



Solicitors  
Regulation  
Authority

# **SQE: What it means for law firms**

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# Solicitors Qualifying Examination

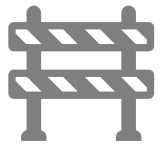


- A single, national licensing examination
- Everyone assessed to the same high standards in a consistent way
- We no longer specify training or routes to qualification
- First sitting November 2021

# Why did we change?



Concerns about inconsistent standards



Lack of flexibility and unnecessary regulatory barriers



High costs of qualification

# Benefits



Better guarantee of standards for consumers



Fair for all candidates – everyone assessed on a level playing field



More competitive training market and more cost-effective training options



Flexibility – removal of regulatory barriers, easier to get required work experience and to tailor training

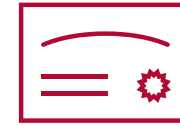
# How's it going?



**4** SQE  
sittings



**6,500** first time  
candidates



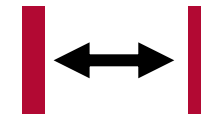
Almost 450  
solicitors admitted  
through the SQE



**66**  
countries








Education and  
training market



Troubling  
attainment gap

# What is QWE?

-  Any experience of providing legal services where someone can develop at least two or more competences - outlined in the Statement of Solicitor Competence
-  Can be done in England or Wales or overseas – does not have to be in organisation we regulate
-  Must be at least two years' working full time or equivalent part time
-  Can be done in up to four separate organisations providing legal services - no minimum or maximum length for each individual period
-  Can be current and previous roles

# Confirming QWE



A solicitor or COLP (who we regulate) within the organisation where the placement took place. Does not need to hold a practising certificate



A solicitor working outside the organisation where the placement took place who has direct experience of the work. So long as they:

- » Reviewed their work during the relevant period of work experience
- » Received feedback from the person or persons supervising their work

# What is confirmed



Exposure to some or all of the competences but solicitor **not** confirming whether individual is competent



The length of work experience/placement carried out



Whether or not there are character and suitability issues



Should be confirmed if it meets our criteria



# Things to consider



How will you confirm QWE if you are approached by a candidate?

- Who will it be? How they check?



How will you manage retrospective claims?

- Are you keeping records? For example, temporary employees and the work they did?



What will recording QWE look like in your firm?



How will you manage employee expectations around QWE and qualification?



Can you take advantage of the flexibility to support your recruitment?

# What does good QWE look like



Diverse and varied work that provides exposure to a wide range of competences



Opportunities for reflection on performance to identify both strengths and areas of development



Exposure to professionalism and to ethical issues



Effective supervision throughout the placement

# Keep in touch



Send your queries to [contactcentre@sra.org.uk](mailto:contactcentre@sra.org.uk)



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