

SQE training options

Updated January 2023

To qualify through the SQE, candidates will need:

- a degree or equivalent [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/degree-equivalent/>]
- to pass both stages of SQE [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/registering-and-booking/>] - SQE1 on the application of legal knowledge, followed by SQE2 focused on practical legal skills
- two years' qualifying work experience [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>]
- to meet our character and suitability [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/assessment-character-suitability-rules/>] requirements.

Under SQE candidates have greater flexibility to choose training that best suits their own circumstances. We no longer prescribe which courses candidates should take.

Other than a requirement to pass SQE1 before taking SQE2 candidates are free to prepare for the assessments and complete their qualifying work experience [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>] in a way that suits them.

Examples below show what training options might be available to prepare candidates for both stages of the SQE assessment. These are indicative only. We expect and encourage additional innovative routes.

We have also included possible sources of funding for each option and additional points to consider.

We have a list of organisations [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/training-provider-list/>] that provide SQE1 and 2 training including some of the training options below.

Options for SQE1 training

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A law degree integrating SQE1 preparation

Some universities may offer a law degree that teaches everything which is assessed in SQE1. This means that no additional training for the assessment is required.

What funding could be available?

An undergraduate law degree will be covered by student loans

[<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>] . These cover:

- tuition fees – normally £9,250 per year
- maintenance (living expenses) - this varies according to household income (eg parental income). The average maintenance loan is about £6,800.

Additional help may be available for disabled students via the Disabled Students Allowance [<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>] . Depending on the level of need, this can be up to £25,000 per year.

Things to consider

You may want to check a course fully covers the SQE1 assessment topics and preparation needed, or whether further training is required.

You may also ask whether any courses offer qualifying work experience opportunities, for example, in a university law clinic.

A law degree plus additional SQE preparation

Some universities will offer law degrees that do not include SQE1 training.

What funding could be available?

An undergraduate law degree will be covered by student loans

[<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>] . These cover:

- tuition fees – normally £9,250 per year
- maintenance (living expenses)- this varies according to household (eg parental) income. The average maintenance loan is about £6,800.

[<https://www.savethestudent.org/student-finance/maintenance-loans.html#amount>]

Additional help may be available for disabled students via the Disabled Students Allowance [<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>] . Depending on the level of need, this can be up to £25,000 per year.

Things to consider

You should check carefully which subjects are covered within a law degree. Some degrees without SQE1 preparation may still cover some of the topics which are assessed in SQE1 (such as contract, tort, land law, equity and trusts, criminal law, EU law, English and Welsh legal system).

If the degree does not fully prepare you for SQE1, you can top up your learning by:

Taking a focussed SQE1 training course for law graduates with no university award

These courses do not carry any academic award and do not qualify for student loan funding. You could fund these courses by:

- Self-funding for example, by working while you study.
- Employer funding for example, through a graduate apprenticeship.
- A commercial bank loan. Some SQE course providers are putting in place arrangements with banks, so check with providers when you are thinking about which course to take.
- Taking advantage of flexible payment options offered by some SQE course providers, for example, monthly instalments. Again, check with providers when you are thinking about which course to take.

Complete a Master's degree

This is likely to be more expensive, but you can get a postgraduate loan of up to £11,222. This is paid direct to the student, unlike undergraduate tuition fee loans.

The price of master's degrees varies and some SQE Master's courses might be higher than £11,222. However, others set their fees at the same level as the loan or lower, which means it could cover both the SQE1 training and assessment.

Undertake self-learning

You could use study materials to prepare yourself for the SQE1 assessment. This is a low-cost option, which you could combine with working. If you take this option, you will need to be self-motivated and able to learn effectively without external support or feedback. But some study materials include practice questions, so you can check your own learning as you go along.

A non-law degree plus SQE preparation

Having a law degree is not a requirement for qualifying as a solicitor under the SQE. Many people switch to law after they have graduated in a different discipline. But you will still need to learn the full range of subjects which are assessed in the SQE1 to give you the best chance of passing the assessment.

What funding is available?

An undergraduate law degree will be covered by student loans

[<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>] . These cover:



- tuition fees – normally £9,250 per year
- maintenance (living expenses) - this varies according to household income (eg parental income). The average maintenance loan is about £6,800.

Additional help may be available for disabled students via the Disabled Students Allowance [<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>] . Depending on the level of need, this can be up to £25,000 per year.

Things to consider

You will be likely to need additional SQE training, which you will have to pay for over and above the cost of a degree. You could choose to carry out additional SQE1 training by:

Taking a focussed SQE1 training course for non-law graduates

These courses are longer than training courses for law graduates. They do not carry any academic award and do not qualify for student loan funding. You could fund these courses by:

- Self-funding for example, by working while you study.
- Employer funding for example, through a graduate apprenticeship.
- A commercial bank loan. Some SQE course providers are putting in place arrangements with banks, so check with providers when you are thinking about which course to take.
- Taking advantage of flexible payment options offered by some SQE course providers, for example, monthly instalments.

Completing a Master's degree

This is likely to be more expensive, but you can get a postgraduate loan of up to £11,222. This is paid direct to the student, unlike undergraduate tuition fee loans.

The price of master's degrees varies and some SQE Master's courses might be higher than £11,222. However, others set their fees at the same level as the loan or lower, which means it could cover both the SQE1 training and assessment.

Undertake self-learning

You could use study materials to prepare yourself for the SQE1 assessment. This is a low-cost option, which you could combine with working. If you take this option, you will need to be self-motivated and able to learn effectively without external support or feedback. But some study materials include practice questions, so you can check your own learning as you go along.

Options for SQE2 preparation

Once you have passed SQE1, you can sit SQE2.

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Using qualifying work experience

A period of qualifying work experience [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>] can help you prepare for the SQE2 assessment as it should expose you to some of the practical legal skills being assessed. You may need additional classroom training, or mock assessments, to top up your qualifying work experience.

What funding could be available?

You may gain qualifying work experience through employment as a trainee solicitor or paralegal. Some employers may sponsor their employees' SQE preparation and assessment fees, either through grants or loans.

Things to consider

You may wish to ask whether there is financial support available from your prospective employer for SQE2 training or assessment when you are considering where to do your qualifying work experience. You may also wish to enquire about study leave.

You should regularly review which practical legal skills you have been exposed to during your placement. Also think about whether you need any top up training or further qualifying work experience so that you have exposure to as wide a range of as possible of the practical legal skills which will be assessed in SQE2.

Take a focused SQE2 training course

Many education and training providers offer courses designed to help you prepare for SQE2. These may be short courses offering mock-assessments, or programmes offering more extensive skills training.

What funding could be available?

These courses will not carry any academic award and do not qualify for student loan funding. You could fund these courses by:

- Self-funding for example, by earning while you learn.
- Employer funding for example, through a loan or grant.
- An apprenticeship.



- A commercial bank loan. Some SQE course providers are putting in place arrangements with banks, so check with providers when you are thinking about which course to take.
- Taking advantage of flexible payment options offered by some SQE course providers, for example, monthly instalments.

Things to consider

You should check which practical skills the course covers and in which legal contexts.

SQE2 training as part of a Master's degree

Some universities may offer a Master's degree that includes SQE2 as well as SQE1 training.

What funding could be available?

This is likely to be more expensive, but you can get a postgraduate loan of up to £11,222. This is paid direct to the student, unlike undergraduate tuition fee loans.

The price of master's degrees varies and some SQE Master's courses might be higher than £11,222. However, others set their fees at the same level as the loan or lower, which means it could cover both the SQE2 training and assessment.

Things to consider

You should check carefully which SQE2 subjects are covered within the Master's degree. Some programmes may go beyond the requirements of SQE2.

Apprenticeships

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Solicitor apprenticeship

Candidates can train through the solicitor apprenticeship

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/solicitor-apprenticeships/>] pathway in England which includes both SQE1 and SQE2 training as well as the cost of assessments. It can be started post-A level and typically takes 5 to 6 years to complete.

At the end candidates gain a Level 7 qualification (equivalent to a master's degree).

Twenty percent of the apprenticeship (for example one day a week) must be spent doing off-the-job training. Time spent in the office counts as their

qualifying work experience. So providing candidates pass the SQE assessment and meet our suitability requirements

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/assessment-character-suitability-rules/>]

, they are ready for admission at the end of their solicitor apprenticeship.

Graduate apprenticeship

Candidates with a degree can join a graduate solicitor apprenticeship programme in England. This integrates qualifying work experience

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>] , as

well as SQE1 and SQE2 training and assessments. It typically takes 2 to 3 years to complete. At the end of the graduate solicitor apprenticeship candidates are ready for admission, providing they meet our suitability requirements [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/assessment-character-suitability-rules/>] .

So this scheme can be used for graduates to complete their training as a solicitor. Under the scheme, apprentices complete about 30 months' training (which counts as their qualifying work experience) and also prepare for SQE1 and SQE2. At least 20% of the training (eg one day a week) takes place away from the office.

What funding could be available?

You receive a salary from your employer during your apprenticeship. Your SQE training and assessments are paid for by your employer who can use the apprenticeship levy fund.

Access to Work [<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>] support could be available if you are disabled or have a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for you to do your job. This would not cover any costs for SQE training or assessments but could help candidates with special equipment needs or getting to and from work.

Things to consider

We have published information about solicitor apprenticeships

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/solicitor-apprenticeships/>] including guidance to help you identify whether they may be right for you.

There is also information on apprenticeships [<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>] , where you can search and apply for legal apprenticeships in England.