



Choosing an SQE training provider

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Key things to consider

- The training you choose covers all of the topics tested in the SQE1 and/or SQE2 [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/assessment-topics>] assessments. Find out more in [What is the training content.](#) [#collapse_1794]
- The training suits your:
 - circumstances, including work and family commitments
 - learning and career goals – for example, are there particular areas of law that you would like to know more about and/or practise in
 - preferred learning style – for example, do you learn best through listening and discussing, through reading and reflecting, through hands-on practical activities, online or face-to-face?
- How the training is delivered. Find out more in [Study approaches](#) [#collapse_c608] and you may also want to consider:
 - Does the training involve lectures, practical lessons, group work or written assignments?
 - Is the training full time or part time?
 - Is it formal training or self-study?
 - Does the training involve distanced, face-to-face or blended learning? Which best suits you?
 - Is there any difference between the training approaches to SQE1 and SQE2?
 - Does the training simulate or replicate real legal practice environments and reflect the tasks that practising solicitors need to complete?
 - Does the training support any needs you may have because of a condition, impairment, illness or learning difference?
- Do you want your training to include qualifying work experience (QWE) [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqa/qualifying-work-experience/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>] ? If so, what providers offer a QWE placement and/or help people to find placements? Find out more in [Study approaches](#) [#collapse_c608] .
- You should get information about the quality of the training and provider you are considering. Find out more in [Information about training quality](#) [#collapse_d2b2] and you may want to consider:



- Any information about SQE1 and SQE2 pass rates. A higher rate can indicate quality of training, but it is important to not make assumptions or rely solely on these.
- Information published by providers about things like:
 - the professional background of the people who deliver their training
 - feedback from candidate surveys
 - the proportion of their candidates who go onto practise as solicitors.
- Candidate feedback and reviews.
- Rankings if you are considering a university provider – league tables are provided by the Times Higher Education [<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-uk>] , The Guardian [<https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2021/sep/11/the-best-uk-universities-2022-rankings>] and the Complete University Guide [<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>] .
- The mission and values of the provider.
- You are happy with a providers' terms and conditions before entering into an agreement with it. We list the things they might cover in Provider terms and conditions [#collapse_3efe] .
- You know how you will pay for your training and understand the different funding options that might be available to you. These can depend on the type of provider and course you choose. Find out more in Funding your training [#collapse_83ff] [] . [#collapse_83ff]
- You have sufficient information about a provider's ability to fully deliver the training you pay for and protect your interests if this is not possible. We outline the types of information you may be able to access in Provider financial viability [#collapse_d95e] .
- You have considered your consumer rights when you enter into an agreement with a provider. See Your consumer rights [#collapse_bf28] for more information.
- If appropriate, you have considered what reasonable adjustments they can make to support your learning. Find more information in Accessibility and individual support needs [#collapse_a324] .

Open all [#]

Types of SQE training organisations

Some providers are on our SQE training providers list

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/training-provider-list/>] . This list is not exhaustive, but it includes a wide range of organisations who:

- deliver SQE education, tutoring or training services (or plan to in the future)



- produce SQE-related study materials and resources (or plan to in the future).

The types of providers offering SQE training include:

Higher education providers / universities

- Some universities incorporate preparation for the SQE1 assessments into their undergraduate or Master's law programmes. Both of these can be funded through student finance. However this does not cover the cost of the SQE assessments.
- Higher education providers in England, such as universities, are regulated by the Office for Students [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>] (OfS). It oversees their quality and standards, makes sure that students have a good experience of higher education and that it represents value for money.
- Higher education providers in Wales are regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) which has similar aims to the OfS.
- Most higher education providers are universities and colleges, but a small number operate as commercial training organisations, including some established legal training providers.
- If you aren't sure whether a provider is a higher education provider, search either the OfS Register [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/>] or the list of providers published by the HEFCW [<https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/en/regulation/higher-education-providers/>].

Commercial training organisations

- These organisations typically offer standalone courses to help candidates prepare for the SQE.
- The courses available are of varying lengths and can sometimes be less expensive than university-based training but require self-funding. Scholarships, grants and loans may be available.
- Most commercial training organisations operate privately and are not regulated by the OfS.
- These organisations vary in size: some are large and may form part of a parent company, whereas others are run by a small team.
- Some of these organisations are based outside the UK. This could be because they provide training and/or materials to candidates based in the same country, or because they provide online training and/or materials to candidates based worldwide.

Individuals

- Some of the providers on our list are individuals who provide training and/or produce materials for the SQE. They can be legal academics, qualified

lawyers or professional tutors.

Legal services providers

- Some of the providers on our list have partnered with one or more law firms, to deliver specific training for their future lawyers.
- Some law firms provide training for the SQE without support from a commercial training organisation or higher education provider.
- Over time, more legal services providers may enter the training market for the SQE.

Producers of study materials and resources

- Some of the providers on our list produce self-study materials to help candidates prepare for the SQE.
- You may prefer self-study if you:
 - already have, or are currently gaining experience of legal practice
 - have studied law and legal practice in the past
 - are a strongly motivated and independent learner.
- Self-study often costs less than other forms of training.

What is the training content

Before choosing a provider, make sure that the training covers and prepares you for the skills and knowledge that will be assessed. The information below can help you do this.

SQE assessment website

Before you can judge whether a particular type of training will prepare you for the SQE, you need to know what the assessment tests. The SQE assessment website [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/>] includes:

- A list of the topics [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/assessment-topics>] tested by SQE1 and SQE2
- Assessment specifications for SQE1 and SQE2 [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/assessment-topics>]
- Sample questions for SQE1 [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/assessment-information/sqe1-sample-questions>] and SQE2 [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/assessment-information/sqe2-sample-questions>].

Provider websites and marketing materials

Most providers publish information about the content and structure of their training on their websites and/or in marketing materials, such as course

prospectuses. You should check this against what is being tested in the SQE.

Engaging with a provider

To find out more about training content, you can speak directly with providers or attend open days or events if they are available.

Study approaches

There are different ways you can study, depending on your circumstances and what works for you. Here are some of the key things to think about.

Self-study

Self-study options are available for SQE1 and SQE2. They are often more affordable and flexible than formal training options. This may suit candidates who:

- want to study flexibly and at their own pace
- have access to limited funds for their training
- want to study at homes
- already have some knowledge and/or experience of the topics and skills assessed by the SQE
- are strongly motivated and independent learners.

Formal training

Studying full time or part time

Full time study takes generally takes less time to complete but is not the best option for everyone. Depending on your personal circumstances and preferences, the possible benefits of part time study can include:

- making it easier for people to work alongside their training so that the cost is more manageable
- helping people balance any caring or other responsibilities with their training
- helping people with some conditions or impairments to complete their training and fulfil their potential.

Distance, face-to-face or blended learning

When choosing formal training, you should also think about the learning styles on offer.

Depending on your personal circumstances and preferences, you may find face-to-face learning, and the networking and social benefits suits you.

Or you may prefer or be suited to distance learning if, for example, you:

- have caring responsibilities
- want to work alongside your training and find it easier to balance with distance learning
- live in a remote area or overseas
- want to save money and find that options for distance learning are cheaper because, for example, they don't require travel.

It is important to check the technology used to facilitate distance learning and whether it is compatible with your own equipment.

Increasingly, some providers are offering a combination of face-to-face learning and distanced learning, known as blended learning. Specific arrangements vary, but blended learning usually combines classroom-based learning for some parts of a course with distance learning for others.

You can also choose different learning styles for SQE1 and SQE2, for example:

- distance learning for SQE1, which tests functioning legal knowledge
- face-to-face or blended learning for SQE2, which tests practical legal skills.

Conditions or impairments can also affect the learning style that works best for individual candidates. For example, candidates with mobility issues, visual impairments, hearing impairments and some psychiatric conditions may prefer distance learning. However, this is for each candidate to decide: two candidates with a similar condition or impairment may have different needs and prefer different learning styles.

Qualifying work experience

To qualify as a solicitor, you'll need to complete at least two years' qualifying work experience (QWE) full-time, or equivalent part time. You'll only need to have completed this by the time you apply for admission as solicitor but you can do it alongside your SQE training. Learn more about QWE [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/>].

Some providers guarantee a QWE placement as part of their training, for example, at their own legal advice centre. Others use connections with law firms and other legal services providers to help candidates find placements alongside their training.

The training offered by some providers is also designed to reflect the realities of practising as a solicitor, for example, platforms and events which connect their candidates with practising solicitors.

Information about training quality

You should consider a provider's reputation and the quality of its training before deciding where to do SQE training. You can use the information below to help.

Information from providers

Some of providers publish information about the quality of their training. If not, you can ask them directly for information.

To help your decision making, you may want to consider:

- A provider's entry requirements
- Their SQE1 and SQE2 pass rate. A higher rate can indicate training quality, but it is important to not make assumptions or rely solely on this. A provider's pass rate can be determined by a range of factors, including
 - the training quality
 - a provider's approach to recruiting candidates including things like candidate background, prior attainment and candidate numbers
 - if the provider has small candidate numbers, a slight drop in those passing can disproportionately impact pass rates.
- How candidates that reflect you, your personal characteristics and your circumstances perform in the SQE1 and SQE2.
- Feedback from candidate surveys, if available.
- A provider's history of providing effective training for other professional qualifications, if applicable.
- Candidate success stories, if available.
- The professional background of the people who deliver a provider's training.
- A provider's links to the legal profession, for example, through partnerships with law firms or in-house legal teams.
- Information about the proportion of a provider's candidates who go onto practise as solicitors, if available.
- Information about the proportion of a provider's candidates who earn above a certain amount after completing their training

Candidate feedback and reviews



If you know a current or past candidate who trained with a provider, ask them about their experience. A provider may also be able to put you in touch with one of its candidates or publish case studies.

You may also find candidate feedback on review sites, such as:

- What Uni [<https://www.whatuni.com/>]
- Trustpilot [<https://uk.trustpilot.com/>]
- The Uni Guide [<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/>]
- Uni Compare [<https://universitycompare.com/>]
- Complete University Guide [<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>]
- The Student Room [<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/university/>]
- Legal Cheek [<https://www.legalcheek.com/the-sqe-provider-list/>]

Links to the profession

Some providers have relationships with the legal profession to:

- train the future lawyers of a particular firm or group of firms
- offer support to their candidates from members of the profession, for example, through events and/or online platforms
- deliver training from practising lawyers
- help their candidates find and complete qualifying work experience alongside their training.

Understanding if a provider has a link with a firm can help you focus your training if you want to practise in a particular area or at a specific firm. You may also be able to ask solicitors about their views of a particular provider or training option - for example, when you attend an event for aspiring solicitors. Such events are run by, for example:

- The Lawyer Portal [<https://www.thelawyerportal.com/>] – supported by the Law Society
- Legal Cheek virtual law fairs [<https://www.legalcheek.com/uk-virtual-law-fair-series/>]
- Future Lawyers Hub [<https://www.futurelawyershub.com/>]
- Aspiring Solicitors [<https://www.aspiringsolicitors.co.uk/about-us/>]

Higher education providers

If you are considering a course from a higher education provider, such as an LLB or LLM, you may find it on Discover Uni [<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>]. This



government-run website helps students by comparing information about things like:

- National Student Survey [<https://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>] results
- Entry information
- Drop-out rates
- Employment and earnings after course completion
- Graduate perceptions.

These organisations rank higher education providers and/or courses against a number of criteria, including teaching quality:

- QS World Universities [<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022>]
- Times Higher Education [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2022/subject-ranking/law#!/page/0/length/25/name/University%20of%20law/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats]
- The Guardian [<https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2021/sep/11/the-best-uk-universities-2022-rankings>]

Provider terms and conditions

You should not enter into an agreement with a provider unless it provides you with a set of terms and conditions to accept, and you should be happy with them.

Some providers publish standard terms and conditions on their websites. These typically include their obligations to candidates and their candidates' obligations to them.

If you have any queries or concerns about the proposed terms of a particular provider, you should discuss them with an appropriate contact for that provider.

The Office for Students [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/what-the-ofs-does-for-students/>] also provides guidance [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/what-the-ofs-does-for-students/>] on a variety of student welfare and course quality matters, including what to expect from providers [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-rights-and-welfare/what-universities-and-colleges-should-do-for-students/>] , and allows you to notify them [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/notifications/>] of your concerns and/or complaints [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/complaints/>] .

Funding your training

Before you enter into an agreement with a provider, you should consider how you will fund your training. How you do this can depend on:

- Your personal circumstances
- The type of training you choose
- The funding options on offer from your chosen provider.

We outline here the types of training options and how they might be funded [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/sqe-training-options/>] to help you prepare for both stages of the SQE assessment. This also includes apprenticeships [<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/solicitor-apprenticeships/>] .

Paying with a loan or credit card

If you choose to pay for any part of your SQE training with a loan or a credit card, make sure that the repayment terms are affordable and competitive as possible.

A possible benefit of loans is that you pay an agreed amount with a set interest rate and over a defined period.

A possible benefit of credit cards is that you may be able to clear your debt without paying interest if you are eligible for a long enough interest free period and pay more than the monthly minimum payment.

A key benefit of credit cards is the degree of protection they afford. All credit card purchases between £100 and £30,000 are covered by Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/39/contents>] . This means that, if you purchase goods or services with a credit card and there is a breach of contract, the credit card provider is just as responsible as the provider of the goods or services for any breach of contract. Section 75 protection can be particularly useful if a provider stops trading. It also applies to foreign transactions.

Provider financial viability

You should feel confident that if your provider, course or campus shuts down, measures are in place to help make sure that:

- you can continue and complete the training you paid for
- your financial interests will be protected if continuation of training is not possible.

What is financial viability

There may be several reasons why a provider can't fully deliver the training you pay for, including staff absence. But a specific risk is that a provider has financial difficulties.

In some cases your provider may not be able to fully deliver the training you have sign up for, whilst meeting its financial commitments - for example, paying for premises and staff.

While viability assessments are usually performed by experts, there is some information you can use to check on your provider before signing up with them.

Accessing information about financial viability

Where possible, review any available information about financial viability when choosing a provider. This is because if you sign an agreement with a provider or for a course which is not financially viable, and doesn't happen, then you could lose money and your training may not be completed.

Below are examples of the information you may be able to access.

Terms and conditions

Providers may include information in their terms and conditions about what they have in place to protect you if they go out of business or shut down your course or campus. For example:

- Arrangements to transfer you to another location, course or provider.
- A guarantee of full or partial compensation if the training you pay for can't be delivered.

Protection plans

All higher education providers registered with the Office of Students (OfS) must publish an approved student protection plan

[<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/student-protection/student-protection-plans/>]

The key purpose of protection plans is to make sure that students can continue their training if a course, campus, or provider shuts down, or be compensated if this is not possible.

If you are considering a provider that is registered with the OfS, make sure that you understand and are comfortable with the information set out in its protection plan.

Student protection plans are tailored to the circumstances of individual providers and based on a risk assessment by the OfS. They need to cover:



- An assessment of risks relating to the provider's ability to continue operation, recruit or teach particular types of student and deliver courses, course components, qualifications and modes of study.
- The provider's mitigation measures if identified risks are likely to materialise. Measures must be fair and reasonable and should include information about refund and compensation policies.

Providers that aren't registered with the OfS aren't required to produce protection plans. However, you can still ask them questions to get information about what they will do to protect you if they close down altogether or shut down your course or campus. Find examples below of what to ask.

Business plans or strategies

These can include information about:

- past performance
- organisational structure and governance
- risks to the organisation or the market it operates in
- how the organisation is funded
- financial projections or forecasts.

Websites and marketing materials

Providers that don't have a protection plan may still say how they will make sure candidates get the training they pay for on their websites or in marketing materials.

Questions to ask providers

Asking these questions can help you get useful information about what a provider might do if something went wrong. You may have additional questions to ask, depending on your own circumstances and the information you already have.

- Do you have a protection plan which explains how you would protect me if you were unable to provide the SQE training I paid for? Please provide a link or a copy.
 - Have you ever needed to close down a course or campus? If you have, what were the reasons and how did you protect your candidates?
 - How will you protect me if you can't deliver or complete my training?
- Possible follow up questions could include:



- Would I receive full or partial compensation?
- What arrangements are in place to guarantee any compensation?
- Do you have an agreement with another provider, to take on each other's candidates if one of you closes down or shuts down a course or campus?
- Would I be moved to another campus?
- If I didn't want to be transferred to another provider or campus, for example, because it is inaccessible or too far from my home, could I opt for compensation instead?

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted continuity and quality of study for some students. So you may also want to ask about the measures a provider put in place to protect candidates, for example:

- How did they make sure candidates were able to study?
- How did they maintain the quality of training?

Your consumer rights

When you enter into an agreement with a provider, you become the consumer of its services. Your rights are set out in The Consumer Rights Act 2015 [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/15/contents/enacted>] , which protects almost all purchases you make.

These rights depend on a number of things, including:

- The types of goods and services you pay for.
- Where the goods and services you pay for are located, for example, in the UK or overseas.
- How you pay for them, for example, in person, over the phone or on the internet.

A key purpose of the Consumer Rights Act is to set minimum standards for the provision of goods and services, which must be met even if they are not explicitly covered in a written or oral contract. When it comes to services, these minimum standards include things like performing the service:

- With reasonable care and skill.
- In a reasonable timeframe, where a specific timeframe is not agreed beforehand.
- For a reasonable price, where a specific price is not agreed beforehand.

If you receive a service which doesn't meet these minimum standards, then the Consumer Rights Act will protect you. The remedies you could be entitled to include:

- Performing the entire service, or part of it, again.
- A price reduction.
- A full refund, depending on the seriousness of the failings.

The Act also allows you to challenge unfair contract terms and protects you against them. A term could be unfair if it involved:

- A hidden fee or charge.
- Excessive charges for defaulting on the contract or terminating it before it is complete.
- An attempt to limit your legal rights.

To learn more about the protections, you can read the Act itself or a summary of its key protections, from organisations like Citizens Advice [<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>] , Ombudsman Services [<https://www.ombudsman-services.org/>] , the Competition and Markets Authority [<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority>] and Which [<https://www.which.co.uk/>] .

All providers must comply with the Consumer Rights Act. Higher education providers must demonstrate how they comply with consumer protection law [<mailto:https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>] .

Accessibility and individual support needs

Under the Equality Act 2010, all providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments and not discriminate against disabled people, either in their capacity as higher education providers and/or as service providers.

If you have individual support needs because of a condition, impairment, illness or learning difference, ask potential providers about their arrangements or what arrangements can be made to help your learning. You can use the following information to help.

Candidates are encouraged to register for the SQE [<https://sqe.sra.org.uk/registering-and-booking/reasonable-adjustments>] , apply for reasonable adjustments and have them agreed at an early stage. If you do this, you may be able to find a provider that can put the same (or similar) adjustments in place, so that you can prepare for and practise the SQE in similar circumstances to the real assessments.

Provider websites

Most providers publish information about accessibility on their websites, including:

- Access and participation plans, which higher education providers are required to publish. Learn about this requirement on the Office for Students website [<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/>] .
- Policies on reasonable adjustments and equality, diversity and inclusion, which may be accompanied by supporting guidance such as FAQs, case studies and candidate testimonials.
- Maps, photos and videos of their premises as well as information about public transport and parking.
- A list of the facilities that are available to support candidates with particular conditions or impairments, for example, hearing loops for candidates who use hearing aids.
- Examples of the types of adjustments they have made to support candidates with individual support needs. Learn about some of the ways to study for the SQE in Study approaches. []
- A guide to the support services that are on offer, which may come from dedicated teams and individuals.

Make a list

A provider's website may not go into enough detail on some of the specific issues you are interested in, so it may help to make a list of any issues you need to get more clarity on.

Speak directly to a provider

A provider should be able to put you in touch with someone who can provide clarity on the issues you are interested in, which may be specific to your condition or impairment and how you manage it. For example:

- If you are a wheelchair user, you may want to make sure that your wheelchair will fit through the doors of a provider's classrooms if this is not clear from the information on its website.
- You may want to ask a provider if, in principle, it would be able to make the adjustments you have had put in place for other forms of training, particularly if they are complex adjustments.

You may be able to speak to a tutor or someone from a student services team, a disability support team, a student union or a mental health team.

Visit a provider

If you want to use face-to-face training to prepare for the SQE, make sure that you are able to access and use their premises and facilities. A good way to do this is by attending an open day or arranging a separate visit.

Candidate insights

A provider may be able to put you in touch with one of its current or past candidates who has individual support needs that are similar to your own. This can help you learn about their experience of training for the SQE.

You may also be able to speak to people with similar individual support needs to your own, through a network, for example:

- The Law Society's Disabled Solicitors Network
[<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/disabled-solicitors/>]
- City Disabilities [<https://citydisabilities.org.uk/>]
- The Association of Disabled Lawyers. [<https://www.disabledlawyers.co.uk/>]

Candidates with individual support needs may have also reviewed their provider or course on a review site. You can find a list of some review sites in the Information about training quality section.

Disabled Students' Allowance

A Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) covers some of the extra study-related costs you incur due to a condition, impairment or learning difference. DSAs don't need to be repaid and are awarded in addition to other forms of student finance, based on your individual needs.

An SQE-related course may qualify for a DSA but that is for the Government to decide. You can contact Student Finance England or Student Finance Wales can tell you if a provider is designated for DSA support. We aren't involved in setting eligibility criteria or deciding who receives the allowance.