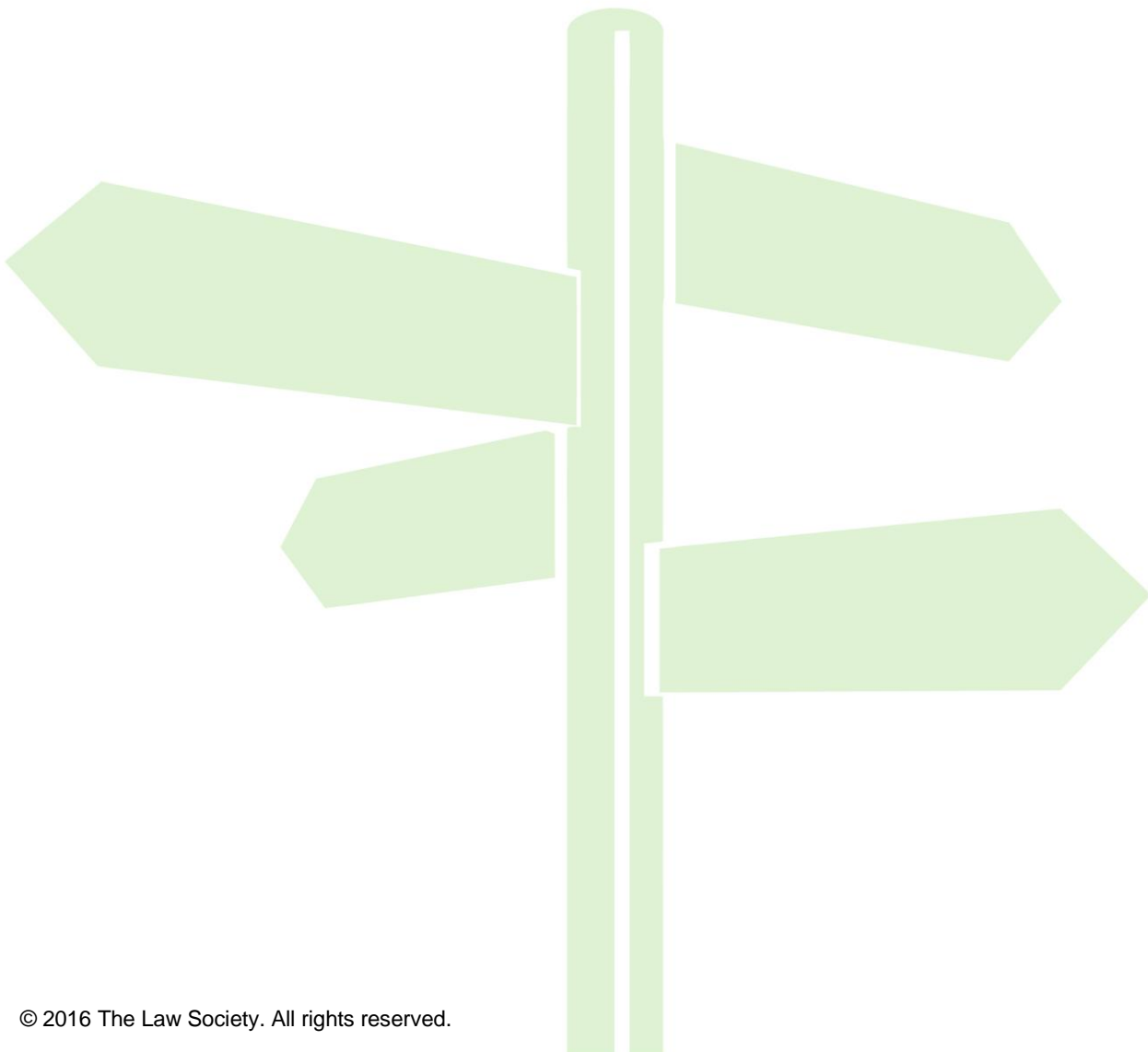




The Law Society

**Equivalent Means - FAQs**  
**Junior Lawyers Division**  
**Updated July 2017**



# Equivalent Means FAQ

## Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society

This FAQ document contains questions from the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England & Wales (JLD) which were put to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and the SRA responses.

### An Overview

The [Solicitors Regulation Authority \(SRA\)](#) recognises that the knowledge and skills that you have gained can be equivalent to all or some part of the academic and/or vocational stages of training needed to qualify as a solicitor.

You can apply to the SRA if you can show how your experiences, skills and knowledge are equivalent to those achieved if you had completed training by the traditional route.

See [the SRA Training Regulations 2014](#) for more on this.

### 1. What are the six different "equivalent means" applications?

- Equivalent means- Eligibility to commence the CPE for non-graduates
- Equivalent means- Common Professional Examination
- Equivalent means- Legal Practice Course
- Equivalent means- Period of Recognised Training
- Equivalent Means- Professional Skills Course
- Equivalent means- Morgenbesser

### 2. How much does it cost?

- Equivalent means – Eligibility to commence CPE for non-graduates **£35**
- Equivalent means – Common Professional Examination exemption **£55**
- Equivalent means – Legal Practice Course **£600**
- Equivalent means – Period of Recognised Training **£600**
- Equivalent means – Professional Skills Course **£210**
- Equivalent means – Morgenbesser **£600**

### “Equivalent means” in relation to a Period of Recognised Training (PRT)

### 3. What is the route for those who have gained equivalent experience outside of a formal PRT?

You may apply under equivalent means if you have gained at least two years experience in at least three areas of law and practice at an appropriate standard.

Your application must be supported by appropriate evidence. The SRA will be looking for you to demonstrate how the work that you have done is the same as a trainee would do.

#### **4. How is this different from a PRT?**

The SRA can consider different ways of satisfying the requirement for recognised training. This creates greater flexibility for those wanting to qualify as a solicitor.

### **Eligibility**

#### **5. Am I eligible?**

To be eligible, you must be able to demonstrate a minimum of two years supervised experience in the law and practice of England and Wales. You must be able to support this experience with relevant and sufficient evidence.

### **My current firm**

#### **6. Do I need the support of my employer?**

Whilst the SRA does not make it an explicit requirement that your firm/organisation support your application, if you are relying on learning and experience gained in your current role, this will need to be verified by your supervisor.

It may also be advisable to talk to your firm/organisation if you are considering making an application so that you know what the position might be were your application successful, for instance will your firm pay for your Professional Skills Courses or would they be willing to offer you an NQ job if you qualified via this route?

### **The process**

#### **7. What is the process from start to finish?**

- The SRA carry out an initial review of your evidence to check that you have provided the right information to demonstrate your work experience.
- Your application is then sent to an assessor who considers this and makes a recommendation.

You will then be sent a copy of the assessor's report and their recommendation. You will have the opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

#### **8. How long does the process take?**

The SRA aims to give a decision within 180 days of receiving the application.

## The application form

### 9. Will the SRA help me complete the application?

The SRA will check your application once submitted, but it is your responsibility to make sure that it is as complete as possible.

### 10. Do you have any precedent examples?

No, the SRA does not provide precedent examples. Each applicant's experience is very different and is considered on its own merits.

### 11. How much detail do you require?

The SRA needs sufficient, relevant and adequate information to fully demonstrate your work experience.

## The evidence

### 12. What evidence is acceptable?

There are no restrictions on the kinds of evidence that you can put forward. It needs to show your knowledge and skills so that the SRA can evaluate whether or not the outcomes have been met. Here are some examples of the kinds of evidence they are looking for:

- References from your supervisors to:
  - ✓ corroborate your work experience
  - ✓ show the content of your application is correct
  - ✓ provide examples of their direct supervision or observation of you.
- Details of your supervisory arrangements. The SRA needs to know your supervisor, and any other individuals, have the necessary skills and experience to give you effective direction.
- Appraisal documents.
- Job descriptions.
- Copies of any training diaries.
- Copies of specific documents to illustrate your work experience.

**Remember to redact any sensitive/identifying information and always protect client confidentiality.**

If more evidence is needed to demonstrate your work experience, make sure it is relevant.

## Assessment

### 13. Who decides whether my application is granted?

The SRA makes the decision on whether to grant or refuse your application. There is no facility for partial exemption from the PRT.

#### **14. What is the assessment framework?**

Applications are assessed against the requirements of [the SRA Training Regulations 2014](#). This includes:

- How you have worked alongside solicitors and colleagues.
- The legal nature of the work you have done.
- Your practical experience in at least three distinct areas of English and Welsh law and practice.
- The level of supervision you have received.
- Your feedback and appraisals.
- Your interaction with clients or similar.
- Your performance and development in respect of the [Practice Skills Standards](#) and the [SRA Principles](#).

The SRA will be looking for you to demonstrate how the work that you have done is the same as a trainee would do.

#### **Decision**

##### **15. How will I be notified?**

You will receive the decision and report by email.

##### **16. Will I receive any feedback from the assessors?**

Yes. The assessors feedback and recommendation will be in the report sent to you.

##### **17. Can I reapply? If yes, when?**

Yes. There are no restrictions on when you can reapply.

##### **18. What is the cost of reapplying?**

If you apply again, you must pay the full application fee again.

#### **How to apply**

##### **19. Where can I find the application form?**

The forms are on the SRA website in the [Equivalent means information pack](#).

##### **20. Who do I send my application form to?**

The SRA will need two hard copies of your application form and evidence. Please post these to:

Authorisation  
Solicitors Regulation Authority  
The Cube  
199 Wharfside Street  
Birmingham  
B1 1RN