

FAQs for students

Updated 25 November 2019

I want to qualify as a solicitor

How do I qualify as a solicitor?

There are currently two key stages to qualifying as a solicitor. [More](#)

The first is the academic stage. This is achieved by either completing a qualifying law degree or by completing the Common Professional Examination (CPE), sometimes referred to as the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL).

The second is the vocational stage. This is achieved by completion of the Legal Practice Course (LPC), a period of recognised training and the Professional Skills Course (PSC).

Further details about qualifying as a solicitor can be found in our student information pack [\[students/resources/student-information/\]](#). Please be aware that from autumn 2021, qualifying as a solicitor will be changing - Please see our SQE pages for more information [\[sra/policy/sqe/solicitor-persona/\]](#).

Academic stage of education and training

What is the academic stage of training?

It is the first stage to qualifying as a solicitor of England and Wales. [More](#)

It is achieved by completing a qualifying law degree or the Common Professional Examination/Post Graduate Diploma in Law sometimes known as a conversion course.

Common Professional Examination (CPE)

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What is the Common Professional Examination (CPE)?

It is a conversion course that completes the academic stage of training for people who do not hold a qualifying law degree. [More](#)

It is also for individuals who have work experience or academic/vocational qualifications that we consider to be equivalent to an undergraduate degree.

It is sometimes called a conversion course or Graduate Diploma in Law.

A list of providers may be found here [\[students/conversion-courses/cpe-gdl-providers/\]](#).

I have a law degree which is not a QLD. Can I apply for exemptions from the CPE?

Yes. If you think you may be eligible for partial exemption you should apply to your course provider. [More](#)

If you think you may be eligible for a full exemption you can apply to us.

More details and the application form can be found in our Equivalent Means guidance [\[students/resources/equivalent-means-information-pack/\]](#).

The fee for this application is £55.

What is the difference between a CPE and a Graduate Diploma in Law?

The CPE is the title given by the regulatory bodies, and is the professional name of the course. [More](#)

However, organisations are permitted to embed this within their academic award frameworks by giving it an academic title. Many organisations choose to use the title Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), but this is a discretionary decision for each organisation.

How do I know who is approved to provide a CPE?

[View a list of recognised providers: More](#)

[CPE/GDL course providers \[students/courses/cpe-gdl-course-providers/\]](#).

Legal Practice Course (LPC)

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What is the Legal Practice Course (LPC)?

The LPC is a practice-focused course which builds on student's academic knowledge of the law and prepares them for their period of recognised training and early years in practice. [More](#)

How do I know who is approved to provide the LPC?

[View a list of recognised providers: More](#)

[Legal Practice Course \(LPC\) providers \[students/courses/lpc-course-providers/\]](#).

Do I need to inform the SRA that I intend to become a solicitor before I commence the LPC?

No, there is no requirement to contact us before commencing the LPC. [More](#)

If you know that you have a character and suitability issue, or are unsure as to whether you may have an issue, you can choose to submit an early disclosure before completing the Legal Practice Course. The fee for an early assessment is £100.

Further information can be found in our Student information pack [\[students/resources/student-information\]](#).

I was previously refused student enrolment. Can I commence the LPC now?

You can, but we will need to consider your character and suitability when you apply for admission to the roll. [More](#)

You can apply to us for an early assessment of your character and suitability at any time before you apply for admission, using our Character and Suitability form [\[globalassets/documents/trainees/character-suitability-application.pdf?version=495d11\]](#).

Can I have any exemptions from the LPC?

If you meet the criteria you can apply for exemptions. [More](#)

Your course provider will be able to advise if you are eligible for partial exemptions.

If you think you may be eligible for a full exemption from either all of stage 1 or stage 2 or both, you can apply to us.

You must be able to demonstrate how you have met the course outcomes. More details can be found in our Equivalent Means guidance [\[students/resources/equivalent-means-information-pack\]](#).

The fee for this application is £600.

Exemptions from certain elements of the LPC are currently allowed for BVC and BPTC graduates. Further information on this can also be found here [\[students/lpc\]](#).

I am enrolled on the LPC. Can I start my period of recognised training?

Yes, you can commence your period of recognised training while you are completing the LPC. [More](#)

Your training principal would notify us by completing a Training Notification [\[trainees/period-recognised-training/applications\]](#).

The fee for this application is £100.

Further information can be found in our Authorised training provider information pack [\[trainees/resources/authorised-training-provider-information-pack\]](#).

Vocational stage of education and training

What is the vocational stage of training?

It is the second of the two stages to qualifying as a solicitor. [More](#)

The first is the academic stage and the second is the vocational stage.

The vocational stage is achieved by completion of the Legal Practice Course (LPC), a period of recognised training and the Professional Skills Course (PSC).

Student character and suitability

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What is a character and suitability issue?

Details can be found in our [Assessment of Character and Suitability Rules](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/assessment-character-suitability-rules\]](#).

It is important that you disclose any character and suitability issues when you apply for admission to the roll.

You should also tell us about any issues that may arise afterwards, before we make our decision.

Failure to do so could affect your admission as a solicitor of England and Wales.

When do I need to disclose a character and suitability issue?

When you apply for admission to the roll of solicitors. [More](#)

To have your character and suitability assessed early, at any time before you apply for admission, please complete the character and suitability form

[\[globalassets/documents/trainees/character-suitability-application.pdf?version=495d11\]](#) .

Further information can be found in our Student information pack [\[/students/resources/student-information/\]](#) .

You should also tell us about any issues that may arise afterwards, before we make our decision.

Student reasonable adjustments

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What should I do if I need a reasonable adjustment from my course provider?

If you are a disabled law student who needs a reasonable adjustment to help you with your course, you should approach the course provider.

More

Under the Equality Act 2010 course providers have a duty to make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled students. If you are a disabled student and need reasonable adjustments, then you will need to discuss these requirements with your course provider.

If you cannot agree on the reasonable adjustment with your course provider, you may be able to take further action to pursue your request.

What if a course provider will not make the adjustment?

You have a number of options available if a course provider does not agree to make the reasonable adjustments. More

You can:

- follow the provider's internal complaints procedures
- apply to the Office of the Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) [\[http://www.oiahe.org.uk\]](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)
- consider an action for unlawful discrimination in the courts.

Can the SRA help me with a dispute with a course provider?

We will not usually get involved in a dispute between a student and a course provider. More

Where an LPC provider shows repeated or systematic breaches of the Equality Act we may reconsider the arrangements for authorisation.

QLD (Qualifying Law Degree) and CPD (Common professional Examination) qualifications are overseen by the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) [\[https://www.qaa.ac.uk\]](https://www.qaa.ac.uk)

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What checks do the SRA make before authorising a course provider?

We authorise organisations to provide the LPC. More

Before we authorise them, we ask the provider to let us know:

- its equal opportunities statement/policy
- details of its approach to the promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity for students and potential students with regard to all dimensions of diversity
- its approach to identifying the needs of students with disabilities
- the resources in place to support students with disabilities
- how any statutory duties to students with disabilities will be monitored and fulfilled.