

## SQE Prep course FAQs

### The SQE assessments

#### 1. What is the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)?

The SQE is a two-stage professional exam assessment for aspiring solicitors in England and Wales. It was implemented by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in September 2021.

To qualify through the SQE route, you will need to:

- have a degree in any subject or equivalent level 6 qualification
- pass both stages of the SQE assessment
- two years' full-time (or equivalent) qualifying work experience
- pass the SRA's character and suitability requirements.

#### 2. What is the exam format/structure of the SQE?

##### **SQE1 (Functioning Legal Knowledge)**

You will be tested on the application of **Functioning Legal Knowledge by single best answer multiple choice questions**. The two SQE1 Functioning Legal Knowledge (FLK) assessments comprise the following subject areas:

- Business Law and Practice
- Dispute Resolution
- Contract
- Tort
- Legal System of England and Wales
- Constitutional and Administrative Law and EU Law and Legal Services
- Property Practice
- Wills and the Administration of Estates
- Solicitors Accounts
- Land Law
- Trusts and
- Criminal Law and Practice.

## **SQE 2 (Practical Legal Skills Assessments)**

You are eligible for SQE2 once you have passed SQE1.

You will be tested on:

- client interviewing with linked attendance note/legal analysis
- advocacy
- case and matter analysis
- legal research and written advice
- legal drafting and
- legal writing.

### **3. Why is the SQE being implemented?**

- The legal qualification route to a solicitor in England and Wales is leaving a saturated market of LLB, GDL and LPC graduates struggling to obtain a training contract.
- The SQE aims to do away with this so-called 'LPC gamble' because under the new system aspiring lawyers can start gaining the mandatory two years' full-time Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) that will replace the training contract as early as during their undergrad studies and 'bank' it.
- The new SQE route is more flexible, and can provide opportunities for smaller firms and organisations to offer placements where – because of their size and resources – might not be currently possible. That suggests a potential increase in the number of organisations that offer QWE.
- The costs of the GDL and LPC are vast compared to the new SQE route. Non-law graduates now can go straight onto a 40-week SQE1 Prep course with BARBRI, than invest in a conversion course first.

## **Qualifying Work Experience**

### **4. What is Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)?**

QWE is the 'work experience' part of qualifying as a solicitor. It involves at least two years' full-time (or part-time equivalent) QWE. QWE must be in roles providing legal services that offer a candidate the opportunity to develop some (or all) of the competences needed to practise as a solicitor.

QWE must be confirmed by a solicitor or a Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP). They will either be working in the organisation where the QWE is obtained or have direct knowledge of the candidate's work.

For each period of qualifying work experience, the relevant solicitor is confirming:

- the details and timescale of the work experience
- that it provided the opportunity to develop some or all the prescribed competences for solicitors
- that no issues arose during the work experience that raise questions over the candidate's character and suitability to be admitted as a solicitor.

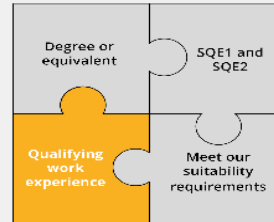
The prescribed competences include:

- Ethics, professionalism and judgment
  - Act honestly with integrity, keeping updated with practice contexts and developments in the law.
  - Apply understanding and critical thinking to solve problems.
- Technical legal practice
  - Obtain relevant facts and conduct relevant legal research, using appropriate methods and resources to undertake the research.
  - Draft legally effective documents, negotiate solutions and undertake effective spoken and written advocacy.
- Working with other people
  - Communicate clearly and effectively, and establish professional relationships with clients.
- Managing themselves and their own work
  - Plan, prioritise and manage work activities and projects to ensure they are completed effectively.
  - Apply good business practice.

The solicitor confirming your qualifying work experience is not deciding whether you have met the prescribed competences for solicitors. SQE assesses whether meet the SRA's standards.

# Becoming a solicitor

from September  
2021



## Qualifying work experience

### What is it?

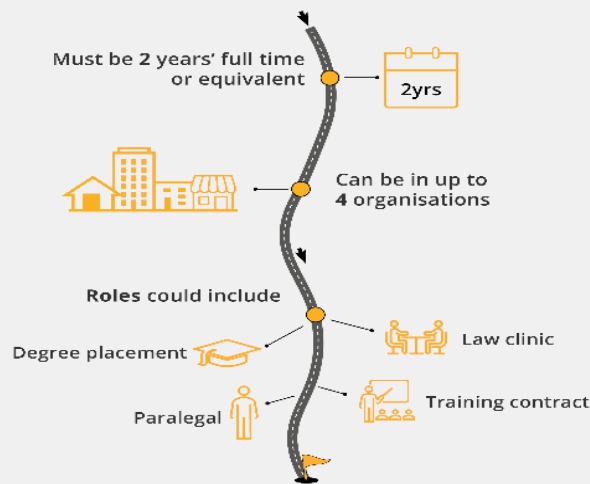


Working in a law firm – or other organisation – providing legal services



Must develop core skills and competencies needed to be a solicitor

### What flexibility is there?



### How is it approved?



Must be confirmed by a solicitor



Potential for confirmation from solicitor outside the organisation,



Not confirming abilities - the SQE will test that

## 5. What counts as QWE?

Qualifying Work Experience can be gained in a single two-year block or in stages across a maximum of four organisations. All QWE can come retrospectively from prior experience, before starting an SQE Prep course.

QWE can be paid or unpaid work and could include time spent:

- on placement during a sandwich degree
- working in a law clinic
- at a voluntary or charitable organisation such as Citizen Advice or a law centre
- working as a paralegal (either in a law firm or an in-house legal department); or
- on a training contract.

Work experience can be done in England or Wales or overseas, and it does not need to cover English and Welsh law. A candidate will need knowledge of this to take the SQE assessment, but they do not need to gain this specifically through their work experience.

Candidates only need to register their two years' qualifying work experience (QWE) by the time they apply for admission as a solicitor. However, a candidate can now register any completed QWE if they need to. This might be because they are due to leave a role shortly or because they want to use a past role as QWE.

## 6. What are the SQE assessment dates and costs?

- SQE1 Exam is offered twice a year: January and July
  - Only one SQE 1 exam in 2022 to be held in JulyExam fee: £1,558
- SQE2 Exam is offered twice a year: April and October in 2022 then April and July 2023 onward  
Exam fee: £2,422

## **Exemptions from the SQE assessments**

### **7. What exemptions can candidates undertake from SQE1 assessments?**

Some candidates will be exempt from the SQE assessments. For SQE1, candidates will need to show the SRA that:

- a. Their qualification(s) and/or experience covers the areas of law which are assessed in SQE1, FLK1 and/or FLK2 and
- b. The law of these qualification(s) or the law which they have practised in your work experience is not substantially different to the law of England and Wales in these areas.

Their evidence will need to show how their knowledge, based on their qualification(s) and/or experience is not substantially different to the areas of English and Welsh law as set out in the [SQE1 Assessment Specification](#).

### **8. What exemptions can candidates undertake from SQE2 assessments?**

Some candidates may also be exempt from the SQE2 assessments. If they have the same practice rights as a solicitor of England and Wales (see below), and at least two years' professional legal work experience gained either as part of their professional legal qualification or after qualification, they may be exempt from the whole of SQE2.

They need to have one or more of these practising rights:

- Criminal litigation (including advising clients at the police station)
- Civil litigation, which is referred to as dispute resolution on the form
- Property practice
- Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice; and
- Business organisations rules and procedures

In most cases the SRA will expect an applicant to have at least two years' professional legal work experience. Where a candidate does not have this, they will require evidence to be submitted to demonstrate how their qualification and experience is equivalent in content and standard to the [SQE2 Assessment Specification](#).

The practical legal skills they need to demonstrate is equivalent to level three of the [SRA Threshold Standard](#).

## 9. What exemptions can foreign-qualified lawyers undertake from the SQE?

Foreign-qualified lawyers will likely be exempt from QWE for the SQE. There are jurisdictions for which the SRA recognises exemptions.

The SRA has also provided guidance for [SRA-recognised jurisdictions](#) for agreed SQE assessment exemptions.

Jurisdiction	Qualification	SQE1 FLK1	SQE1 FLK2	SQE2
Australia (Victoria)**	Barrister	Under consideration	Under consideration	Under consideration
Brazil**	Advogado	No	No	Yes*** <a href="#">(Apply for this exemption)</a>
Canada (Ontario)**	Lawyer	No	No	Under consideration
Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland	Advokat	No	No	Yes*** <a href="#">(Apply for this exemption)</a>
England and Wales	Barrister	No	No	No
England and Wales	CILEx Practitioner	No	No	No
England and Wales	Chartered Legal Executive	No	No	No

Jurisdiction	Qualification	SQE1 FLK1	SQE1 FLK2	SQE2
Hong Kong	Solicitor	No	No	Yes***( <a href="#">Apply for this exemption</a> )
Israel**	Advocate	No	No	Under consideration
Italy**	Avvocato	No	No	Under consideration
Scotland	Solicitor	No	No	Yes ( <a href="#">Apply for this exemption</a> )
Singapore *	Advocate and Solicitor of the Supreme Court	Under consideration	Under consideration	Under consideration
South Africa**	Attorney	No	No	Under consideration

All qualified lawyers can apply for additional or new exemptions based on their qualifications and personal work experience.

The SRA will not grant exemptions from part of an assessment.

### 10. What exemptions does the Legal Practice Course (LPC) provide?

The LPC does not give you an agreed exemption from any SQE assessment. This is because the SQE covers similar subject areas to the LPC but is assessed at a higher standard. If you choose to qualify through the SQE, you could use your LPC as evidence if applying for any exemptions.



## The traditional route v the new route

### **11. Should a student undertake the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) and LPC or venture onto the new SQE assessments?**

There is a transition period meaning that those who have already commenced their *legal* studies on or before September 2021 can continue the old route to qualification. From September 2021 onwards, all new non-law graduates must take the SQE to qualify as a solicitor — unless they have already commenced a GDL, or they have a confirmed training contract.

From a diversity and inclusion perspective, a greater degree of choice combined with a less rigid route to qualification is a welcome move, especially for self-funding LPC hopefuls. The SQE aims to do away with this so-called ‘LPC gamble’ because under the new system aspiring lawyers can start gaining the mandatory two years’ full-time Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) that will replace the training contract as early as during their undergrad studies and ‘bank’ it. Designed to be as flexible as possible, aspiring lawyers can obtain QWE in one block with a single employer or in stages with up to four different organisations. Whilst from an employer’s perspective, such flexibility is likely to provide opportunities for ‘smaller’ firms to offer placements where – because of their size and resources – this might not currently be possible. That means a potential boost in the number of organisations that can offer QWE.

Although some may find comfort in the familiar, the GDL adds another costly layer to the qualification journey and recent research from legal services consultancy Hook Tangaza found that 85% of non-law graduates are funding the conversion courses themselves. The average cost of solicitor qualification is around £24,000 and annually, £21 million of qualification costs are spent by students who never qualify. Instead, Hook Tangaza’s study highlighted that SQE self-funded students will stand to save between 25-50% in training costs, helping to ensure the profession remains accessible to those that perhaps it previously would not have been. Although the LPC will still be available until 2032 as the SQE is phased in, we anticipate that many students will ‘vote with their feet’ and opt for a more affordable route to qualification.

## SQE1 Prep

### 12. What are the BARBRI SQE1 Prep course options?

#### 40-week course

10-12 hours/week

##### Best for:

- Non-law graduates
- Anyone in full-time employment
- Foreign-qualified lawyers

#### 20-week course

20 hours/week

##### Best for:

- Law graduates from a UK university
- Graduated 3+ years ago

#### 10-week course

35 hours/week

##### Best for:

- Recent law graduates
- Graduates from a UK university

Click to add text



### 13. Is the course flexible?

The BARBRI SQE curriculum is assigned on a weekly basis. The course is available on demand and students can be flexible when they complete the assigned work. The online Personal Study Plan (PSP) integrates our algorithm, ISAAC (Intuitive Study Assistant and Coach) and allows you to study when and where you study best over the duration of the course session you choose. While your study time, days and location are extremely flexible, you should plan on spending the recommended hours per week over the relevant course session. The online Learning Coaches keeps students accountable to their studies through fortnightly check-in emails, telephone appointments, and hold online recorded workshops for exam success and confidence.

### 14. How many hours of study do I commit to each SQE1 Prep course?

All course options cover the same materials but at different speeds/hours per week.

- The 40-weeks PT course you will need to do 10-12 hours study, we recommend 1 hour of study a day with 1 full day on the weekends.
- The 20-week part-time course you will need to do 20 hours per week we recommend 3 hours per day over the 7-day week period.
- Finally, the 10-week full-time course will require 40 hours and is recommended for recent law graduates who can dedicate the time and study intensively.

**15. How many practice multiple-choice questions does the BARBRI SQE1 Prep course include?**

The SQE1 Prep course has over 2,500 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and forms the main foundation of the course content.

**16. How many mock exams are included?**

In addition to the main practice MCQs, there are several multiple-choice practice tests delivered in exam style. There are 4 mock tests throughout the course, which includes two 90-question practice tests for each of the two assessment areas. Finally, the SQE1 preparation course concludes with a full simulated exam which will replicate the SQE1 assessment specification, a full test of 360 questions.

**17. Will I receive 1:1 support?**

Each student is assigned a Learning Coach, who acts as a personal mentor, who will be in touch at a minimum every 2 weeks, after checking the students' progress on their PSP to provide support, motivation, etc. There will also be scheduled "office hours" when the learning coaches will be available for queries and support.

Additionally, we include 6 touchpoint workshops "Prep for Success" workshops to enhance group cohesion and improve exam readiness.

**18. What other features are included in the SQE1 Prep course?**

- 2 hard copy and online books on the law.
- Online pre-recorded lectures delivered by subject matter experts on the areas of law tested.
- Unlimited mentor support by the Learning Coaches.

This way you will not only familiarise yourself with the substantive content of the exam, but also learn the crucial skill of applying this knowledge in the multiple-choice format that the assessment is in.

**19. What does the BARBRI Guarantee entail?**

If you do not pass an SQE assessment on your first attempt with a BARBRI SQE Prep course, you will receive free access to the course for your second attempt. The Guarantee must be used within 12 months of receiving your exam results.

## **20. What are the costs of a BARBRI SQE1 Prep course?**

- SQE1 Prep: £2,999.
- SQE1 Exam is offered twice a year: January and July
  - a. Only one SQE 1 exam in 2022 to be held in July  
Exam fee: £1,558

## **SQE2 Prep**

### **21. What are the BARBRI SQE2 Prep course options?**

BARBRI's SQE2 Prep course is 12 weeks. The course estimates 10-15 hours of learning per week.

### **22. What are the course features in a BARBRI SQE2 Prep course?**

- BARBRI SQE2 Prep requires between 10 and 15 hours per week of studying.
- Online Personal Study Plan (PSP) – graphics, interactive exercises, masterclass videos and lots of practice demonstrations and exercises.
- Top law tutors – qualified solicitors and barristers in England and Wales teaching students the skills to master for SQE2.
- Professional resource books.
- Practice and mock exams – regular mock SQE2 exams with individualised tutor feedback and a full simulated exam in the London campus.

### **23. Is there a guarantee for the SQE2 course?**

If you take SQE2 and are not successful, you will be entitled to another SQE2 Prep course for free, subject to the condition that you have attended/submitted a minimum number of your practice feedback assessments and mock exams.







### **24. How much does the SQE2 Prep course cost?**

- SQE2 Prep: £3,499. It is £2,999 (£500 discount) for candidates who have taken SQE1 Prep with BARBRI.
- SQE2 Exam is offered twice a year: April and October in 2022 then April and July 2023 onward
  - Exam fee: £2,422

## Careers support

### 25. What Careers support and guidance does BARBRI offer for students?

#### BARBRI careers services

 <b>Monthly business skills workshops</b> We will help you to develop essential skills including networking and personal branding, organisation and time management, commercial awareness, communication skills and much more, all delivered by the BARBRI team. <a href="#">Find out more.</a>	 <b>1-2-1 fortnightly career clinic</b> Delivered either face-to-face or virtually, these 30-minute sessions will focus on supporting you with applications, CV writing and interview skills, amongst other things, to support your employability.	 <b>Careers webinars</b> Every month we will be bringing you a virtual, interactive half-day workshop to help you focus on those all-important personal skills including business development, networking and beyond. Check out the upcoming videos in the SQE Careers series <a href="#">here</a> .
 <b>Law events</b> We will always keep you up to do with the latest law fairs, networking events, student events, industry talks and so much more, all delivered to your inbox.	 <b>Partnerships</b> We have partnered with industry leaders in the news and career sector, including <a href="#">Legal Cheek</a> , <a href="#">Flex Legal</a> , <a href="#">CheekyLittleCareers</a> , <a href="#">Global Lawyers Connect</a> and <a href="#">LittleLaw</a> to help you further your legal training and access only the most relevant education conferences.	 <b>BARBRI Job Network</b> We have built a rich network of international legal employers who are interested in recruiting talent from law schools to help you find your dream job in the legal sector. You'll be able to build your profile and access the latest opportunities. <a href="#">Find out more.</a>

### 26. How can BARBRI support students struggling to obtain legal roles for QWE?

BARBRI offers 1:1 career clinic appointments and holds specific QWE-related events for current enrolled SQE students. BARBRI will also be adding more QWE-related information on the Careers Hub. There are bootcamps which cover an array of employability skills including good QWE. BARBRI consults with careers experts in the legal profession, such as Husnara Begum, a former Magic Circle lawyer who now runs Cheeky Little Careers.

### 27. What constitutes good QWE and what should SQE candidates account for leading into qualification?

The general answer is one size does not fit all. It depends on the career aims of the student and which area of law they desire to practice. Future employability goals should be considered by SQE candidates when choosing what QWE to undertake. At present, the two most popular routes are the training contract and paralegal work. Training contracts are still being offered by the larger, commercial firms and have an approximate retention rate of 85%. Paralegal work offers experience and flexibility, and it will also constitute QWE up to 4 different organisations.

For each period of qualifying work experience, the relevant solicitor is confirming:

- the details and timescale of the work experience
- that it provided the opportunity to develop some or all the prescribed competences for solicitors
- that no issues arose during the work experience that raise questions over the candidate's character and suitability to be admitted as a solicitor.

Some of the prescribed competences include:

- Ethics, professionalism and judgment
  - Act honestly with integrity, keeping updated with practice contexts and developments in the law.
  - Apply understanding and critical thinking to solve problems.
- Technical legal practice
  - Obtain relevant facts and conduct relevant legal research, using appropriate methods and resources to undertake the research.
  - Draft legally effective documents, negotiate solutions and undertake effective spoken and written advocacy.
- Working with other people
  - Communicate clearly and effectively and establish professional relationships with clients.
- Managing themselves and their own work
  - Plan, prioritise and manage work activities and projects to ensure they are completed effectively.
  - Apply good business practice.

The solicitor confirming your qualifying work experience is not deciding whether you have met the prescribed competences for solicitors. SQE assesses whether meet the SRA's standards.

**28. What discounts do I receive as a Queen Mary University of London student studying with BARBRI for the SQE?**

Queen Mary University of London students and alumni receive a 10% discount off BARBRI SQE1 Prep published prices and a £500 discount on SQE2 Prep after completion of SQE1 Prep. Students and alumni also receive a 10% discount off BARBRI's Extended U.S. Bar Prep published prices. To avail of the student and alumni discount on SQE1 Prep and Extended U.S. Bar Prep, students must enter the following discount code on their online enrolment form: QMUL10.