

Transitional arrangements

September 2021

What are the transitional arrangements?

The Solicitor Qualifying Examination (SQE) was introduced on 1 September 2021.

Our transitional arrangements are designed to give candidates who were already on their way to becoming a solicitor when this was introduced, as much choice as possible.

This means someone already studying or training can continue to qualify through the LPC route [\[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/\]](#), or choose to do the SQE [\[/become-solicitor/sqe/\]](#).

These arrangements apply to anyone who, before 1 September 2021, had completed, started, accepted an offer of a place or paid a non-refundable deposit for one of the following:

- the Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE)
- the Legal Practice Course
- a period of recognised training (also known as a training contract).

In the case of a qualifying law degree (QLD) and exempting law degree (ELD), these arrangements apply to anyone who completes, starts, accepts an offer of a place or pays a non-refundable deposit by 21 September 2021 (inclusive).

In most cases, for the QLD, ELD and CPE, the relevant course must start at the latest on or before 31 December 2021.

Anyone who falls within this group will have until 31 December 2032 to qualify as a solicitor under the LPC route, as long as courses still remain available.

The text of the transitional arrangements is set out at regulation 11 [\[/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-11\]](#) of the SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations [\[/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/\]](#).

Qualifying law degrees and the Common Professional Examination/Graduate Diploma in Law

Our common protocol [\[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/\]](#) explains that we will continue to validate QLD, ELD and CPE courses that begin up to and including 31 December 2021. This is as long as the student has accepted the offer by 31 August 2021 (inclusive) for CPE courses and by 21 September 2021 (inclusive) for QLD and ELD courses.

There are separate arrangements [\[#heading_a1a8\]](#) for students who deferred a place on a QLD, ELD or CPE from 2020 to 2021, and for those who accepted the offer of a period of recognised training on or before 31 August 2021.

Exempting law degree

We will continue to validate ELD courses that begin up to and including 31 December 2021, as long as the student has accepted the offer by 21 September 2021 (inclusive).

There are separate arrangements [\[#heading_a1a8\]](#) for students who deferred a place on an ELD from 2020 to 2021

Legal Practice Course

Legal Practice Course (LPC) approvals will also be extended until at least the end of the academic year 2025/26. This is so any students who fall under the transitional arrangements, for example because they have started a QLD or CPE course, prior to the SQE's introduction - or have accepted an offer of a place (by the dates set out above) - can progress onto the LPC, as long as these courses are available.

How will the transitional arrangements affect me?

Open all [#]

Already have your qualifying law degree, exempting law degree or due to start in 2020 or 2021?

If you have started, or accepted an offer to start, a qualifying law degree (QLD) or exempting law degree (ELD) by 21 September 2021 (inclusive), then you can qualify as a solicitor through the LPC route (as long as the courses remain available). This option remains open to you until 31 December 2032. Or you can choose to qualify through the SQE [become-solicitor/sqe].

QLDs and ELDs remain available provided you accept the offer of a place by 21 September 2021 (inclusive) and the course starts on or before 31 December 2021.

There are separate arrangements for students who deferred a place on an QLD or ELD from 2020 to 2021, as set out below.

Deferring students

We realise that some students may have delayed starting new programmes of study, particularly given the current Covid-19 pandemic.

So you may start a QLD or ELD at any time in academic year 2021/22 up to and including 31 August 2022, where you originally accepted an offer to start in academic year 2020/21 and deferred your place. But you may not defer your place to a later academic year.

You will need to keep evidence of your deferral in order to be accepted onto a Legal Practice Course (LPC). This evidence could be, for example, a letter from your university making clear that you had accepted a place to start in 2020/21 and had deferred it to the subsequent academic year.

Qualify through the LPC route

Once you have a QLD or ELD, to qualify through the LPC route by 31 December 2032, you'll also need to:

- pass the LPC [become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/lpc]
- complete a period of recognised training [become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/period-recognised-training] (also known as a training contract)
- meet our character and suitability requirements [become-solicitor/character-and-suitability].

In most cases, anyone who starts a QLD or ELD after 31 December 2021 will not fall within the transitional arrangements. They will need to sit the SQE assessments and meet our other requirements [become-solicitor/sqe] to qualify as a solicitor.

There are, however, separate arrangements for students who deferred a place on a QLD or ELD from 2020 to 2021, and for those who accepted the offer of a training contract on or

before 31 August 2021.

Qualifying through Equivalent Means (Exemptions)

If you are in the transitional cohort, for example because you accepted an offer of a place on a QLD by 1 September 2021 (inclusive) and it began on or before 31 December 2021, you may be able to qualify under our Equivalent Means [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/equivalent-means-information-pack/](#)] route. To do this you will need to have certificated learning and work-based experience equivalent to our training requirements.

Qualify through the SQE

Alternatively, you could choose to qualify through the SQE [[/become-solicitor/sqe/](#)]. To do so, you will need to:

- have a degree (in any subject) or equivalent qualification or experience
- pass both stages of the SQE assessment [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/registering-and-booking>]
- have two years' full time equivalent qualifying work experience
- meet our character and suitability requirements.

If you started, or accepted an offer to start, the CPE/GDL on or before 31 August 2021, then you can qualify as a solicitor through the LPC route (as long as the courses remain available). This option remains open to you until 31 December 2032. Or you can choose to qualify through the SQE [[/become-solicitor/sqe/](#)].

In general, CPE/GDLs only remain available if they start on or before 31 December 2021 and you accepted the offer to start the course up to and including 31 August 2021.

But there are separate arrangements [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/transitional-arrangements/#heading_a1a8](#)] for students who deferred a place on a CPE or GDL from 2020 to 2021, and for those who accepted the offer of a period of recognised training on or before 31 August 2021.

Deferring CPE/GDL students

We realise that some intending CPE/GDL students may have delayed starting new programmes of study, particularly given the Covid-19 pandemic.

So you may start a CPE/GDL at any time in academic year 2021/22 up to 31 August 2022 (inclusive), where you had accepted an offer to start in academic year 2020/21 and deferred your place. But you may not defer your place to a later academic year.

You will need to keep evidence of your deferral in order to be accepted onto a Legal Practice Course. This evidence could be, for example, a letter from your university making clear that you had accepted a place to start in 2020/21 and had deferred it to the subsequent academic year.

It is possible that some non-law students may accept the offer of a period of recognised training before 1 September 2021, and before they have been offered a place on a CPE/GDL.

In this case you may start a CPE/GDL programme which starts up to and including 31 August 2022, and which meet our requirements for the CPE/GDL.

You will need to evidence your accepted offer in order to be accepted onto the CPE/GDL. For example, this could take the form of correspondence between you and your training provider accepting the offer of a period of recognised training.

Qualify through the LPC route

Once you have the CPE, to qualify on the LPC route by 31 December 2032, you'll also need to:

- pass the Legal Practice Course [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/lpc](#)]
- complete a period of recognised training [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/period-recognised-training/](#)] (also known as a training contract)
- meet our character and suitability requirements [[/become-solicitor/character-and-suitability/](#)].

In most cases, anyone who starts the CPE/GDL after 31 December 2021 will not fall within the transitional arrangements. They will need to sit the SQE assessments and meet our other requirements [[/become-solicitor/sqe/](#)] to qualify as a solicitor.

There are separate arrangements for students who deferred a place on the CPE/GDL from 2020 to 2021, and for those who accepted the offer of a training contract on or before 31 August 2021. This is explained in the above section.

Qualifying through Equivalent Means (Exemptions)

If you are in the transitional cohort, for example because you accepted an offer of a place on a CPE/GDL before 1 September 2021 and it began on or before 31 December 2021, you may be able to qualify under our Equivalent Means [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/equivalent-means-information-pack/](#)] route, if you have certificated learning and work-based experience equivalent to our training requirements.

Qualify through the SQE

You could also choose to qualify through the SQE [[/become-solicitor/sqe/](#)]. You'll need to:

- have a degree (in any subject) or equivalent qualification or experience
- pass both stages of the SQE assessment [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/registering-and-booking>]
- have two years' full time equivalent qualifying work experience
- meet our character and suitability requirements.

Already have the Legal Practice Course (LPC) or are due to start?

Our transitional arrangements may already apply to you because you have started or completed a qualifying law degree, the Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law or an exempting law degree.

You can also choose to qualify on the LPC route [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/](#)] (or take the SQE [[/become-solicitor/sqe/](#)]), if you have started or completed the LPC, or if you have accepted an offer to start one, or paid a non-refundable deposit, before 1 September 2021.

Once you have the LPC, including one gained through an ELD, to qualify on the LPC route by 31 December 2032, you'll also need to:

- complete a period of recognised training [[/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/period-recognised-training/](#)] (also known as a training contract)
- meet our character and suitability requirements [[/become-solicitor/character-and-suitability/](#)]

Qualifying through Equivalent Means (Equivalent)

If you started to train through the LPC before 1 September 2021, you may be able to qualify under our Equivalent Means [\[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/equivalent-means-information-pack/\]](#) route, if you have certificated learning and work-based experience equivalent to our training requirements.

Substitute QWE and SQE2 as equivalent to a period of recognised training

If you have the Legal Practice Course, including through an ELD, we will recognise the combination of qualifying work experience and successfully passing SQE2 as equivalent to the period of recognised training. Find out more about this option and how to apply [\[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/substitute-qwe-sqe2-equivalent-training/\]](#).

Already have started or accepted an offer of a period of recognised training before 1 September 2021?

If you have started, or accepted an offer to start, a period of recognised training (also known as a training contract) before 1 September 2021, then you can qualify as a solicitor through the LPC route [\[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/\]](#).

To qualify this way, by 31 December 2032, you'll also need to:

- pass a qualifying law degree (QLD) or Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE/GDL)
- pass the Legal Practice Course [\[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/lpc/\]](#)
- complete a period of recognised training (PRT) [\[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/period-recognised-training/\]](#)
- meet our character and suitability requirements [\[become-solicitor/character-and-suitability/\]](#).

If you are unable to complete a PRT, you can choose to qualify through the SQE [\[become-solicitor/sqe/\]](#).

Period of recognised training offers for non-law students

It is possible that some non-law students may have accepted the offer of a PRT before 1 September 2021, and before they were offered a place on a CPE/GDL.

In this case you may start a CPE/GDL programme up until 31 August 2022, and which meet our requirements for the CPE/GDL.

You will need to keep the evidence of your accepted offer in order to be accepted onto the CPE. For example, this could take the form of the exchange of correspondence between you and your training provider, accepting the offer of a PRT.

Qualified lawyers

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

If you are an existing QLTS candidate, find out how you can continue to qualify as a solicitor through this route [\[become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/qlts/\]](#).

If you are not an existing candidate, find out how you can qualify as a solicitor through the SQE [\[become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/\]](#).

CILEX Practitioner or Chartered Legal Executive

Find out how you can qualify as a solicitor [[become-solicitor/admission/pathways-qualification/chartered-legal-executives/](#)].

Effectively managing Legal Practice Course closure

We will continue to authorise Legal Practice Courses (LPC) until the end of the 2025/26 academic year. However, we expect courses may close as demand for the LPC decreases. We want to make sure the standard of the LPC is maintained during the transition period for those who want to complete their route to qualification.

We have made authorising a course subject to a number of conditions to make sure that we are aware if a course is closing. This is so that we know where students may be affected and can work with providers to make sure that the quality of provision is maintained.

Bar Standards Board changes

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) have also made changes to their training requirements. We have entered into a common protocol [[become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/](#)] with them to explain how this will affect qualifying law degree and the Common Professional Examination.