Solicitors Regulation Authority

Equivalent Means

Updated 25 October 2023

You can only qualify through this route if you meet our transitional requirements [https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/] . If you do not meet these, you will need to qualify under the SQE [https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/] .

What is Equivalent Means and how to apply?

When you apply for Equivalent Means, we may recognise your certificated learning and work-based learning by granting exemption from the qualification and training requirements such as the Legal Practice Course (LPC) and Period of Recognised Training (PRT).

Should I apply?

Do you:

- want to qualify as a solicitor through certificated learning and work-based learning1 [#note1] ?

- want to apply for exemption from any part of the route to qualification i.e the LPC/PRT or Professional Skills Course (PSC)? If so you must have worked or volunteered in a legal capacity (for example, as a paralegal, or as a legal caseworker for a charity) and/or have certificated learning which is equivalent to these stages of training

- Applying for full exemption [#7465]

- Applying for partial exemptions [#6416]

- Other ways to qualify [#7987]

This guidance is intended to supplement the requirements set out in our regulations.

The Equivalent Means route to admission can exempt you in full (if you are eligible) from the requirements to:

- complete the LPC Stages 1 or 2 or both

- complete a PRT

- complete any of the PSC core modules

We can consider your experience under the SRA Education Training and Assessment Provider Regulations. [https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/education-training-assessment-provider-regulations/]

Partial exemption from the LPC

We can only grant full exemption from the LPC (Stage 1, Stage 2 or both).

You may be eligible to apply to your education provider for a partial exemption from the LPC. You must apply to them directly. It is normal to apply for any exemptions when you apply for entry to the course.

Education providers grant exemptions based on their own academic regulations. If you're thinking about applying for an exemption, contact your preferred provider before you choose a course.

Your course provider will decide whether any exemption reduces the period of study or course fee.

LPC partial exemption

Bar Vocational Course

If you have passed all elements and been awarded the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) an LPC provider can exempt you from the following modules:

Stage 1 - Litigation, advocacy, drafting and practical legal research

Stage 2 - Two vocational electives

Bar Professional Training Course

If you have passed all elements and been awarded the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) an LPC provider can exempt you from the following modules:

Stage 1 - Litigation, advocacy, drafting

Stage 2 - Two vocational electives

To claim the above exemptions, you should have been awarded the BVC/BPTC no more than five years prior to your enrolment on the LPC.

Partial exemption from the PSC

The PSC is designed to build on the LPC. Completion of the LPC cannot be used to apply for exemptions from the PSC.

Your PSC provider [https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/professional-skills-course/professional-skills-course-providers/] can grant exemption from one or more of the electives on the PSC if you have completed:

- the shortened Accounts Course as part of the Law Society Finals or the pre 1997 LPC or

- the courses leading to the Higher Rights of Audience Qualifications

You don't need to pass either course to claim exemption. (This is because the PSC electives themselves have no assessments.)

Exemption applications should be made to the PSC provider directly in accordance with their policies. This is normally done when you apply for entry on the course.

Take a look at our pathway [https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/admission/pathways-qualification/] to see how you can qualify.