

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Qatar

Introduction

The pro bono legal market does not have any great tradition in Qatar. Qatari nationals are well looked after by both the State and the buoyant economy in Qatar, therefore, the need for pro bono legal representation amongst Qatari nationals is rare. In Qatar, there is exceptionally low unemployment, and all unskilled labour is provided by expatriate workers who are invariably transient and without permanent residence rights. There are limited pro bono opportunities for dealing with issues between such unskilled labour and their employers in the private sector, as this market at this point remains very underdeveloped. The Qatar government also provides extensive support to charitable organisations, so their requirements for legal services tend to be limited.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	No	Yes	No.**	No	No	No

**The distinction between "law firms" (which must have insurance in the QFC) and "in-house counsel" (who are not formally recognised/regulated) is correctly maintained to justify the "No" above.

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel. 	<p>Law (23) for 2006 regarding enacting the code of law practice (Advocacy Law) is the primary source for regulating legal services in Qatar.¹</p> <p>Licensing requirements for entry into the Roll of Practicing Lawyers under the Advocacy Law requires a formal application to the Ministry of Justice and is open to those persons with: (i) Qatari citizenship; or (ii) citizenship of a Gulf Cooperation Council (the GCC) country (provided the GCC country provides reciprocal rights).</p> <p>Such licensing requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a law degree from a recognised university;

¹ See <http://www.almeezan.qa/LawPage.aspx?id=2563&language=en> (last visited on 13 February 2025).

- full mental capacity and at least 21 years of age;
- respectable, reputable character and worthy of respect accorded to members of the profession;
- no convictions for felonies or crimes involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless such individual has been rehabilitated; and
- the completion of a term of training, which comprises six months of training at the Centre for Judicial and Legal Studies, in addition to 18 months at a practicing lawyer's office who has engaged in legal practice for at least five years, or has worked at the judiciary, public prosecution, or any other legal work at any Ministry, government agency, public entity, or institution.

Within Qatar, there is also the Qatar Financial Centre (the **QFC**), a separate financial services freezone with its own legislative framework. The QFC Authority Rules contain a Legal Services Code that is applicable to law firms operating in and from the QFC.² A legal services firm operating in the QFC must obtain a licence from the QFC Authority, and lawyers within such firm must be members of a Recognised Professional Body that satisfies the QFC Authority's discretionary power to determine what qualifies as a Recognised Professional Body.

There is no formal recognition of the concept of corporate counsel in Qatar or the QFC. As such, there are no specific rules for in-house lawyers.

Regulatory landscape for pro bono

2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.

The Criminal Procedure Law (Law 23 of 2004)³ provides that in a criminal proceeding, if a defendant is unable to appoint a lawyer, then the Court can appoint one for him/her.

For civil matters, the Advocacy Law requires that

² See https://qfcra-en.thomsonreuters.com/sites/default/files/net_file_store/QFCRA_5172_VER_18.pdf (last visited on 13 February 2025).

³ See <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawPage.aspx?id=3971&language=en> (last visited on 13 February 2025).

	<p>a party to a proceeding can have a lawyer appointed by the Court if the party is insolvent or is unable to find a lawyer willing to take on the case, provided that a committee of judges approves this (which is entirely discretionary). The lawyer cannot refuse the appointment unless they can explain why such appointment should not be made.</p> <p>The QFC has no equivalent rule.</p>
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	There is no specific licence required to provide pro bono legal services in Qatar.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	Foreign lawyers are generally prohibited from providing legal services unless they are members of a QFC registered law firm. Otherwise, there is no additional licence required to provide pro bono legal services. ⁴
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	No.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	No.
7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?	No.
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	Lawyers in Qatar do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked, and there are no CLE rules in Qatar.
Insurance and advertising	
9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?	The Advocacy Law does not require professional indemnity legal insurance for the provision of pro bono legal services.

⁴ Part 6: Legal Services Code (see <https://qfcra-en.thomsonreuters.com/rulebook/part-6-legal-services-code>) (last visited on 13 February 2025).

<p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>The QFC Authority requires all professional firms to maintain professional indemnity insurance but does not specify the level of insurance to be maintained. Whether the insurance cover will prohibit pro bono work will depend on the insurance policy coverage on a case-by-case basis. There is insurance available that will cover pro bono cases specifically.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no rules in Qatar that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients.</p>
Pro bono practice and culture	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>Generally, the main areas of law that require or present opportunities for the provision of pro bono legal services in Qatar are criminal cases against expatriate workers or labour law claims by expatriate workers, but publicly available information on the number of cases and the resources available are both limited.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>The Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (the QICDRC) has a pro bono service to extend support to individuals by providing them with access to free legal advice and representation when their legal issues fall within the jurisdiction of the Qatar International Court or Regulatory Tribunal, and they cannot afford to pay for legal assistance.⁵</p> <p>Legal assistance is also provided through Qatar University's Law Clinic (the University Law Clinic).⁶ The University Law Clinic was established in 2012 and is particularly focused on helping foreign and migrant workers.⁷</p> <p>A number of international, commercial law firms operating in Qatar have also been identified as providing pro bono services.⁸</p> <p>There may be charitable organisations/NGOs that</p>

⁵ See <https://www.qicdrc.gov.qa/services/pro-bono/qicdrc-pro-bono-service-guidelines> (last visited on 12 February 2025).

⁶ See <https://www.trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-TrustLaw-Index-of-Pro-Bono.pdf> (last visited on 13 February 2025).

⁷ See <https://www.qu.edu.qa/en-us/Colleges/law/departments/legal-skills/Pages/law-clinic.aspx> (last visited on 13 February 2025).

⁸ See <https://www.trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-TrustLaw-Index-of-Pro-Bono.pdf> (last visited on 13 February 2025).

	aid with expatriate workers facing legal problems, but such information is not publicly available.
13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?	No.
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.	As noted above, the QICDRC has a pro bono service to extend support to individuals by providing them with access to free legal advice and representation when their legal issues fall within the jurisdiction of the Qatar International Court or Regulatory Tribunal, and they cannot afford to pay for legal assistance. The University Law Clinic also appears to provide similar services and works closely with representatives of the Ministry of Labour.
15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?	There are no public or private organisations with which a local or foreign attorney can register in order to be made aware of pro bono opportunities in Qatar, other than the QICDRC where volunteering is possible by contacting the QICDRC Registry at registry@qicdrc.gov.qa in order to express any interest. The University Law Clinic can also be contacted at legalskills@qu.edu.qa .
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	The QICDRC has issued an annual pro bono appreciation award since 2020; however, publicly available information is limited.

Acknowledgements

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Name and lawyer: Frank Lucente

Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.