

Qualified lawyers: How to cross qualify as a solicitor

September 2024

How to become a solicitor

A qualified lawyer is someone who holds a professional legal qualification which confers rights to practise in England and Wales or in another jurisdiction.

To become a solicitor, qualified lawyers need to:

- have a degree (does not need to be in law) or an equivalent qualification and/or experience
- pass the SQE1 and SQE2 assessments, unless granted an exemption – for SQE2 exemptions, will also need to demonstrate proficiency in English or Welsh
- meet our suitability requirements

What is the SQE?

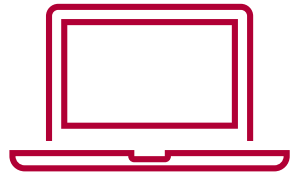
- A single, robust examination for all aspiring solicitors
- Consists of two parts:
 - SQE1 assesses functioning legal knowledge
 - SQE2 assesses practical legal skills
- All candidates must meet the same high standards in a consistent way
- Candidates can choose how to prepare for the assessments

SQE1

Functioning legal knowledge assessment



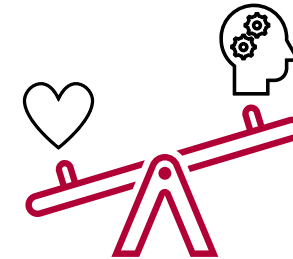
Solicitors
Regulation
Authority



Two 180-question
examinations - 10
hours in total



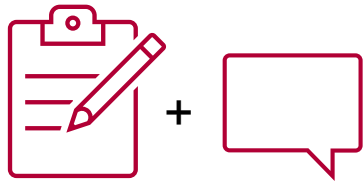
FLK - test ability to
identify legal principles
and apply them to
client problems
and transactions



Unflagged ethics
questions
throughout

SQE2

Practical legal skills assessment



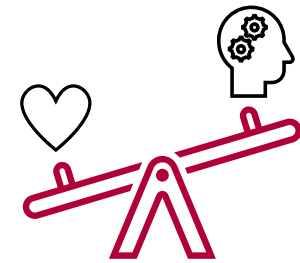
16 written and oral tests - 14 hours in total



Simulating tasks carried out by a solicitor in practice



Tests practical legal skills and functioning legal knowledge equally



Unflagged ethics questions throughout

SQE exemptions

- Qualified lawyers are eligible to apply for exemptions from the SQE assessments
- They must demonstrate that they meet the same standards that are assessed in the SQE assessment they wish to be exempted from
- We cannot grant an exemption from an assessment that someone has failed. They would have to must retake it and pass to be eligible to qualify as a solicitor

SQE2 exemptions

Use our SQE2 exemption finder to see what evidence you need to provide for your specific qualification

sra.org.uk/sqe-exemptions

SQE2 exemption finder

Argentina

Argentina

Abogado

You can apply for an individual SQE2 exemption.

To do this, you will need to provide:

- evidence of your professional qualification, eg an admission certificate or a certificate of good standing
- a reference showing you have at least two years' legal work experience post-qualification as an Argentinian abogado
- proof of your referee(s) professional qualification, eg an admission certificate or a certificate of good standing.

Learn what to do next

Applying for SQE2 exemptions

SQE2 exemptions

- Step by step guidance for making an application is on our website
- Make sure you have added your jurisdiction in your mySRA profile
- Check the SQE2 exemption finder to see if you are applying for an agreed exemption or an individual one

Evidence for an SQE2 exemption

- Qualification evidence such as an admission certificate or certificate of good standing (CoGS)
- Reference letter from employer
- Referees' qualification if they are legally qualified, such as an admission certificate or CoGS
- If referee is regulated by us, they only need to provide their SRA number

Practising under your home qualification

- England and Wales is an open jurisdiction for legal practice
- You can practise as a lawyer under your existing home qualification, so long as not carrying on reserved activities
- Legal Services Act 2007 reserves some activities to solicitors and other qualified lawyers of England and Wales
- If you are a lawyer who wants to be a manager or owner of an authorised law firm, you can register with us as a registered foreign lawyer (RFL)

Registered foreign lawyers

If you are an RFL, you can:

- practise the law of your home state, including legal work reserved to lawyers, provided you can do this within the rules of your current profession
- advise on English and Welsh law
- provide and supervise other unreserved legal services, including acting in first-tier immigration tribunal cases, and preparing documents for immigration tribunal proceedings

More information

- SRA information for qualified lawyers: sra.org.uk/qualified-lawyers
- SQE assessment exemptions: sra.org.uk/sqe-exemptions
- Queries about becoming a solicitor, the SQE route, including exemptions, and registering as an RFL: sra.org.uk/contact-us
- SQE assessments information, including dates and venues: sqe.sra.org.uk
- Queries about RFL activities/duties: professional.ethics@sra.org.uk