

SQE Legal in-house 101:

Attracting, Nurturing &
Retaining **legal talent**

What is the SQE?



The SRA's objectives for SQE

1. Greater assurance of consistent high standards at the point of admission
2. the development of **new and diverse pathways** to qualification, which are responsive to the changing legal services market and promote a **diverse profession** by **removing artificial and unjustifiable barriers**

The benefits SQE brings to promote a more diverse profession

- New and diverse pathways
- Lower cost & flexible 'earn while you learn' opportunities
- QWE model promotes greater opportunity to qualify by removing the 'training contract' bottleneck
- New qualification route through solicitor apprenticeships

Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE)

Key Information



The new route to legal qualification in England & Wales



Available for law and non-law students



A two-stage exam assessment:

1. SQE1 - Mixed subject, multiple choice questions
2. SQE2 - Legal skills assessment

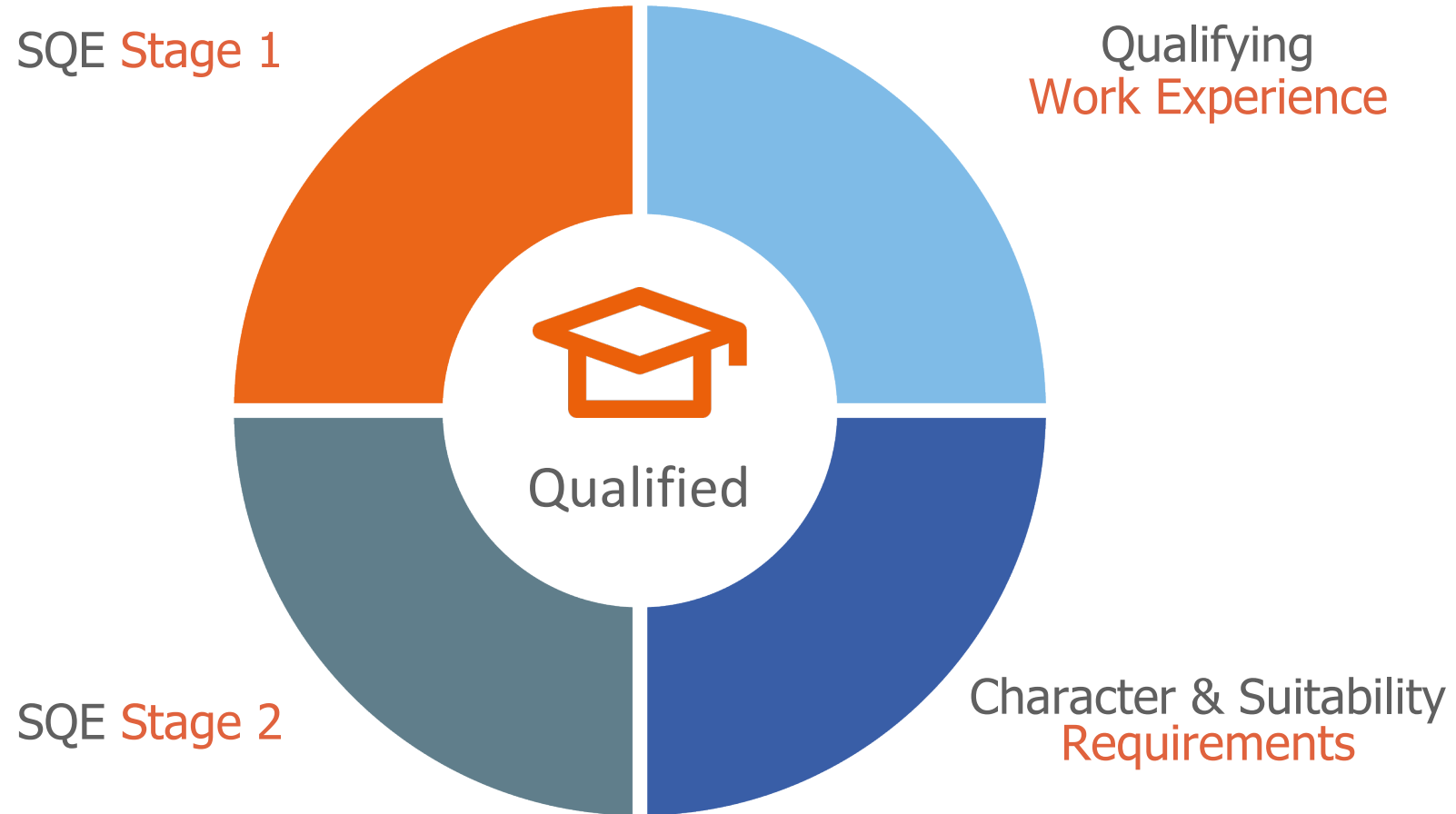


From November 2021



A more flexible approach

The SQE route



SQE1 Exam

£1,798 exam
fee

Functioning Legal Knowledge



Mixed subject,
multiple-choice



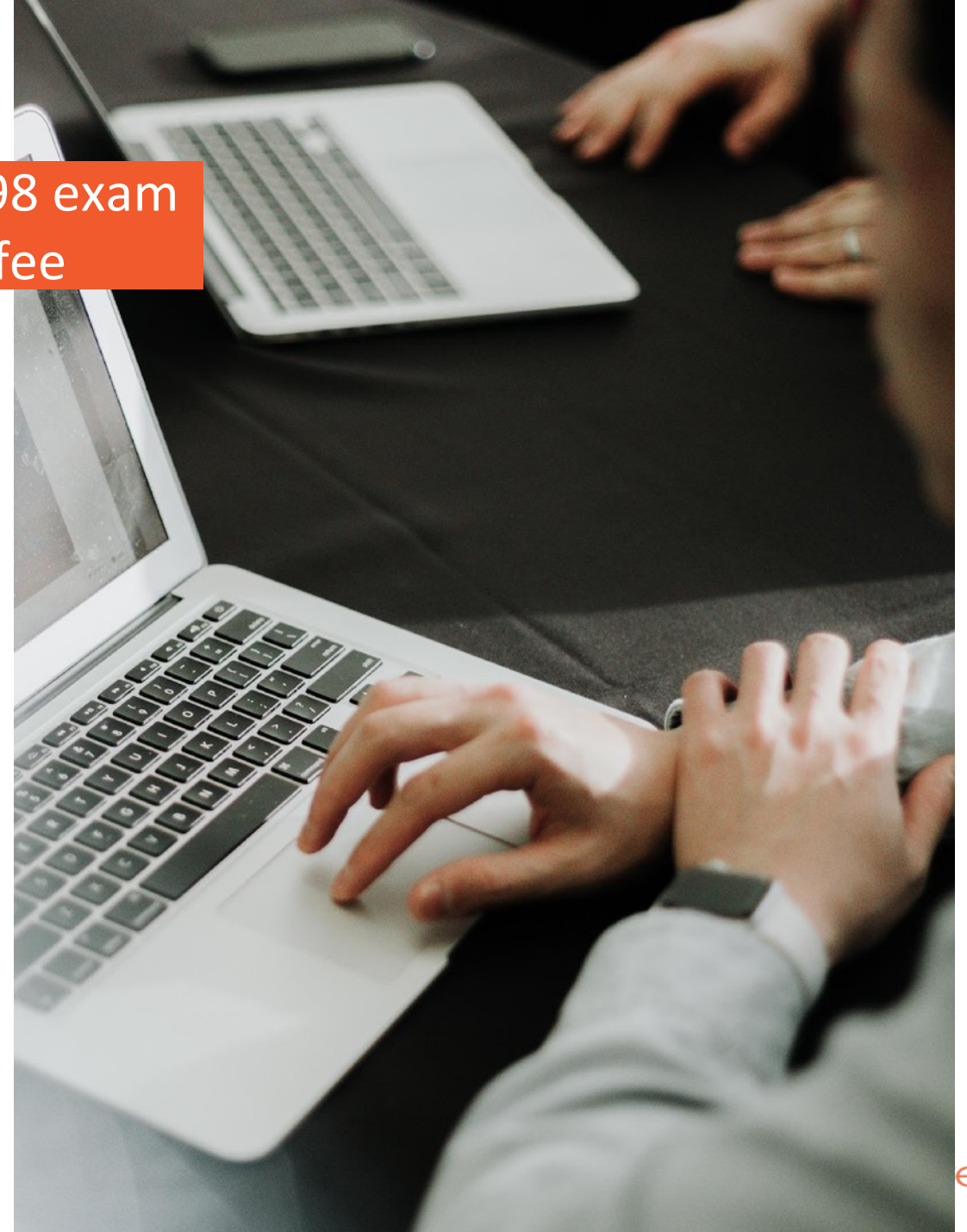
Two-day exam with 360
questions



Computer-based



Can be studied alongside full-
time employment



SQE1 Exam

What subjects are tested?

- Business Law and Practice (including taxation)
- Dispute Resolution
- Contract
- Tort
- The Legal System of England and Wales
- Constitutional & Administrative Law & EU law
- Legal Services
- Property Practice (including taxation)
- Wills and the Administration of Estates (including taxation)
- Solicitors' Accounts
- Land Law
- Trusts
- Criminal law and Practice

Ethics & professional conduct are pervasive subjects

SQE2 Exam

Legal Skills Assessment



Available
after passing
SQE1



Can be studied
alongside full-time
employment



Subjects covered:

- Client interviewing
- Advocacy
- Case & matter analysis
- Legal research, writing and drafting

£2,766 exam
fee



LPC/GDL v SQE - Mythbusting



LPC/GDL vs SQE

Myth busting

True

- The SQE is significantly cheaper than the LPC
- The SQE is now the sole route to qualification (subject to a transition phase)
- QWE is flexible and candidates can earn and learn

False

- Non-law grads still need a GDL before taking SQE
- The LPC will continue as an option alongside SQE
- Two-year training contract in one organisation is still required

QWE Explained



Qualifying Work Experience

The Basics

- Comprises two years' work-based experience
- Possible to complete full or part-time
- Can be split across a maximum of four placements
- Includes: training contracts, paralegal roles and pro bono work
- Can be claimed retrospectively
- Must be confirmed by a solicitor admitted in England & Wales or a COLP
- Exemptions may apply for foreign qualified lawyers

QWE

“the provision of legal services”



QWE helps aspiring solicitors by giving them experience of real-life legal work and the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences needed to be a solicitor



The competences outlined by the SRA are:

- Ethics, professionalism & judgment
- Technical legal practice
- Working with other people
- Managing themselves & their own work



The SRA does not require someone to develop all of the listed competencies, the minimum number needed is two.



A role that involves only a single competence, even though it may be providing legal services, will not count as QWE.

QWE Confirmation



QWE must be confirmed by a solicitor or COLP, but they do not have to hold a practising certificate. It can also be a solicitor that does not work for the same organisation but is willing to confirm. They will need to have:

- reviewed their work during the relevant period of work experience
- received feedback from the person or persons supervising their work



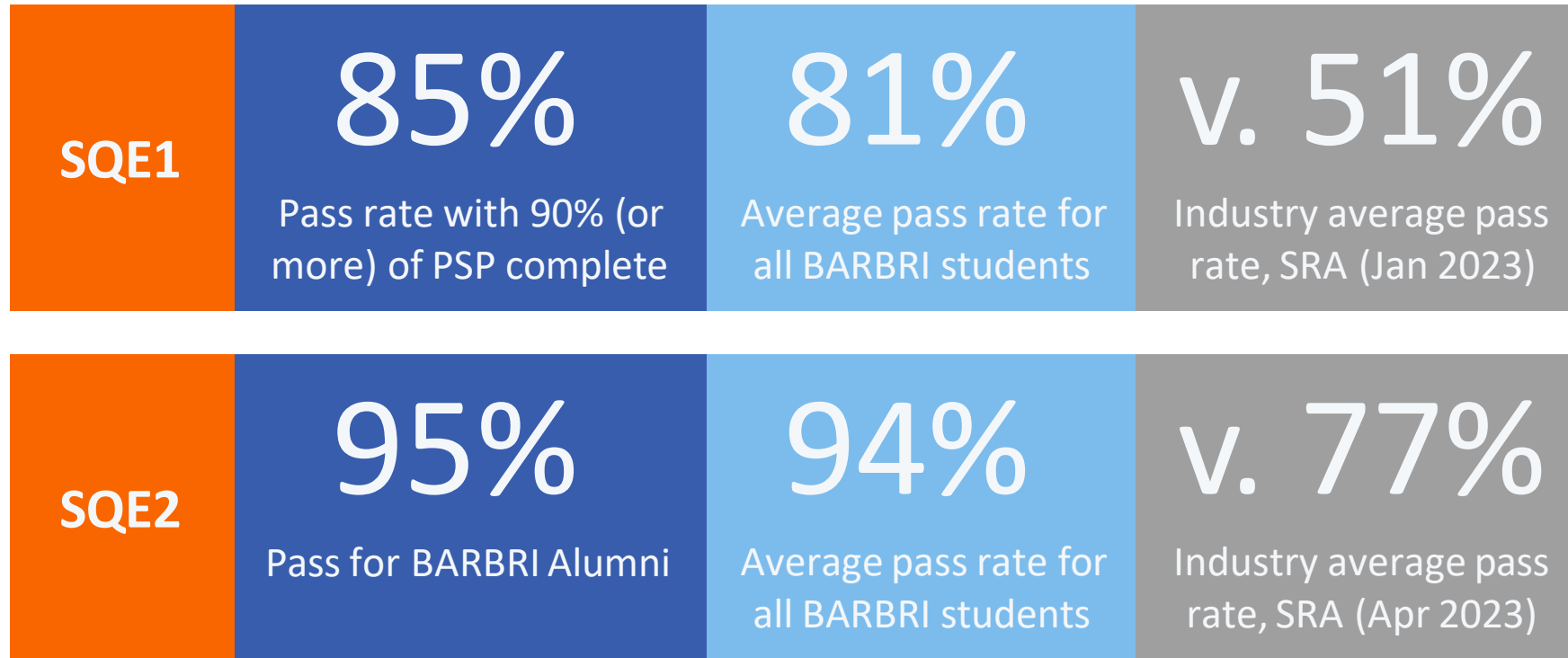
What is being confirmed:

- the length of work experience that was carried out
- the experience was providing legal services and the candidate had the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences
- that no issues arose during the work experience that raise questions over the candidate's character and suitability to be admitted as a solicitor

SQE pass rates in first cohorts



BARBRI SQE Results: Sponsored Students



Notes:

- Based on students reporting their pass rates.
- Student ratings based on all student feedback.
- Updated 8 September 2023.

4.6/5
Student rating of
BARBRI PSP

4.7/5
Student rating of
BARBRI lectures

What we have learned



What have we learnt: SQE1

- Non-law graduates perform as well as law graduates
- The format of the exams has a potential impact on students with poor mental health
- There is work to be done on diversity attainment, and prior academic attainment is broadly a measure of success

	BARBRI	SRA
1st or equivalent	77%	70%
2:1 degree or equivalent	70%	59%
2:2 degree or equivalent	81%	35%

	BARBRI	SRA
Asian or Asian British	55%	54%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	49%	23%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	71%	58%
White	68%	63%

- Students need to be taught how to tackle a MCQ exam and how to study for this type of exam
- Apprentices are doing well – gaining marks that are on average 8% higher than other sitters
- Bitesize and mobile content is helping students to flexibly approach their studies

What have we learnt: SQE2

- Fewer students are sitting SQE2 than anticipated
- Diversity statistics are better than SRA average – especially in areas such as ethnicity and those that have undertaken QWE

	BARBRI	SRA
Paralegal	82%	
Qualified Foreign Lawyer	78%	70%
Undertaken QWE	85%	80%

	BARBRI	SRA
Asian or Asian British	80%	72%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	64%	53%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	94%	92%
White	86%	85%

- Format of the SQE2 assessments means that there is a difference between skills in the SQE2 exam and skills in practice
- Completing SQE2 soon after SQE1 enables students to more easily retain FLK

Solicitor

Apprenticeships



What is a solicitor apprenticeship?

- Aspiring solicitors can qualify through this alternative to the traditional qualification route through university and may suit candidates who want to 'earn as they learn' as it combines 'off the job' study with paid work-based experience.
- Apprenticeship training and assessments are paid for through the apprenticeship levy fund by the employer.
- Solicitor apprentices must pass the SQE assessments to qualify as a solicitor.
- The solicitor apprenticeship standard is based on the SRA's Statement of Solicitor Competence: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/solicitor-v1-0>
- Entry requirements: 5 GCSEs, including mathematics & English - grade C or above (or equivalent), 3 A Levels (or equivalent) - minimum grade C and/or various apprenticeships including the paralegal apprenticeship.

The solicitor apprenticeship programmes

Shorter form solicitor apprenticeship

For those already working in legal jobs and who are law graduates, holders of a graduate diploma in law (GDL) or full/part-qualified CILEX L6, Licenced Conveyancers or similar

-  Next cohort starting April 2024
-  Programme duration: c.18 months
-  Cost: £18,800 from the Apprenticeship Levy or £940 (5%) for non-levy employers
-  SQE 1 in Jan 2025
-  SQE 2 in Oct 2025

Longer form solicitor apprenticeship

For non-law graduates, successful paralegal apprentices, CILEX L3, Conveyancing Technicians, Licensed Paralegals and similar

-  Next cohort starting August 2024
-  Programme duration: c.36 months
-  Cost £24,000 fully funded by the Apprenticeship Levy or £1200 (5%) for non-levy Employers
-  SQE 1 in January 2026*
-  SQE 2 in July 2027*

*dates may vary slightly

Commitment

- “Off-the-job” study time: 8 to 9 hours per week (must take place during apprentice’s contracted working hours)
- Study can be structured flexibly e.g. two half days a week or one full day or three blocks of time
- Detailed weekly study schedule and content on BARBRI system
- Damar coaching support: every 6 weeks (via Teams) and a review meeting with coach and workplace supervisor every 12 weeks
- Group workshops and strategy sessions
- Learning journey: available at all times on the apprentice’s individual OneFile (e-portfolio) account



Learning structure

We use a teaching approach known as “flipped learning” which allows apprentices to learn in a structured but efficient and flexible way that works for them and their employer using a range of interventions:

- Online learning using BARBRI platform
- 1:1 coaching support - every 6 weeks (via Teams) and a review meeting with Damar coach and workplace supervisor every 12 weeks
- Group workshops and strategy sessions – to develop study skills and exam techniques
- Practice exams and mocks
- Activity briefs - put their learning into practice at work and build robust evidence of qualifying work experience (QWE)
- Reflection - Every week, apprentices update their learning journal
- Electronic and hard copy course manuals

Apprentices also have access to:

- Solicitor apprentice forum (moderated by the Damar coach) where apprentices can share and ask questions.
- Freshdesk, an online helpdesk for questions about the BARBRI materials or platform.
- Damar’s business support unit, available during office hours to help with any administrative or practical questions.
- Damar’s safeguarding team. Ensuring that apprentices are safe, healthy and supported underpins all our delivery and our welfare team is here to help apprentices and employers.



victoria.cromwell@barbri.com



■ barbri.com/sqe/

f @barbrisqe

📷 @barbri_sqe

in BARBRI SQE Prep

🐦 @barbrisqe

 barbri SQE prep