Welcome and SQE1 pilot update

Julie Brannan,

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SQE update 2019

- March – SQE1 pilot
  - 316 candidates in 42 locations
  - Used, with QLTS data, expert analysis and stakeholder input to revise SQE1 design

- October– final FLK assessment specification

SQE update 2019

- December– sample FLK questions

- December – SQE2 pilot
  - 167 candidates in two locations (oral) and 29 locations (written)
  - Will be used, with QLTS data and expert analysis, to revise SQE2 design

Next year

- FLK sample questions – webinar 15 January

- Community of interest
  - First meetings 2020 – watch this space!

- Pilot results and finalisation of assessment design – June/July

- Final LSB application - summer/autumn

Solicitors Regulation Authority

Expert input: advisory board of psychometricians

- **Dr Dave Swanson**
  - previous Director of United States Medical Licensing exam, Step 1
  - Vice President, Academic Programs and Services, American Board of Medical Specialties
  - published extensively on testing in professional exams

- **Dr Susan Case**
  - previous Director of Testing at the National Conference of Bar Examiners
  - published extensively on testing in professional exams

Expert input: advisory board of psychometricians

- Richard Wakeford
  - Life fellow Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge
  - assessment advisor to range of UK professional licensure examinations (including QLTS)

Solicitor involvement: the golden thread

- Question writers are all solicitors

- Panel of solicitor practitioners will review questions

- Assessors all solicitors

Other expert input

- ## Diversity
  - David Rosenbauer, diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias trainer. Clients include law firms Debevoise, Skadden and Weil Gotshal & Manges and organisations such as Network Rail and The Royal College of Psychiatrists

- ## SRA oversight
  - Expert psychometrician (pilot) – Kiran Sanghera (Standards and Testing Agency, Department for Education)
  - Independent reviewer – Geoff Coombe

Claire McGourlay,
Professor of Legal Education,
University of Manchester

Independent review of the SQE

Geoff Coombe, SQE Independent Reviewer

- My background

- What is the independent reviewer role?

- My overriding concern: to make sure the SQE delivers the highest standards and is fair, defensible and commands public confidence

- Site visits and observation
- Planning discussions
- Documentation
- Data analyses
- Reports

Main findings to date – SQE1

- Assessment of the functioning legal knowledge worked well in the SQE1 pilot

- The operational processes worked effectively, albeit at low volume

- Having skills assessed, as in the SQE1 pilot, was not defensible – session later

Main findings – SQE2 prep

- The SQE2 pilot enables testing a design option which has a common core and sampling across practices and contexts

- Experience and data from the pilot aids decision about final SQE design

Main findings – SQE2 prep

- Performance data from the SQE2 pilot will be useful, but should not be over interpreted

- Logistics and operational needs are complex and appear to have worked

Review how well the assessments have performed:

- Do the tasks effectively represent what is expected of a Day One newly qualified solicitor?
- Is it possible to accurately and reliably assess candidate performance?
- Did everyone get a very similar assessment?
- Can we draw safe and defensible inferences from the candidate scores?

- Assessment = decision = qualified to practice or not

- Reliability and validity of the SQE final design paramount when finalising design:
    - Will the assessments be fair and replicable?
    - Can we make consistent and safe grading decisions on an ongoing basis?

- Is the final SQE fair, defensible and will it command public confidence?