

Education and training providers

September 2021

This information is for education and training providers, such as universities. It will help you understand more about the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), what it might mean for you and help you think through what you need to do to implement it.

- About the SQE [#9120]
- Q&A [#questions]
- Transitional arrangements for current courses [#current]

What is the SQE?

A single, rigorous assessment for all aspiring solicitors. They need to:

- have a degree (in any subject) or equivalent qualification or experience [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/>]
- pass both stages of the SQE assessment [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/>] – SQE1 focuses on legal knowledge and SQE2 on practical legal skills
- have 2 years' qualifying work experience [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-employers/>]
- pass the character and suitability [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/character-and-suitability/>] requirements.

Get ready

- Read the findings from our SQE1 [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/pilot/sra-response-sqe1-pilot/>] and SQE2 [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/pilot/sqe-pilots/sqe2-pilot/sra-response-sqe2-pilot/>] pilots.
- Look at the Statement of Solicitor Competence [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/competence-statement/>] and SQE1 Functioning Legal Knowledge Assessment Specification [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/assessment-information/sqe1-assessment-specification/>] .
- Find out how you can register as an SQE training provider [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/training-provider-list/>] .
- Talk to local employers to understand how they are preparing for the SQE and what their training requirements are likely to be in the future.



- Look at our admission as a solicitor regulations [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/>] .
- Join our LinkedIn reference group [<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8548868>] . It will help you stay up to date with latest developments.
- Subscribe to our SQE Update [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sqe-update/sqe-subscribe/>] .

Keeping in touch

Talk to other legal practitioners about what they are doing. One way you can do this is by joining our LinkedIn reference group

[<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8548868>] .

SQE: A fair assessment for all

We want our information about the content and administration of the SQE assessment to be as clear and accessible as possible.

If you are actively involved in training that aims to prepare candidates for the SQE assessments, you may find the questions and answers we post here useful. To ask a question, email us [<https://www.sra.org.uk/home/contact-us/>] .

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Are there sample papers available?

Sample questions for SQE1 are available [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/assessment-information/sqe1-sample-questions>] .

How much will the SQE exam cost?

The total fee for taking both SQE assessments is £3,980. The fee covers:

- SQE1 - £1,558 for ten hours of examinations testing candidates' functioning legal knowledge.
- SQE2 - £2,422 for 14 hours of written and oral tasks testing both practical legal knowledge and skills, such as advocacy, legal research and case and matter analysis.

Ethics and professional conduct are tested throughout both SQE1 and 2.

The fees do not include training costs, which will vary depending on a candidate's choices. Find out more about SQE training providers

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/training-provider-list/>] .

When will the SQE exams occur?

Please see the published SQE dates [https://sqa.sra.org.uk/registering-and-booking#heading_01fd] .

The SQE timings shows only a single SQE1 sitting in 2022. Is this correct?

The one sitting is primarily a quirk of how the sittings fall around the calendar year - there will actually be three SQE1 sittings in the space of 15 months (Nov 2021, July 2022, Jan 2023).

The reason only one falls in the calendar year is that 2021 and 2022 are transitional years, before we move to a consistent timetable with sittings in January and July. Stakeholders consistently told us that it is really important that we move to a regular pattern of SQE sittings as soon as we can. And the overall preference was for sittings around January and July.

Will candidates that pass SQE1 be able to progress to book on to the next available SQE2 sitting?

We aim to allow some time following the publication of SQE1 results for candidates to book on to the next SQE2 assessment, although this may only be a few days. We are looking at our processes to try to maximise this window for candidates that want to follow this path. Candidates can of course book on to a later SQE2 sitting if that is more suitable for them.

What will the pass marks be for the SQE?

The pass mark for each sitting of the SQE will be set by the Assessment Board in accordance with the SQE Marking and Standard Setting Policy [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/policies/markings-and-standard-setting-policy>] . There is not one fixed pass mark for the assessment. The pass mark for both SQE1 and SQE2 can vary to make sure that the passing standard of the assessment remains consistently at the correct level from one sitting to the next. The pass mark will be published after each Assessment Board and will also be included with the candidate's results. Please read the policy for further details.

Will candidates that pass SQE1 be able to progress to book on to the next available SQE2 sitting?

We aim to allow some time following the publication of SQE1 results for candidates that have passed to book on to the next SQE2 assessment, although this may only be a few days. We are looking at our processes to try to maximise this window for candidates that want to follow this path. Candidates can of course book on to a later SQE2 sitting if that is more suitable for them.

This information offers further guidance in line with the common protocol [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/>] and the transitional arrangements set out our rules (regulation 11 [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-11>] of the SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/>]).

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If you are a QLD or CPE/GDL provider

Validating courses

As set out in our common protocol [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/>], we will continue to validate qualifying law degrees (QLDs), exempting law degree (ELD) and Common Professional Examination (CPE) courses for academic year 2021/22.

For courses to be eligible for this validation, students must have accepted offers on or before 31 August 2021 and the course must start on or before 31 December 2021.

The validation remains in place until students have completed their course, in accordance with the requirements of the SRA's academic stage handbook.

Validating courses which start in or after academic year 2021/22

Subject to the exceptions below, we will not validate courses which start after 31 December 2021.

This means that students cannot defer their offer of a QLD, ELD or CPE if it means that they would start the course after 31 December 2021.

This is, however, subject to two exceptions:

- Students who defer an accepted place from 2020/21 to 2021/22 may start their QLD/ELD/CPE at any time in academic year 2021/22, up to and including 31 August 2022.
- Individuals who have accepted the offer of a period of recognised training on or before 31 August 2021 may start a CPE any time in academic year 2021/22 up to and including 31 August 2022.

These students will need to keep evidence of their deferral in order to be accepted onto a Legal Practice Course (LPC). This could be, for example, a

letter from you making clear that they had accepted a place to start in 2020/21 and had deferred it to the subsequent academic year.

See how this will affect your students [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/>]

Non-law students who have accepted the offer of a period of recognised training before 1 September 2021

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

Again, in order to fairly balance individual circumstances against the need to introduce the SQE without unnecessary delay, we will extend our validation of programmes which meet our requirements for the CPE for one year, for this group of students.

We will therefore recognise programmes which start before 31 August 2022, and which meet our requirements for the CPE, for individuals who have received the offer of a period of recognised training before 1 September 2021.

This applies only to CPE courses, not to QLDs.

Students will need to evidence their accepted offer in order to be accepted onto the CPE (and in due course onto the LPC. For example, this could take the form of the exchange of correspondence between them and their training provider, accepting the offer of a period of recognised training.

See how this will affect your students [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/>].

If you are an LPC course provider

Validating courses

Your Legal Practice Course (LPC) approval is extended until at least the end of the academic year 2025/26. This is so any students who have started a qualifying law degree (QLD) or Common Professional Examination (CPE) course, before the SQE's introduction, can progress onto the LPC, as long as these courses are available.

Entry requirements for the LPC

The conditions of approval state that students admitted to your courses should meet our LPC entry requirements. This means they need to have completed the academic stage of training by successfully completing either a QLD or CPE.

We will continue to validate QLDs and CPE/GDL courses for academic year 2021/22, provided they start on or before 31 December 2021.

This is, however, subject to two exceptions:

- Students who defer an accepted place from 2020/21 to 2021/22 may start their QLD/ CPE at any time in academic year 2021/22, up to and including 31 August 2022.
- Individuals who have accepted the offer of a period of recognised training on or before 31 August 2021 may start a CPE any time in academic year 2021/22 up to and including 31 August 2022.

Subject to these two exceptions, we will cease to recognise QLD and CPE/GDL courses which start after 31 December 2021. Students graduating from those courses will not have met our LPC entry requirements and should not be admitted to an LPC.

Other students graduating from courses which start in or after academic year 2021/22

Anyone who does not fall within the two exceptional groups will not fall within the transitional arrangements and therefore will not meet the requirements to start the LPC. They will need to sit the SQE assessments and meet our other requirements [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/>] to qualify as a solicitor.

Annual course monitoring

We will continue to monitor courses annually for as long as you continue to offer the LPC. But we will amend our narrative report to ask about planned course closure arrangements.

As LPCs come to an end, we will work with you to make sure standards are maintained. This may include informal conversations, formal monitoring visits, attendance at your examination boards and/or requests for information.

If you have any questions, please contact us [<https://www.sra.org.uk/contactus/>] .

See how this will affect your students [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/>] .