

# **SQE1 - how the first assessment went**

**Julie Brannan,  
Director of Education and Training, SRA**

# SQE1 – November 2021

- 1,090 candidates, including 27 solicitor apprentices, took part in 100+ centres around the world
- Two parts: Functioning Legal Knowledge 1 and Functioning Legal Knowledge 2
- Candidates need to pass both parts, to pass SQE1

# SQE1 – pass mark and rate

- FLK1 was 57%
- FLK2 was 56%
- 53% of candidates passed both assessments
  - 67% passing FLK1
  - 54% passing FLK2

- No material difference in performance by gender, disability, or social mobility
- Was troubling attainment gap by ethnicity
- 60% of candidates did not fully complete EDI questionnaire

- Data is from a single sitting and represents c.10% of anticipated future annual cohort numbers
- No evidence of bias in the assessment
- Research commissioned from University of Exeter into causes of attainment gap in professional legal education

# Operational matters

- Candidate handling at Pearson Vue test centres
- Results delayed from 15.00 – 21.00 on 20 January
- Introduction of queueing system for SQE2 booking

# Pass rates by provider

- We will be publishing pass rates by provider by end 2023
- We have not done so now, because results of a single assessment with relatively small overall cohort may not be representative
- We have fed back to those providers with largest candidate numbers in private so they can evaluate their training



# SQE1 – conclusions and next steps

‘The initial SQE1 exam appears to have successfully delivered valid fair, reliable and defensible outcomes. Each of the stages of preparation; delivery and processing outcomes for the exam demonstrated significant evidence of good practice.’

Geoff Coombe – SQE Independent Reviewer

# **Geoff Coombe, SQE Independent Reviewer**

# Role of independent reviewer

- Provide external assurance to SRA and Kaplan that the SQE will deliver outcomes that are fair, defensible and command public confidence

# Reviewing the first SQE1 assessments

- Observed training meetings for new question writers
- Reviewed processes and training materials for all preparatory processes
- Interviewed Kaplan and SRA staff before and after the exam
- Observed candidates sitting the exam at a test centre
- Reviewed summary management information

# High level conclusions

- Each of the stages of preparation, delivery and processing outcomes for the exam demonstrated significant evidence of good practice
- Evidence of a robust lessons learned process, mainly minor but important, improvements needed for future sittings

# High level conclusions

- Process for determining the pass boundaries was well considered and effective
- From a technical perspective the SQE1 assessments appear to deliver an effective assessment

# High level conclusions

- Differences in outcomes by demographic group - white candidates achieving higher pass rate than other ethnic groups
- Does not mean the assessment was unfair - good safeguards in place to avoid unintended bias when setting questions and reviewing how the exam performed
- Wealth of information about candidate performance now available, which enables further analyses

**Zoe Robinson,  
Director of Qualifications, Kaplan**



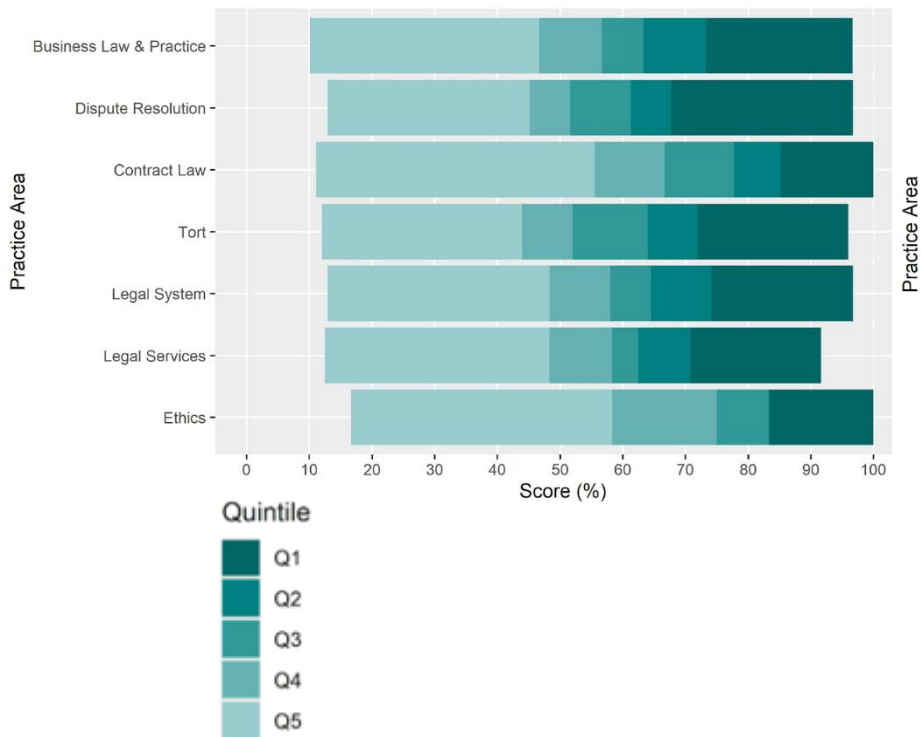
# Pass marks

Statistic	FLK1	FLK2	SQE1 overall
Candidate	1084	1078	1073
Passing score	57%	56%	-
Pass rate	67%	54%	53%

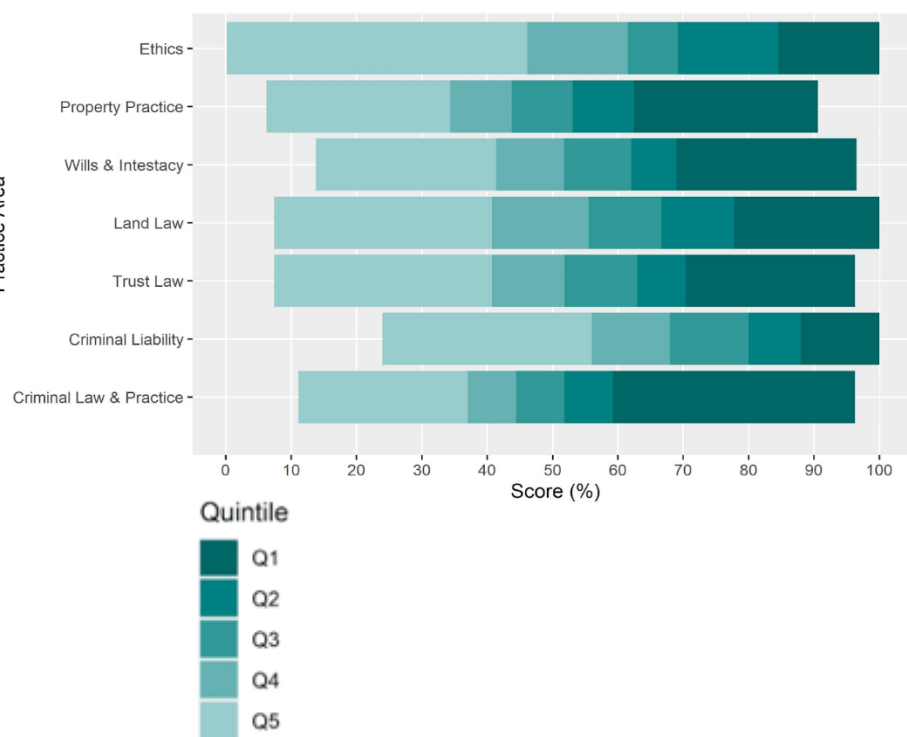
Statistic	FLK1	FLK2
Mean %	61.2	56.8
Std. Dev %	12.6	13.9
Median %	62	58
Min %	21	22
Max %	89	89
Range %	68	67

# Practice areas

## FLK1



## FLK2



# Future sittings

- April 2022 SQE2
  - Written: 11-13 April
  - Oral: 19-29 April
  - Bookings open between 31 January - 7 March
  - Results out towards the end of August

# Future sittings

- July 2022 SQE1
  - Bookings open between 17 March - 16 June
  - FLK1 on 21 July and FLK2 on 25 July
- October 2022 SQE2
  - Oral: From week commencing 24 October
  - Written: 7-9 November

# Keep in touch



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



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