

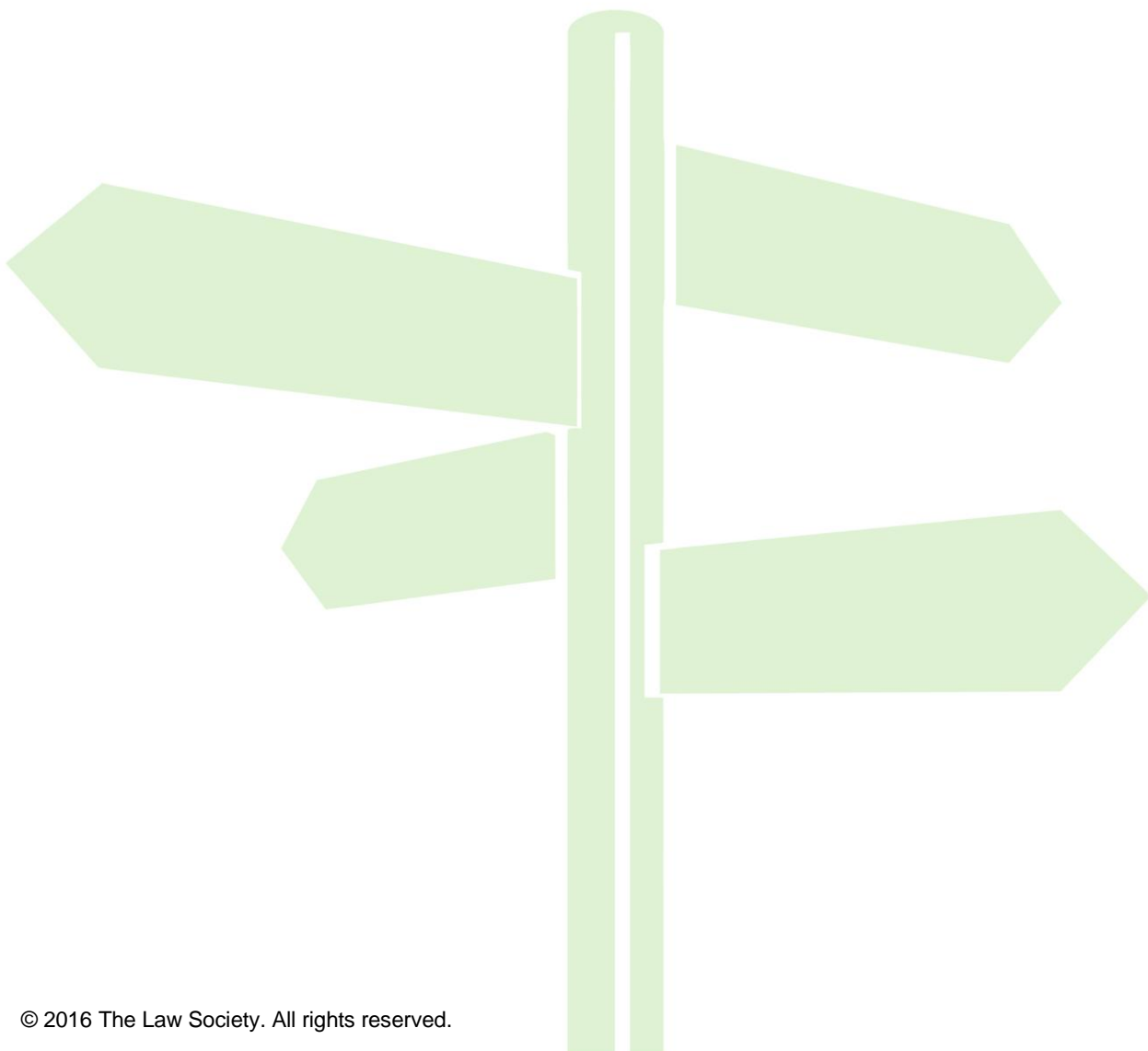


The Law Society

# **Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) - FAQs**

The Junior Lawyers Division

August 2017



# Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)

## FAQs

The answers to these questions are based on the SRA's current proposals regarding the introduction of the [Solicitors Qualifying Exam \(SQE\)](#). We will update them as and when further information is provided.

### **When is the SQE being introduced?**

September 2020 at the earliest.

### **How much will it cost?**

We don't know. The SRA has stated that that the SQE will be cheaper than the current route. The position is currently out to tender and we should have further information on costs once the provider is confirmed in the first half of 2018.

### **Will I need a qualifying law degree?**

No, but the SRA has said it will take longer without one.

### **What is the format of the exam?**

There will be two parts, SQE1 and SQE2:

- SQE1 will be an academic exam, mainly computer based multiple choice, which will test legal knowledge.
- SQE2 will be an exam of practical skills, testing issues such as client interviewing and giving advice.

### **When will I take it?**

There is no prescribed time but the idea is that SQE 1 will be taken around the time of graduating and SQE2 will be taken after two years of practical experience have been gained. In some cases, however, it could be possible to do SQE2 before the end of the two years.

### **How many times can the SQE be taken?**

Three times.

### **What is the practical work experience?**

You will need to undertake at least two years of legal work experience which cannot comprise of any more than four separate placements within that two year period. No timeframe has yet been provided as to how long you have to complete the two year period and whether you will need to do consecutive seats.

### **Will I have to have experience of both contentious and non-contentious work?**

No. The SRA is addressing concerns on this and so there maybe an element of advocacy that will be included in the final version of the proposals.

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### **I am currently doing my LPC, what does this mean for me?**

If you have begun a qualifying law degree, CPE (common professional examination)/ GDL, LPC or period of recognised training before September 2020 you will be able to choose whether or not to qualify under the old route or to take the SQE. If you choose to take the SQE, you will need to meet all of its requirements. There will be a longstop date where you will no longer be able to continue on the old route and, if the SQE is implemented in September 2020, the longstop date is expected to be September 2031 although this is still to be finalised.

### **I was thinking about doing the LPC, should I wait and complete the SQE instead?**

In addition to the advice above, you should consider at what stage you will need to undertake a two year training contract (period of recognised training). At this stage, no one is sure how law firms will react to these changes and there is a risk that a training contract will no longer exist and you will instead have to do the work experience element of SQE. This would mean you would instead need to follow the SQE route and pass SQE part 1 and 2, plus the work experience requirement. If you enrol on an LPC and then are unable to obtain a training contract, you would ultimately be paying a lot more having first paid for the LPC and then the SQE.

### **I'm a foreign qualified lawyer, what does this mean for me?**

You will need to:

- hold a legal professional qualification which confers rights to practise in England or Wales or in an overseas jurisdiction recognised by the SRA;
- demonstrate you have the competences set out in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence](#), and the knowledge of English and Welsh law set out in the [Statement of Legal Knowledge](#) either on the basis of the principles set out below and/or through successful completion of the SQE;
- have a degree or qualifications or experience which the SRA is satisfied are equivalent to a degree; and
- satisfy the SRA's character and suitability requirements.

Junior Lawyers Division  
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