



SOLICITORS QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS (SQE)

Admission changes - The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has introduced the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE) in Autumn 2021 as a route to qualification as a solicitor in England (SQE route).

The SQE will eventually replace the Legal Practice Course (LPC), Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) and the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme Test (QLTS) and some transitional arrangements in effect.

The SQE route provides a new method for students to qualify as barristers and attorneys in Bermuda. For qualification in England, the SQE route comprises two sets of exams, SQE1 and SQE2 and qualifying work experience and other requirements. For full details of the requirements of the SQE route please visit the SRA website at <https://sqe.sra.org.uk/>

As SQE1 and SQE2 comprise the final examination required to qualify as a solicitor in England (in addition to the LPC which will continue to be available for a transitional period), they meet the examination requirements for admission as a barrister and attorney in Bermuda under Section 51(1)(a) of the Supreme Court Act 1905 (SCA).

Accordingly, the SQE examinations can be used to qualify as a barrister and attorney in Bermuda. In addition, the SQE route provides an opportunity to qualify as a solicitor in England.

Bermuda qualification

In order to qualify in Bermuda, a person who opts for the SQE route must have passed SQE1 and SQE2 and, in accordance with the SCA section 51(1)(a)(ii), must have completed at least twelve months of practical training, in England or Bermuda or partly in one and partly in the other. That training may comprise:

- in England, training under the supervision of a solicitor of not less than 5 years training, or
- in Bermuda, training the course of a lawful pupillage.

The SQE1 and SQE2 may be taken at any time before, during or after training/pupillage.

A person must register for the SQE before commencing pupillage and submitting their pupil registration form to the Bar Association.

England qualification

In order to qualify as a solicitor in England through the SQE route there are additional requirements including:

- The period of practical training (qualifying work experience “QWE”) is two years.
- The person who signs off on the QWE must be solicitor who is on the roll of solicitors in England. They need not hold an English practising certificate. This would usually be a qualified solicitor within the person’s place of work. But a nominated solicitor from outside the organisation with direct knowledge of your work could also fulfil this role.

The provisions regarding QWE are more flexible than the training requirements for admission in Bermuda. As noted above, please visit the SRA website for full information. As the QWE allowed for qualification in England is wider than what is allowed in Bermuda, a person who opts for the England qualification route may not be able to be called to the Bermuda Bar after one year if their QWE does not meet the Bermuda requirements.