

SQE Update - April 2024

In this bulletin find out about our SQE annual review reports, booking to sit both the SQE1 and SQE2 in July, and a fee increase from September. You can also find the link to watch our annual SQE Virtual Conference.

Subscribe to alerts [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sqe-update/sqe-subscribe/>] so that you know when we publish the latest SQE Update bulletin.

Latest SQE review reports

We've published the latest reports reviewing the SQE. These cover the second year of the assessments and include an annual review from the SQE's assessment provider, Kaplan, and one by the SQE's Independent Reviewer. Overall, they have shown the SQE continues to perform well and there can be confidence in this rigorous assessment.

Read our reports:

- Our news release [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/sqe-year-two-reports/>]
- SQE assessment Annual Report 2022-23 [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/docs/default-source/pdfs/reports/sqe-annual-report-2022-23.pdf>]
- SQE Independent Reviewer Annual Report 2022-23 [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-independent-22-23/>]
- SQE Quality Assurance Annual Report 2022-23 [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-qa-report-22-23/>]

Qualifying work experience feedback survey findings

We have also published a report into qualifying work experience (QWE), based on feedback from both aspiring solicitors and those who employ them. Key findings from this feedback included:

- QWE is overall straightforward to secure, with just over 5,000 QWE confirmations recorded with us by November 2023.
- Approximately 90% of candidates who had completed some QWE said they were satisfied or very satisfied with it.
- 70% of organisations said their QWE offer allows candidates to develop a broad range of the competencies needed to become a solicitor.

Read more about the survey findings [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/qualifying-work-experience-survey-findings/>]

SQE assessment fees to rise

Our contract with our assessment provider Kaplan allows for an annual inflation linked increase in fees. The new fee also includes an additional charge towards the cost of providing for candidates to sit the SQE in Welsh if they wish.

The fees for 2024/25 will be:

- SQE1: £1,888 (£1,798 previously)
- SQE2: £2,902 (£2,766 previously).

These will apply to anyone taking SQE2 in October 2024 and subsequent assessments during the academic year 2024/25.

SQE1 July 2024 booking process changes

We have changed how you book to take the SQE1 in July. Following feedback, we are changing arrangements to provide a quicker and simpler way for candidates to book a seat for this assessment.

There will be no queuing process and no need to manually search for test centres. Instead, candidates now need to complete a form, but only if they intend to sit the July SQE1 and want to reserve a seat.

Here is what they need to do:

1. Register for an SQE account.
2. Complete the pre-booking steps.
3. Complete the seat reservation form by 16 April. The form will be emailed to candidates with an SQE account at approximately 6pm on 10 April.

Kaplan will work to allocate a seat in line with the candidate's preferences, as set out on their seat reservation form. Where it's not possible to allocate everyone to their first choice of location and/or date, Kaplan will allocate as closely as possible according to the order in which they received completed forms. Once the booking window reopens on 8 May, candidates will see their reserved seat. They will then need to confirm they want to take the seat and pay the fee. This must be done on or before 10 May.

If a candidate needs a reasonable adjustment, they should make the request as early as possible as part of their pre-booking steps.

Learn more [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/news-item/2024/03/26/important-update-regarding-the-july-sqe1-booking-window>]

Booking to sit SQE2 in July 2024

The booking window will open for the July sitting on 24 April. To sit the SQE2 assessment, candidates must have either:

- passed SQE1
- have the Legal Practice Course and be using SQE2 (as well as qualifying work experience) as an equivalent to a period of recognised training.

To secure a place, candidates must have first completed the registration and pre-booking processes. If they need any reasonable adjustments, they should make the request as early as possible as part of their pre-booking steps. Kaplan will endeavour to allocate a seat to every candidate that completes the seat reservation form.

Find out how to book for SQE2 [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/news-item/2024/03/28/important-information-regarding-the-july-2024-sqe2-booking-window>]

Updated SQE training providers list and course information

Candidates looking to take the SQE assessments may choose to take a course or other training before sitting the exams. We have updated the SQE training providers list we publish, and it now includes course or training information.

Take a look at the training provider list [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/training-provider-list/>]

Consultations on qualified lawyer regulation changes

Our recent consultations on two proposed regulation changes affecting qualified lawyers have now closed. These proposed:

- Introducing a new rule preventing qualified lawyers from being granted an SQE exemption from a part of the SQE they have previously failed.
- Changing when and how we seek assurance that a qualified lawyer with an SQE2 exemption has the English or Welsh language proficiency needed to practise as a solicitor.

Subject to approval by the Legal Services Board, we will implement the new rules in the summer of 2024.

Read our consultation responses

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultations-closed/>]

SQE1 in Welsh information

Candidates will be able to take the SQE1 assessment in Welsh from January 2025. We have published new information about taking SQE in Welsh to help candidates understand more about what this will look like. This includes:

- which aspects of the SQE will be in Welsh
- the advance notice candidates will need to give us if they want to sit the SQE in Welsh
- the translation process and reference materials.

Candidates intending to take an SQE1 or SQE2 assessment in Welsh will need to give advance notice to be able to do so. We will publish more guidance on how to do this later this year.

Read more about sitting the SQE in Welsh [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/assessment-information/welsh>]

SQE EDI Risk Assessment update

We have published an update on the progress made against the commitments in our SQE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Risk Assessment. This looks at our activities and actions since February 2021.

Read the update [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/edi-risk-assessment/update-progress-march-2021-february-2024/>]

Becoming a solicitor with the Legal Practice Course

We have updated information for those looking to qualify through the Legal Practice Course (LPC) route. This includes a reminder of our transitional arrangements and who can still qualify this way. Plus, some things to consider if you or someone you know is looking to take the LPC.

Find out more [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/transitional-arrangements/>]

SQE infomediaries meeting

We have recently set up a network of people who are involved with providing information and support to aspiring solicitors. This is for us to

share updates on qualifying as a solicitor and to raise awareness of the information and resources we provide. It is also an opportunity for us to hear from network members about what they hear from aspiring solicitors and what information they find useful.

We recently held an online meeting with members of the network. It was attended by representatives from university careers services and online content providers. If you are involved in providing information or advice and would be interested in joining our network, please let us know.

Email our Education team [<https://www.sra.org.uk/contactus>] .

Changes to applying for a first practising certificate

We have changed when someone can apply for their first practising certificate. Once they have chosen their admission date, they will be able to apply for their certificate as well. We have also created a helpful video on how to apply.

Find out more about applying [<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/manage-account/individual-account/step-by-step-guides/apply-practising-certificate/>]

Get involved

SQE Virtual Conference 2024

Watch our latest virtual SQE Conference, aimed at education and training providers and organisations offering qualifying work experience.

Hear about:

- the headlines from the latest SQE annual reports from our assessment provider, Kaplan and our SQE Independent Reviewer
- SQE1 and SQE2 sample questions and resources
- answers to common questions from candidates
- the latest on qualifying work experience, including perspectives and experiences from employer and candidates.

Watch now [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/events/on-demand-events/sqe-conference-2024/>]

Other ways to get involved

Join our LinkedIn reference group [<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8548868/>] . It will help you keep up to date with the latest SQE developments and

opportunities to get involved in our surveys and events.

If you are thinking about taking the SQE, or know someone who is, please follow Career in Law [<https://www.facebook.com/careerinlaw>] for the latest information aimed at aspiring solicitors.

If you have any questions, or want more information on how you can get involved, contact us [<https://www.sra.org.uk/home/contact-us/>] .

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