A qualified lawyer is someone who has a legal professional qualification which allows them to practise in the UK or an international jurisdiction.

The Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme (QLTS) has now been replaced by the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

What you need to become a solicitor of England and Wales

Qualified lawyers need to do the following:

- have a degree that is the same level as a UK degree[^degree-equivalent], or other qualification and/or experience that is equivalent to this
- pass the SQE assessment which is made up of two parts:
  - SQE1 tests legal knowledge through a multiple choice test
  - SQE2 test practical skills through oral and written exams
- Find out what the SQE tests [[^ assessment topics]] and the exam costs [[^ costs and fees]].
- meet our character and suitability requirements[^character-and-suitability].

Qualified lawyers do not need qualifying work experience

Unlike other aspiring solicitors, qualified lawyers do not need qualifying work experience to qualify.

However, we may take into account their work experience when considering an application for an SQE assessment exemption.

Applying for an SQE assessment exemption

Qualified lawyers can apply for exemptions from the SQE assessments based on their qualifications and/or experience.

We have already given some legal qualifications an agreed exemption[^agreed exemptions] and all lawyers who have these qualifications can apply for the exemption.

If a qualification doesn't have an agreed exemption, a lawyer may want to apply for an individual one[^individual exemptions].

If someone is granted an exemption from SQE2, they may also have to demonstrate their English or Welsh language competence.[^language competence].

If you are a UK lawyer

Find out your steps to admission if you are a:

- Barrister of England and Wales (who has completed pupillage)
Our approach to qualified lawyers

Find out more about principles and requirements for qualified lawyers [become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/principle-admission].

Pathways to qualification

Find your pathway to qualification [become-solicitor/admission/pathways-qualification] and what you need to do next.

Jurisdictions where there is political unrest

Qualified lawyers in jurisdictions where there is political unrest, for example, Ukraine, Syria or Afghanistan, may want to come to England and Wales to practise law. We welcome applications for admission from lawyers from these jurisdictions and are happy to discuss an individual's circumstances.

We recognise that access to certain documentation or evidence, such as a certificate of good standing, can be difficult, but alternative documentation can be used to support an application. We make our decisions on a case-by-case basis, using the available evidence.

There are also a number of different ways of practising in England and Wales, in addition to becoming a solicitor.

Please contact our Education team [home/contact-us/] so we can provide more detail and arrange to discuss your situation, if that would be helpful.