



SQE1 & SQE2 · QUALIFIED LAWYERS · 2026 - 2027

Qualifying as a Foreign Lawyer Admitted

the SQE route, step by step

Exemptions, the SQE from abroad, screening and admission,
with a checklist.

The Ultimate SQE Success Guide.*

This guide is part of a series.

You can find more here: [**Downloads & Tools**](#)

THE SERIES

SQE 2027 Changes · Ethics · Resitting SQE1 · Employer Funding ·

Income Tax · Solicitors Accounts · SQE2 Client Interview ·

SQE1 Specification Checklist · SQE1 and SQE2 Readiness Checklists ·

Foreign Lawyers

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Already a lawyer.
Now the route to
solicitor, in order.

What is This Guide?

A step-by-step route for **lawyers qualified outside England and Wales** who want to become solicitors here through the SQE: who counts as a qualified lawyer, **SQE1 and SQE2 exemptions** and how to apply, sitting the SQE from abroad, the **degree and English** checks, **character and suitability** screening, and **admission**. It ends with a worked timeline, a costs table and a **route checklist** you can tick off.

Who This Guide is For?

- Advocates, attorneys and barristers qualified in another jurisdiction
- Foreign lawyers working in the UK who want the solicitor title
- Anyone planning SQE1 for July 2027 or later from abroad
- Lawyers deciding whether to apply for an SQE2 exemption

Why It Matters?

Most delays on this route are not exam delays. They are an exemption applied for **after** booking, screening that expires, or an English test that does not count. Each step has its own form, fee and clock. Get the order right and you can be admitted months sooner. Our site covers exemptions in depth at fqps.co.uk/sqe/sqe-for-foreign-lawyers; this guide is the whole route, in order.

Who Counts and What You Need



The SRA defines a **qualified lawyer** as someone who holds “a professional legal qualification which confers rights to practise in England and Wales or in another jurisdiction”. If that is you, the SQE route is shorter than it is for other candidates: you skip qualifying work experience, and you may be exempt from SQE2.

What you need to be admitted

Requirement	Qualified lawyer	Other SQE candidates
Degree	A degree in any subject, or an equivalent qualification or experience; an overseas equivalent counts	The same
SQE1 (FLK1 and FLK2)	Pass it. An exemption is possible but very rare	Pass it
SQE2	Pass it, or apply for an exemption	Pass it
Qualifying work experience	Not required: the SRA recognises your existing qualification and experience	Two years full-time or equivalent
Character and suitability	Meet the SRA's requirements, after background screening	The same
English or Welsh	Passing SQE2 proves it. If exempt from SQE2, you show it separately	Passing SQE2 proves it

Admitted first

Exemptions rely on a qualification you already hold. You must already be admitted in the jurisdiction you rely on: mySRA will not take a future date.

The QLTS has closed

The old Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme is over: the deadline to apply for admission through it was 31 March 2024. The SQE is now the route.

Important: experience is expected, not required

The SRA expects qualified lawyers will “typically have at least two years’ professional experience”, but says this is not a requirement to become a solicitor. Two years (or equivalent) is a requirement for an SQE2 exemption (page 05).

Sources: SRA Qualified lawyers; Pathways to qualification; Qualified lawyers regulations (June 2024); SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations, regs 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 to 3.3; SQE website, Exemptions. Accessed 9 October 2026.



The Route on One Page

From qualified lawyer to solicitor of England and Wales

SRA AND SQE FEES FROM SEPTEMBER 2026 · TICK EACH STEP WHEN IT IS DONE

STEP	WHERE	FEE	DONE
Set up			
1. Open a mySRA account Add each jurisdiction: your professional title and the date you qualified	mySRA	None	
2. Check your degree Atlantic Data checks it against UK level 6: £36 for a UK or Irish degree, £54.84 for an international one	mySRA	£36 or £54.84	
Exemptions and the SQE			
3. Apply for any exemption One application covers SQE1 and SQE2; decision within 180 days of a complete application	mySRA	£265	
4. Register for the SQE Upload photo ID; enter your SRA ID in the exemptions form	SQE account	None	
5. Sit SQE1 FLK1 and FLK2 in the same window; results about 5 to 6 weeks later	Pearson VUE	£2,006	
6. Sit SQE2, unless exempt Written at Pearson VUE; oral in person in England and Wales	SQE account	£3,086	
Before admission			
7. If exempt from SQE2: prove your English Your exempting qualification assessed in English or Welsh, or an approved test	mySRA	Test fee, if any	
8. Complete screening Results must be no more than six months old when you apply for admission	mySRA	£34 UK checks	
9. Apply for admission Certificate of good standing from each jurisdiction; aim: 30 days	mySRA	£100	
10. Choose your date Then apply for a practising certificate if you need one	mySRA	Separate fee	

180 days

exemption decision

3 years

English test validity

3 months

overseas police check

6 months

screening results

30 days

admission aim

Step order is our suggestion; the SRA's requirements are on pages 03 to 13. Overseas-only screening has no SRA fee, but your country may charge for its criminal record check. Checked 9 October 2026.

SQE Exemptions



An exemption means you do not sit an assessment because the SRA accepts that your qualification and experience already meet its standard. Exemptions only cover a **whole** assessment: all of SQE2, or all of FLK1 or FLK2. The SRA does not exempt you from part of one.

SQE1: plan to sit it

The SRA calls SQE1 exemptions “very rare”: only one has been granted since 2021. You would need to cover every area of SQE1 at the level of a day-one solicitor, in law not substantially different from English and Welsh law. Academic study alone, the LPC included, is not enough, and the SRA says every jurisdiction it has reviewed differs significantly.

SQE2: the realistic exemption

You need at least one of five practice rights: criminal litigation (including police station advice); civil litigation; property practice; wills, probate and administration; business organisations. You also need at least two years’ professional legal experience (or equivalent), covering all the SQE2 skills at level 3 of the SRA Threshold Standard.

Agreed or individual?

	Agreed exemption	Individual exemption
Who	Your title is on the SRA’s list for your jurisdiction, and you qualified through that jurisdiction’s full route	Your title is not on the list, or you cross-qualified into it
Evidence	Set out for your title in the SRA’s exemption finder	You show how your qualification and experience meet the SQE2 standard (page 07)
Decision	Within 180 days; the SRA says likely much sooner	Within 180 days of a complete application
Fee	£265 for one or both SQE exemptions. One application cannot be reused later for the other assessment	

Important: three things block any exemption

You cannot be exempt from an assessment you have **failed** (SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations, reg 3.3), or one you have sat and are **awaiting results** for, and you must **already be admitted** in the jurisdiction you rely on. So apply before you try the assessment, not after.

Sources: SRA SQE exemptions; Applying for an SQE1 exemption; Applying for an SQE2 exemption; Apply for an SQE agreed exemption; Qualified lawyers regulations. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Which Route is Yours?

Run the tree for SQE2. Our method, built on the SRA's exemption rules (pages 05 and 07). SQE1 exemptions are so rare that we assume you will sit SQE1.



Special cases

If you are...	What the SRA says
A qualified lawyer with the LPC	You cannot mix the SQE and LPC routes, and the LPC gives no agreed SQE1 exemption. The LPC route stays open until 31 December 2032
A Swiss lawyer	There is a separate route through an aptitude test or an adaptation period
A barrister or CILEX lawyer in England and Wales	You can apply for an individual SQE2 exemption on your practice rights and experience (a barrister needs a full practising certificate)
From a jurisdiction in unrest	Contact the SRA's Education team: alternative documents can be accepted

Building your exemption application

For an agreed exemption, follow the evidence list for your title. For an individual one, the SRA assesses what **you** have done, not what your qualification covers in theory. Here is what it asks for, and how it decides.

Stage	What happens
Before you apply	Open a mySRA account. In "My profile", add each jurisdiction with your professional title and the date you qualified
Apply	"Start new applications", then "Apply for qualified lawyer exemption from the SQE assessments". Pay £265
Stage 1: review	The SRA asks for anything missing. If you cannot provide it, the application is rejected
Stage 2: assessment	By the SRA and, where applicable, an external assessor
Stage 3: decision	Within 180 days of a fully completed application. If refused, you can ask for a review within 28 days, or apply again with new evidence

Evidence for each area

Professional legal assessments you passed; redacted work samples such as attendance notes or client letters; and detailed supervisor references. For each example, explain the scenario, the steps you took and the advice you gave (citing the legislation or case law and the skills used), and the outcome.

References that count

One for each period of experience, written for this application, dated within the last three months, on letterhead. The referee supervised you directly, gives dates and weekly hours, has read your application and evidence, and proves their own qualification.

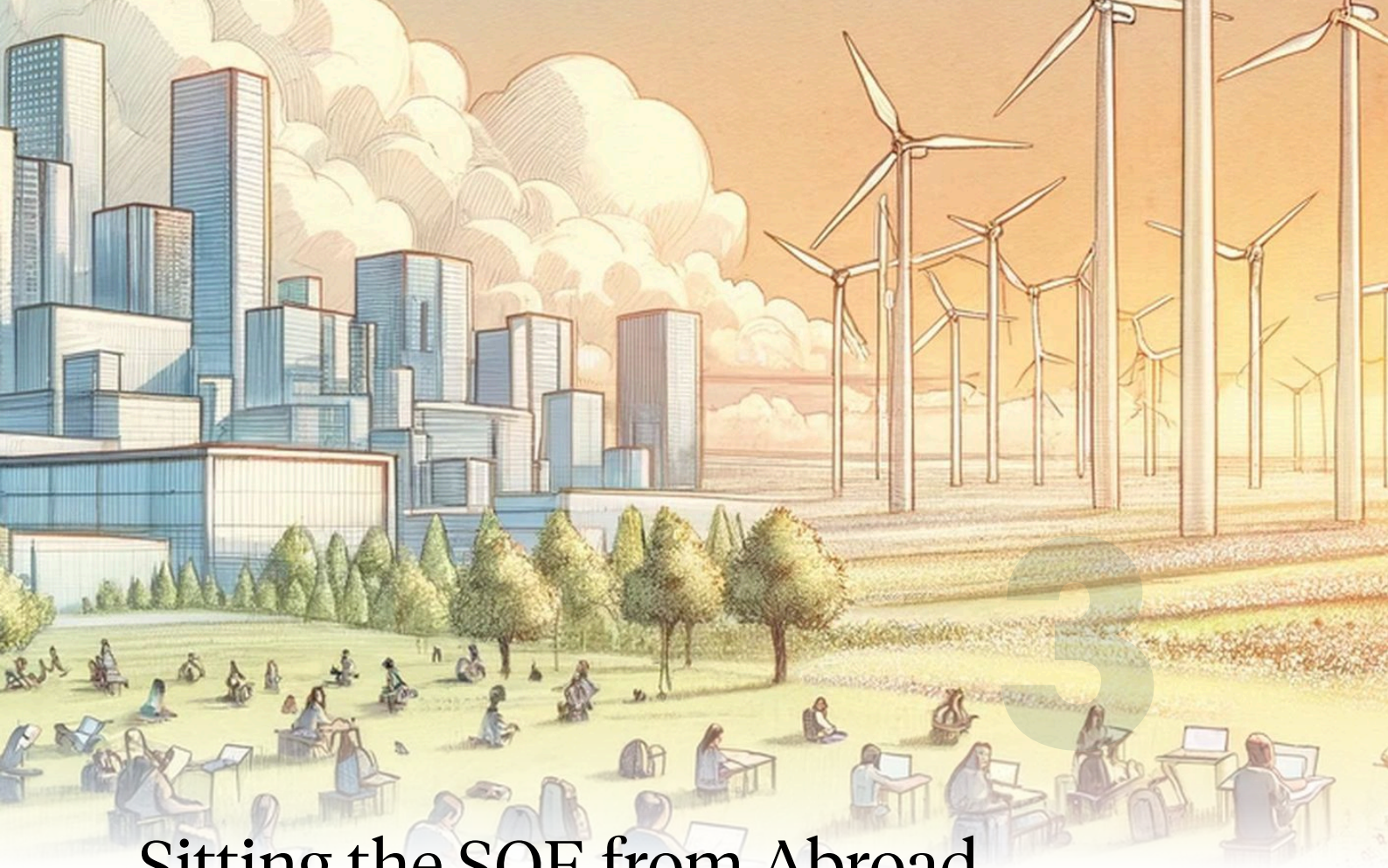
Why the SRA rejects applications

- Sections left incomplete
- No work samples, or references that do not back them up
- Duplicated text or "see above" instead of evidence for each area
- AI-written explanations "that are not individual to you"
- Asking the SRA to accept partial equivalence
- Relying on an academic qualification without post-qualification practice
- Pre-qualification experience, unless it was a mandatory part of qualifying

Find your title first. The SRA's exemption finder lists the qualifications it has assessed and the evidence each one needs. FQPS keeps a summary by jurisdiction at fyps.co.uk/sqe2-exemption-finder-by-jurisdiction; the SRA's list is the one that counts.

Translations: any document not in English needs a certified translation. The SRA will not accept AI-generated or self-certified translations.

Sources: SRA Applying for an SQE1 exemption; Applying for an SQE2 exemption; SQE exemptions: questions and answers. Accessed 9 October 2026.



Sitting the SQE from Abroad

SQE1 and the SQE2 written tests run at Pearson VUE centres across the UK and in many countries. The SQE2 orals do not: they are in person in England and Wales. Four steps, in this order.

1

Register

Open an SQE account and upload government photo ID. A passport is easiest; digital IDs are not accepted. Your name must match your ID exactly.

2

Confirm exemptions

Enter your SRA ID in the exemptions form. If you are exempt from SQE2, you will only be offered SQE1.

3

Book

SQE1: FLK1 and FLK2 in the same window, one payment of £2,006. SQE2: written and oral together, £3,086. Fees are VAT exempt.

4

Sit

Start times vary at international centres: check yours. SQE2 orals are in Birmingham, Cardiff, London or Manchester.

Where you cannot sit

The SQE2 written tests are not offered in the USA, Canada, New Zealand, or Central and South America. No SQE assessment is offered in Ukraine, Belarus or Russia. Plan travel for these, and for every SQE2 oral.

Book by seat reservation

Most candidates book through a short online seat reservation form, sent months ahead. Seats go in the order forms arrive.

Do the tasks early

Before you can book: the diversity survey, your exemption number and any reasonable adjustments, all in your SQE account. You can do them in advance.

Sources: SQE website: ID, exemptions, cost, locations, booking and dates pages. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Dates and Rules, 2026 to 2027

The sittings published on the SQE website on 9 October 2026. Seat reservation for SQE1 January 2027 closed on 24 September 2026. "Law cut-off" is the last date of law and practice examined. TBC means not yet published.

Sitting	Assessment dates	Booking closes	Law cut-off	Results
SQE1 January 2027	FLK1 11 to 15 Jan; FLK2 18 to 22 Jan 2027	23 Nov 2026	11 Sep 2026	9 Mar 2027
SQE1 July 2027	FLK1 12 to 16 Jul; FLK2 19 to 23 Jul 2027	TBC	12 Mar 2027	TBC
SQE2 January 2027	Oral 26 to 29 Jan; written 2 to 4 Feb 2027	4 Dec 2026	26 Sep 2026	20 May 2027
SQE2 April 2027	From 20 Apr 2027 (written and oral sittings to 14 May)	TBC	20 Dec 2026	TBC
SQE2 July 2027	Oral 27 to 30 Jul; written 3 to 5 Aug 2027	TBC	27 Mar 2027	TBC

The rules that shape your plan

3

attempts at each part

FLK1, FLK2 and SQE2 each. After three fails of one part, you wait until your six-year window ends, and earlier passes do not carry forward.

6

years to pass everything

From the first day of your first SQE assessment.

1 → 2

SQE1 before SQE2

You can only book and sit SQE2 after passing SQE1, unless the SRA has exempted you from the whole of SQE1.

Results take time

About 5 to 6 weeks after SQE1 and 14 to 18 weeks after SQE2. You can only book a resit once you have the result of the last attempt.

Do not double up

Do not book an assessment while you are applying for an exemption from it. If the exemption comes through after you book, the normal cancellation rules apply.

SQE1 while you wait

You can sit SQE1 while the SRA decides on your SQE2 exemption. The SQE1 result does not affect that decision.

Resit fees

From September 2026: £1,003 for one FLK part, £2,006 for both, £3,086 for SQE2.

Sources: SQE website, Dates and booking windows; Results and resits; Resits; Exemptions; How much does the SQE cost? SRA, SQE exemptions: questions and answers. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Degree and English



Two checks that many qualified lawyers leave too late. Both are done in mySRA, and both can be started long before your SQE results.

Your degree

You need a degree in any subject, or an equivalent qualification or experience. An overseas degree counts if it is shown to be equivalent to a UK degree, as does a qualification at level 6 or above of the European Qualifications Framework. Work experience can be accepted case by case.

How the check works: in mySRA, apply to check that your qualification or work experience is equivalent to a degree. The SRA's provider, Atlantic Data, compares it with a UK level 6 qualification. You pay Atlantic Data directly: £54.84 for an international degree, £36 for a UK or Irish one. It aims to answer within 10 working days, longer for non-UK degrees. Your university may charge to verify it.

English or Welsh

Every solicitor must show proficiency in English or Welsh. Most do it by passing SQE2. If you are **exempt from SQE2**, you must show it before you apply for admission, through the English or Welsh Language Assessment application in your mySRA qualification checklist, in one of two ways.

Route	What the SRA accepts
Your legal qualification	The same qualification that gained your SQE2 exemption, if it was assessed in English or Welsh
IELTS (Academic) UKVI	7.5 overall. Non-UKVI certificates are not accepted
Pearson PTE (Academic) UKVI	71 overall
LanguageCert (Academic SELT)	80 overall
Trinity College London ISE III	Distinction in reading, listening and writing; Merit in speaking

Important: two easy mistakes

A test certificate must be from a Home Office approved provider and no more than **three years** old when you rely on it for admission. And the degree check does not prove your English: the SRA says its result cannot be used as language evidence.

Sources: SRA Degree and equivalent qualifications explained; Checking and validate your degree; English or Welsh language proficiency; Qualified lawyers regulations. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Character and Suitability



The SRA will only admit you if it is satisfied as to your character and suitability (Solicitors Act 1974, s.3). You tell it about any issue when you **apply for admission**, not when you start studying, and the duty continues: anything new before your admission date must be reported too.

What you must disclose

Category	Examples from the SRA
Criminal conduct	Convictions and cautions, including spent ones unless protected, and any current charges
Integrity and independence	Dishonest, violent, threatening or harassing behaviour; discrimination; misusing a position of trust
Assessment offences	Deliberate plagiarism or cheating, not mistakes such as wrong referencing
Financial conduct	Insolvency, a county court judgment, six or more missed consecutive payments, possession proceedings
Regulatory findings	Disciplinary findings by any regulator, including your home bar or law society; false information to a regulator
Health	Only where a condition is not being managed and could affect your practice or regulatory duties

Allow time

The SRA aims to admit within 30 days, but a disclosed issue can take up to six months, and an overseas criminal record check adds time too. Build both into your plan.

Early assessment

Worried about an issue? You can ask for a voluntary early assessment, after screening. No fee; the SRA aims to decide within 120 days. It is closed from 1 August to 31 October 2026, and the SRA is not bound by it later.

Disclose, do not hide. The SRA can admit you with conditions where risks can be managed. Giving false or misleading information to a regulator is itself a matter it looks at.

Sources: SRA What is character and suitability?; Applying for an early assessment of character and suitability; Admission dates; Admission to the roll and related fees; Solicitors Act 1974, s.3. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Screening: Which Checks?

You must finish background screening before you apply for admission. Which checks you need depends on where you lived **continuously for at least 12 months** in the five years before you apply, even if only part of that year falls inside the five years.

UK only

You lived in the UK for a 12-month stretch, and nowhere else for one

- Identity check, usually face to face
- Financial checks
- A standard DBS check
- A solicitor on the roll verifies your documents

£34

Overseas only

You lived abroad for a 12-month stretch, and not in the UK for one

- Proof of name and current address
- A criminal record check from each such country
- No UK DBS check
- SRA staff review the documents

No SRA fee

Both

You lived in the UK and abroad, each for a 12-month stretch

- Overseas criminal record checks first
- Then the full UK checks, DBS included
- Both sets must be in date

£34

Three cases, based on the SRA's own examples

Where the applicant lived (applying 1 June 2026)	Checks needed
UK, 30 Sep 2020 to 30 Sep 2021; then Italy to the application	UK screening and an Italian check: the UK year counts though only four months fall within the five years
China, 1997 to 20 Jun 2025; then the UK to the application	Overseas only: proof of name and address and a Chinese check; the UK stay is under 12 months
UK, then France for under a year, the UK again, France again for about five months	UK screening only: neither stay in France reached 12 continuous months

Timing

An overseas criminal record check must be no more than **three months** old when you submit screening. Screening results must be no more than **six months** old when you apply for admission, or you screen again.

Documents

Official translations for anything not in English, not by you, friends or family; the translator signs, dates and states their qualification. Where a country issues no check (Hong Kong and South Korea, for example), the SRA accepts a statutory declaration.

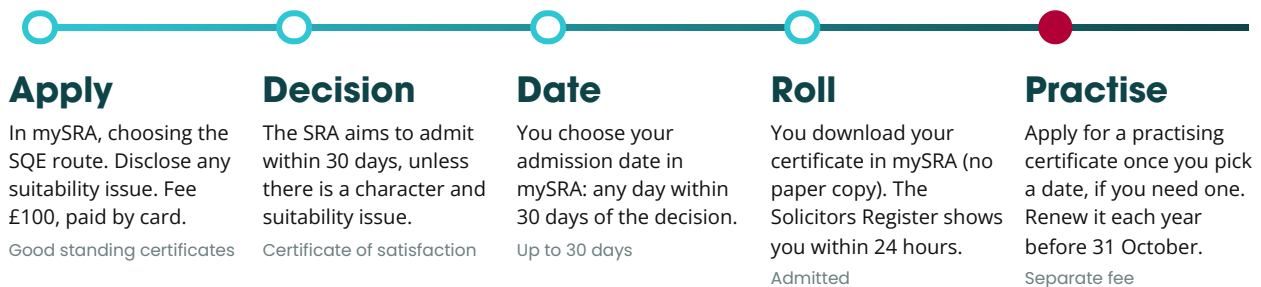
How to apply: in mySRA, start a new application, choose "Apply for screening" and answer the two questions on where you lived. For UK checks, Atlantic Data emails you a link within five working days. Use your full legal name, exactly as on your ID.

Source: SRA, Apply for screening (updated 17 July 2026), including its three examples. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Admission and After



Once you have your SQE results or exemptions, your degree check, any English evidence and in-date screening, you can apply to be admitted. Admission puts your name on the roll; a practising certificate then lets you act as a solicitor.



Certificates of good standing

When you apply for admission, the SRA checks that your qualification gives you the right to practise. Provide a certificate of good standing from your regulator, law society or bar, and one from **each** jurisdiction if you are qualified in more than one.

Admitted is not practising

Under the Solicitors Act 1974, s.1, you can act as a solicitor only if you are admitted, your name is on the roll, and you hold a practising certificate in force.

Working overseas?

Give your real practising address in mySRA, not your employer's head office. If you will practise abroad, the SRA points you to its Overseas and Cross-border Practice Rules.

Another way in

Not ready to qualify? A foreign lawyer from a suitably regulated profession can apply to the SRA's register of foreign lawyers (RFL). It is a separate register, not the roll of solicitors.

The ceremony

On your admission day the SRA issues your certificate. The Law Society will invite you to book a place at an admission ceremony.

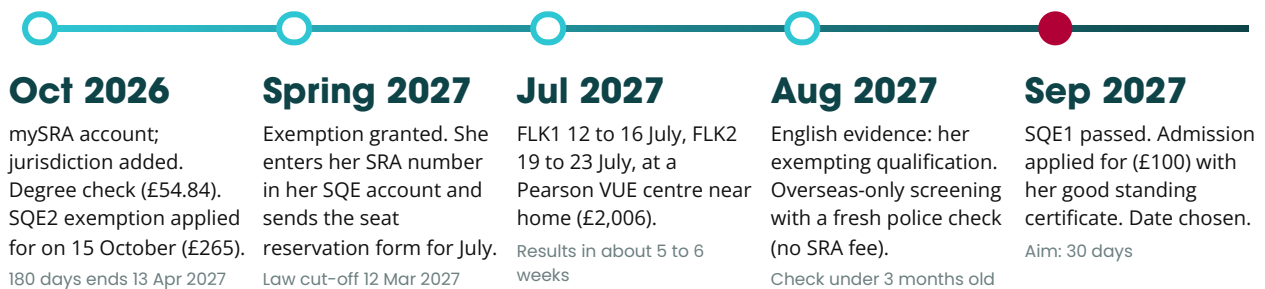
Sources: SRA Admission to the roll and related fees; Admission dates; What to expect before and after admission; Applying for an SQE2 exemption; SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations, regs 5.1, 5.3, 6.2, 6.5 and 8.2; Solicitors Act 1974, ss.1 and 3. Accessed 9 October 2026.

Worked Examples



An invented lawyer, planning from abroad in October 2026. Dates come from the SQE website; the order is our method.

The facts: Amara was admitted as an advocate in 2018 in a jurisdiction whose title has an **agreed SQE2 exemption**; she qualified through its full route, which is taught and assessed in English. She has always lived there. She has a law degree. She wants to be admitted in England and Wales as soon as she can.



Why not January 2027?

The seat reservation forms for SQE1 January 2027 went out in September 2026, with a deadline of 24 September. Starting in October, July 2027 is the realistic first sitting.

Why screen in August?

Screening must be no more than six months old when she applies for admission, and her police check no more than three months old when she submits screening. Too early, and it expires.

If the exemption is refused

She sits SQE2 as well, after passing SQE1: SQE2 October 2027 starts on 28 October. She can apply again only with new evidence.

If she had failed FLK2

No FLK2 exemption is possible after a fail. Having passed FLK1, she would resit FLK2 alone (£1,003) once she had her results.

Her earliest admission: SQE1 results about 5 to 6 weeks after 23 July, then up to 30 days for the SRA's decision, then a date of her choice within 30 days. Every other step is done before the results arrive.

Worked example: what it costs

SRA and SQE fees only, from September 2026, for a first-time pass. Two invented lawyers: Amara (page 14) and Tomas, who has no exemption and has lived in London for three years.

Fee	Paid to	Amara (SQE2 exempt)	Tomas (no exemption)
Degree check, international degree	Atlantic Data	£54.84	£54.84
Exemption application	SRA	£265.00	none
SQE1 (FLK1 £1,003 + FLK2 £1,003)	SQE	£2,006.00	£2,006.00
SQE2	SQE	exempt	£3,086.00
Screening	SRA	£0 (overseas only)	£34.00 (UK)
Admission	SRA	£100.00	£100.00
Total		£2,425.84	£5,280.84

The arithmetic: Amara: 54.84 + 265 + 2,006 + 0 + 100 = **£2,425.84**. Tomas: 54.84 + 2,006 + 3,086 + 34 + 100 = **£5,280.84**. The exemption saves Amara £3,086 in SQE2 fees for a £265 application, plus any travel to England or Wales for the SQE2 orals.

Not in the totals

Other people's fees

Your university's fee to verify your degree; a police check abroad; a language test if you need one; certified translations; certificates of good standing.

After admission

A practising certificate has its own fee, and is renewed each year. Check the current figure with the SRA when you apply.

Resits

£1,003 for one FLK part, £2,006 for both, £3,086 for SQE2. A first-time pass is the cheapest route.

Travel and preparation

Travel to an SQE2 oral venue (Birmingham, Cardiff, London or Manchester), and any course or materials you choose.

Employer paying? Our free guide *How to Get Your SQE Funded by Your Employer* has a business case and a funding agreement checklist, at fqps.co.uk/downloads-tools.

Eight quick cases

Invented facts. Decide first, then read the answer. Each one applies a rule from this guide.

1 Lena failed FLK2 in July 2026. Her practice covers business law, so she asks for an FLK2 exemption.

Answer. Refused: the SRA will not exempt you from a part you have failed (reg 3.3). If she passed FLK1, she resits FLK2 alone (£1,003); it counts towards her three attempts.

2 Omar booked SQE2 for January 2027, then applied for an SQE2 exemption.

Answer. The SQE website says not to book an assessment while applying for an exemption from it. If the exemption comes after booking, normal cancellation rules apply.

3 Priya lived in the UK from September 2020 to September 2021, then in Italy. She applies for screening in June 2026.

Answer. UK screening (£34) and an Italian criminal record check. Her UK year counts, though only part of it falls in the five years: the SRA's own example.

4 Kwame, exempt from SQE2, has an IELTS General Training certificate scoring 8.0, taken two years ago.

Answer. Not accepted: the SRA needs IELTS Academic UKVI at 7.5 or a listed equivalent. If his exempting qualification was assessed in English, he can rely on that instead.

5 Sofia qualified in one country, then cross-qualified into another whose title has an agreed SQE2 exemption.

Answer. No agreed exemption: it is only for lawyers who qualified through that jurisdiction's full route. She can still apply for an individual one.

6 Daniel finished screening in January 2027 and applies for admission in September 2027.

Answer. Too late: screening results must be no more than six months old when he applies. He must apply for screening again first.

7 Hana is a Scottish solicitor who qualified through the full Scottish route.

Answer. An agreed SQE2 exemption: she still applies in mySRA, with no fee, and the SRA decides within 30 days. She sits SQE1 unless she wins an individual SQE1 exemption.

8 Marco is a solicitor of the Republic of Ireland.

Answer. No SQE and no qualifying work experience. He needs a degree or equivalent, screening and the character and suitability check, and certificates of good standing from every jurisdiction where he is admitted.

Route Traps

Ten ways qualified lawyers lose months, or money, on the way to admission.

1. Sitting first, asking later

Once you fail an assessment, or sit it and await results, no exemption from it is possible. Apply first.

2. Counting on an SQE1 exemption

One granted since 2021. Plan and prepare to sit SQE1.

3. Assuming you need QWE

Qualified lawyers do not need two years' qualifying work experience. Do not delay for it.

4. Booking and applying at once

Do not book an assessment you are seeking an exemption from: cancellation rules apply if it is granted.

5. Missing the seat reservation

Seats are reserved months ahead. For January 2027 SQE1 the form was due on 24 September 2026.

6. The wrong English test

Only UKVI or approved SELT certificates at the SRA's scores, no more than three years old.

7. Screening too early

Results last six months. Time them for your admission application, not your exam.

8. A stale police check

An overseas check must be under three months old when you submit screening.

9. Generic evidence

"See above", copied text, AI-written answers, references that do not match your samples: all grounds for rejection.

10. Admitted, then practising

Being on the roll is not enough to act as a solicitor. You also need a practising certificate in force.

Before every step, ask three questions

1

Does this step close a door, such as an exemption?

2

What expires, and when do I need it to be valid?

3

Which documents need a certified translation?

Test yourself

Cover the answers and say yours out loud. Every answer is on an earlier page.

1 Who counts as a qualified lawyer for the SRA?

Answer. Someone with a professional legal qualification that confers rights to practise in England and Wales or in another jurisdiction.

2 Which admission requirement does a qualified lawyer not have to meet?

Answer. Qualifying work experience. The degree, the SQE (or exemptions), character and suitability and English or Welsh all still apply.

3 Can the SRA exempt you from the Property part of SQE2?

Answer. No. Exemptions cover the whole of SQE2, or the whole of FLK1 or FLK2, never part of one.

4 What does an SQE2 exemption need, in short?

Answer. At least one of five practice rights, at least two years' professional legal experience, all the SQE2 skills, level 3 of the Threshold Standard, and no fail or pending SQE2 result.

5 What is the fee for an exemption application, and how long can a decision take?

Answer. £265 for one or both. Up to 180 days from a complete application; agreed ones are likely sooner.

6 Can you sit SQE1 while waiting for an SQE2 exemption decision?

Answer. Yes. The SQE1 result does not affect the decision. If the exemption is refused, you must pass SQE1 before sitting SQE2.

7 Where are the SQE2 orals held?

Answer. In person in England and Wales: Birmingham, Cardiff, London and Manchester.

8 You are SQE2 exempt. Name two ways to prove your English.

Answer. The same qualification that gained the exemption, if assessed in English or Welsh; or an approved test, such as IELTS Academic UKVI at 7.5, under three years old.

9 You lived abroad for the last ten years. Which screening checks apply?

Answer. Overseas only: proof of name and address and a criminal record check from that country. No DBS check and no SRA fee.

10 What three things must be true before you can act as a solicitor?

Answer. You are admitted, your name is on the roll, and you hold a practising certificate in force (Solicitors Act 1974, s.1).

Start the paperwork now

The degree check, the exemption and your certificates do not depend on your exam.

Open mySRA, add your jurisdictions and start the degree check this month. Ask your home regulator how long a certificate of good standing takes, and when it would go out of date.

Build your evidence file as you work

An individual exemption is won on specific, recent evidence.

Keep redacted samples of real work in each SQE2 practice area. Ask supervisors early: references must be dated within three months of your application.

Plan backwards from admission

Pick the month you want to be admitted, then place each step.

Screening no more than six months before you apply for admission; a police check no more than three months before screening; SQE results before both. Write the dates down.

Study English law, not your own

The SRA says every jurisdiction it has reviewed differs significantly from English and Welsh law.

Even in a common law system, revise SQE1 from the specification, not from memory. Check the law cut-off for your sitting on page 09.

Bonus Tip - Practise in the real format

SQE1 is a multiple-choice test, and you may sit it far from home.

Our full-length SQE1 mocks in the 2027 format (2 x 85 questions) let you rehearse timing before you book. They are SQE1 practice only: use the SRA's guidance for every step in this guide.

Your Route Checklist

Tick a line only when it is done, not when it is planned. In this order, it is the whole route.

Start

- ☐ I am admitted in my home jurisdiction, with practice rights (page 03)
- ☐ I have a mySRA account with every jurisdiction, title and date added (page 07)
- ☐ My degree check is submitted or done (page 10)

Exemptions

- ☐ I have run the decision tree and checked the SRA's exemption finder (page 06)
- ☐ I have not sat, or failed, any part I want to be exempt from (page 05)
- ☐ My evidence, references and certified translations are ready (page 07)

The SQE

- ☐ I have an SQE account, photo ID uploaded and my SRA number entered (page 08)
- ☐ I know my sitting, its seat reservation date and its law cut-off (page 09)
- ☐ I have checked where I can sit, and planned travel for any SQE2 orals (page 08)

Before admission

- ☐ If SQE2 exempt: my English evidence is accepted (page 10)
- ☐ I know my screening route and its timing (page 12)
- ☐ I have disclosed anything relevant to character and suitability (page 11)

Admission

- ☐ I have good standing certificates from every jurisdiction (page 13)
- ☐ I have applied for admission and picked a date within 30 days (page 13)
- ☐ I have a practising certificate, if I will act as a solicitor (page 13)

Make the route a plan

STEP 1

Check your title

Run the tree on page 06 and look up your title in the SRA's exemption finder.

STEP 3

Pick your sitting

Its seat reservation date and law cut-off are on page 09.

STEP 5

Rehearse the real thing

Full-length SQE1 mocks in the 2027 format (2 x 85 questions). Options and prices: fqps.co.uk/pricing.

STEP 2

Start the paperwork

mySRA account, degree check and any exemption application, before you book.

STEP 4

Prepare for SQE1

English law, in the exam's format, with timed practice.

STEP 6

Questions?

Email support@fqps.co.uk and a person will answer.

FQPS Academy. Full-length SQE1 mocks in the 2027 format (2 x 85 questions).

Create your account

prep.fqps.co.uk

Sign up



Supporting - candidates

We are committed to the success and well-being of every student.



The route has many forms but only one order. Write your dates on the checklist on page 20, and keep a copy of every document you send the SRA.

A question about qualifying from abroad or which plan fits you? Write to us.

support@fqps.co.uk



Prepare for SQE1 and
SQE2 with our SQE
courses.



Practice questions, full-length
SQE1 mocks in the 2027 format (2
x 85 questions) and free guides like
this one, online, whether you're in
the UK or abroad.



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