

## Notes on Applications for a Certificate of Exemption from the Common Professional Examination

Caseworking & Applications Unit  
Version 1

1. These notes should be regarded as applying only to persons wishing to qualify as solicitors under the Solicitors Training Regulations 2009.
2. An application for a certificate of exemption from the Common Professional Examination (CPE) does not constitute an application to enrol as a student member of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).
3. A person who wishes to be admitted to the roll of solicitors in England and Wales is required to complete the following stages of training:
  - (i) The academic stage of training
  - (ii) The vocational stage of training, which normally comprises
    - a) a recognised Legal Practice Course (LPC)
    - b) two years' service in a registered training contract
    - c) a Professional Skills Course

The academic stage of training may be completed by one of several different routes, but all students are required to enrol as a student member of the SRA and obtain a certificate of completion of the academic stage of training before they may commence a Legal Practice Course. To obtain a certificate of completion of the academic stage of training, the applicant must have either

- (i) graduated with a qualifying law degree within the last seven years, or
  - (ii) passed the CPE within the last seven years, or
  - (iii) obtained a recognised Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) within the last seven years, or
  - (iv) obtained a certificate of exemption from the CPE.
4. A Certificate of Exemption from the CPE may be issued to applicants in the following categories:
    - (i) A person who obtained a non-qualifying law degree from a provider of qualifying law degrees validated by the SRA not more than seven years ago.
    - (ii) A person who has obtained a law degree at a university overseas, where the syllabus followed in each of the foundations of legal knowledge is accepted by the SRA as being substantially equivalent to the CPE syllabus.
    - (iii) Fellows of the Institute of Legal Executives (Filex) who have passed the Institute's Higher Diploma in Law (Level 6) examinations in each of the foundations of legal knowledge.
    - (iv) Members of the Institute of Legal Executives (Milex) who have passed the Institute's Higher Diploma in Law (Level 6) examinations in each of the foundations of legal knowledge and who have gained at least three years qualifying legal experience since reaching the age of 18 years.

5. Partial exemption will only be granted to students eligible for exemption from four or more subjects.
6. A person applying for a certificate of exemption from the CPE is required to complete an application form and submit it to the SRA together with supporting documentation as detailed below.
  - (i) **If you were awarded a law degree you are required to submit;**
    - a certified true copy of your degree certificate
    - an original degree transcript
  - (ii) **If you are an overseas law graduate you are required to submit;**
    - a certified true copy of your degree certificate
    - an original degree transcript
    - a course syllabus or detailed breakdown of course content
  - (iii) **If you are a Filex you are required to submit;**
    - a certified true copy of your certificate of admission to Fellowship of the Institute
    - certificates of passing the Institute's Higher Diploma in Law (Level 6) examinations in all 7 foundations of legal knowledge plus one other substantive area of law.
  - (iv) **If you are a Milex you are required to submit;**
    - a certified true copy of your certificate of admission to Membership of the Institute
    - certificates of passing the Institute's Part II (Membership) examinations in each of the 7 foundations of legal knowledge plus one other substantive area of law
    - a certified true copy of your birth certificate
    - a letter from your employers confirming that you have had at least three years qualifying employment within the legal profession since reaching the age of 18 years.
7. Members and Fellows seeking full exemption from the CPE are required to have passed the papers necessary to gain full exemption from the CPE in one four year block and within seven years of gaining membership.
8. The granting of a certificate of exemption from the CPE offers no guarantee of a place on the LPC. Nor does it guarantee the offer of a training contract or employment as a solicitor.