

# SQE – where we've got to

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Director of Education and Training

# The SQE – a reminder



- A single, robust, examination all aspiring solicitors will have to take
- To be introduced on 1 September 2021; details of the transition to SQE are on our website
- Everyone will meet the same high standards in a consistent way
- We will no longer specify routes to admission as a solicitor

# Our work over past 12 months

- December 2019: publication of SQE1 sample questions; SQE2 pilot
- June 2020: publication of SQE2 final report; decision on overall assessment design
- July 2020: publication of Bridge Group report and updated Equality Impact Assessment; announcement of SQE fees; publication of SQE 2 assessment specification
- October 2020: SQE approved in full by the LSB
- Summer 2020: revised SQE transition arrangements

# Getting ready for the first assessment



# Action for us all – law firms

## Joint responsibility to take action to realise SQE benefits:

‘Increasing diversity in the profession is dependent critically on the actions of employers and training providers, with actions by the SRA likely to achieve only modest gains without corresponding action from stakeholders in the sector.’

### Bridge Group



Employers who currently employ trainees can now recruit from different talent pools and qualification routes



Employers who don't currently employ trainees might want to think about whether they can offer qualifying work experience

# Action for us all – training providers



Opportunity for greater variety and choice in solicitor training:

- Traditional delivery, or online courses, or integration between classroom and work-based learning
- Short focused courses or additional learning
- The trainee or apprenticeship or paralegal models



Closer collaboration between traditional universities and providers of professional legal education and/or law firms



We want to collaborate with firms and training providers. Tell us what support you would find helpful: [sqe@sra.org.uk](mailto:sqe@sra.org.uk)

# Keep in touch



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[sqe@sra.org.uk](mailto:sqe@sra.org.uk)



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SQE Update

# Independent Review – update on SQE development

Geoff Coombe

# My role

- During piloting – to review ideas, observe pilot activity and offer assurance based recommendations on the best set up of the SQE
- Preparing for the first live exams
- As live exams get going

Ultimately to offer independent assurance

# Outcomes from SQE2 pilot

- Useful evidence for finalising SQE2 design
- Planning and operation of logistics was high quality
- Recommended some detailed improvements to put in place for first live exams
- My report was published in July 2020

# Finalising the design of SQE

- Informed by the SQE1 & SQE2 pilots
- Review of best practice in other professional exam contexts
- The academic literature supports the final design decisions
- Single best answer tests for SQE1 are right for this type of assessment
- The universal design for SQE2 is critical for fairness

# SQE approval process

- Interviews with the Bridge Group and Legal Services Board
- Recommendations for framework and governance of quality assurance
- Recommendations from my SQE1 & 2 pilot reports informed submissions of evidence to LSB

# Preparing for first live exams

- Build processes which aim to design quality up front
- Review of operational plans and process documents
- Observation of early training activities eg SQE question writers
- Meeting with key stakeholders
- Checking preparedness for live assessments