that the same are complete and in accordance with the applicable rules and guidelines.

iii. Any deficiency or discrepancy noticed during scrutiny shall be communicated to the concerned Panel Advocate within a reasonable period, with an opportunity to rectify the same.

iv. Verified and complete claims shall be processed and forwarded for payment without undue delay.

v. Payment of duly verified and approved claims shall be made subject to the availability of budgetary provision and compliance with the applicable financial rules and procedures.

Note 1: Bills of Panel Advocates shall, as far as practicable, be processed and paid on a monthly basis to avoid undue delay in payment.

Note 2: The DLSA shall deduct Tax Deducted at Source (TDS), wherever applicable, in accordance with the provisions of the Income-tax Act and the rules made thereunder.

26. Honorarium and Payment

(a) Panel Advocates- Panel Advocates shall be paid honorarium in accordance with **Appendix-A of the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority (Transaction of Business and Other Provisions) Amendment Regulations, 2024**, as notified vide **Notification No. 1039(1)/SLSA/2024 dated 12.06.2024**, and **Letter No. 782/UKSLSA/2024-25 dated 28.04.2025**, as amended, revised or substituted from time to time or in accordance with any other specific directions or instructions issued by the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority (UKSLSA).

Explanation: The Panel Advocate shall be reimbursed actual expenses incurred for obtaining certified copies and file inspections, up to ₹500/- (Rupees Five Hundred only) per case, as part of clerkage charges, subject to submission of requisite receipts, vouchers or other supporting documents.

(b) Panel lawyers providing legal services in police stations and involved in other legal awareness activities- Panel Advocates providing legal aid and services to needy persons at the pre-arrest stage in police stations and undertaking legal awareness activities, including multipurpose camps and visits to homes, institutions and clinics, shall be entitled to an honorarium of ₹750/- (Rupees Seven Hundred Fifty only) per working day, in accordance with Letter No. 164/UKSLSA/2020-21 dated 15.02.2022, or at such rate as may be prescribed or directed by the UKSLSA from time to time.

Explanation-Panel Lawyers deputed to the Front Offices shall be entitled to an honorarium of ₹750/- (Rupees Seven Hundred Fifty only) per working day or such rate as may be prescribed by the UKSLSA from time to time, at par with the honorarium admissible for the duties referred to hereinabove.

(c) Panel Advocates providing legal aid and legal services through Prison Legal Aid Clinics shall be entitled to an honorarium of ₹750/- (Rupees Seven Hundred Fifty only) per working day, in accordance with Letter No. 124/SLSA/2013 dated 15.05.2013, as amended from time to time, or at such rate as may be directed by the UKSLSA.

(d) Retainer Lawyers deputed to Front Offices shall be paid an honorarium of ₹25,000/- (Rupees Twenty-Five Thousand only) per month. A Reserve Retainer Lawyer deputed in place of the regular Retainer Lawyer shall be paid proportionately for the period of duty, calculated on the basis of the monthly honorarium, in accordance with Letter No. 1488/UKSLSA/2025-26 dated 11.07.2025, as amended from time to time, or at such rate as may be directed by the UKSLSA.

Note: The Secretary, DLSA, shall ensure that the Retainer Lawyer or Reserve Retainer Lawyer, as the case may be, devotes a minimum of five hours on each working day to the functioning of the Front Office and shall regularly monitor their performance. A quarterly progress report shall be submitted, detailing the nature and extent of the work undertaken by the Retainer Lawyer or Reserve Retainer Lawyer.

27. Training and Orientation

i. The DLSA shall ensure that all lawyers empanelled undergo a period of training as per modules prepared by NALSA and UKSLSA. The participation in the training programme shall be a relevant consideration for the retention or continuation of panel lawyers.

ii. While conceptualising training programmes, DLSAs shall take the advice of the Mentoring and Monitoring Committee which is mandated to access the training needs of panel lawyers on a continuous basis.

iii. Participation in training programme shall be a relevant consideration for the retention or continuation of panel lawyers, therefore, DLSA shall maintain a list of trainings attended by each panel lawyer.

iv. Sensitization of panel lawyers should be done in accordance with the training curriculum and training manual prepared by the UKSLSA with the assistance of the State Judicial Academies.

v. Training shall be organized frequently at the district level with the assistance of the State Judicial Academy.

vi. Specialized training shall be imparted to duty lawyers engaged for providing legal assistance at the pre-arrest, arrest and remand stage. Training may cover topics such as rights of the arrested persons, jurisprudence of section 41, 41A to 41D of Cr.P.C. {(section 35, 35 (3) to 35(6), 36, 37, 38 of BNSS)}, important judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on arrest law, juvenile justice act etc.

vii. Workshops shall be organized for police and other investigating agencies on rights of the arrestees and corresponding duties of the Investigating Officers. Capacity building programmes for panel lawyers specifically touching upon essential aspects of law pertaining to arrest, remand and bail be planned and implemented.

viii. Refresher Trainings should be periodically organized for all panel lawyers.

ix. **Non-Attendance Consequences:** If the panel lawyer(s) do/does not attend the Training and Orientation Programme without valid reason, it shall adversely affect:

- Annual Performance Review;
- Re-empanelment eligibility;
- Assignment of specialised cases.
- Repeated non-attendance (two or more consecutive programmes) may invite warning or suspension until training is completed.

28. Applicability to High Court Legal Services Committee (HCLSC)

28.1 Extension of SOP Provisions to HCLSC Panel Advocates

(a) The provisions of this SOP shall apply mutatis mutandis to Panel Advocates empanelled with the High Court Legal Services Committee (HCLSC), Uttarakhand, subject to the administrative control and supervision of the Chairman, HCLSC.

(b) In particular, the provisions relating to empanelment and selection, case assignment and handover, duties and reporting, custodial matters, training, honorarium and payment, withdrawal, non-abandonment and removal from the panel shall apply with necessary modifications.

(c) HCLSC Panel Advocates shall coordinate with the Secretary, HCLSC, for jail visits, necessary permissions, video-conferencing facilities with detention centres and reporting of urgent custodial matters to the appropriate authorities.

28.2 Administrative Modifications- In respect of Panel Advocates empanelled with the High Court Legal Services Committee (HCLSC), references in this SOP to "DLSA" shall be construed as references to "HCLSC" and references to "Secretary, DLSA" and "Chairman, DLSA" shall be construed as references to "Secretary, HCLSC" and "Chairman, HCLSC", respectively.

29. Miscellaneous

1. The DLSA shall ensure that all panel lawyers are informed of the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee (MMC), its constitution, mandates and functions.
2. The DLSA must inform the lawyers that they may seek advice from the MMC in case of any difficulty in handling the case at any stage or specifically in complicated issues.
3. The DLSA shall periodically review the early access to justice framework so as to identify the gaps and taking timely and appropriate corrective measures for improving the structure.

30. Amendment and Applicability of NALSA Provisions

(a) The UKSLSA may, from time to time, amend, modify, supplement or revise this SOP in accordance with NALSA guidelines, applicable regulations and emerging requirements.

(b) All such amendments shall be duly notified and, wherever necessary, communicated to all concerned DLSAs and HCLSC.

(c) In the event of any inconsistency or conflict between the provisions of this SOP and any applicable NALSA regulations, guidelines, circulars or directions, the NALSA provision shall prevail to the extent of such inconsistency or conflict.

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