

SQE exemptions: questions and answers

Exemption from the SQE assessments is only available to qualified lawyers. To help explain all your options we have put together these questions and answers.

General questions about SQE exemptions

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If my application is refused can I make another application for exemption?

Yes, but you would need to provide new evidence and information than in your previous application.

Can I sit SQE1 while awaiting an SQE2 exemption decision?

Yes, if you are ready to sit SQE1 you can do this alongside making your exemption application. Any results from this exam will not affect the decision.

And if the exemption is not granted you will need to have passed SQE1 before you are allowed to sit SQE2.

Is there a time limit on when I have to sit any additional assessments if I have an exemption?

No, there is no time limit. Please see the SQE assessment website for more on the [exam dates](https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/timings) [\[https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/timings\]](https://sqa.sra.org.uk/about-sqa/what-is-the-sqa/timings).

SQE1 exemptions

Can I rely on pre-qualification experience to demonstrate the SQE1 competences?

No, pre-qualification experience is below the [threshold standard](https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/) [\[https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/\]](https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/) of a newly qualified solicitor.



SQE2 exemptions

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I have booked a place on the SQE1 assessment before my SQE2 exemption has been approved. Do I need to do anything?

Not at this point. If you get an exemption, you will need to confirm this in your [SQE account](https://sqa.org.uk/registering-and-booking/exemptions) [\[https://sqa.org.uk/registering-and-booking/exemptions\]](https://sqa.org.uk/registering-and-booking/exemptions).

Can I rely on pre-qualification experience as part of my two years' work experience for SQE2 exemption?

No, pre-qualification experience is completed below the [threshold standard](https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/) [\[https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/\]](https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/threshold-standard/) of a newly qualified solicitor.

I am already qualified as a lawyer in England and Wales. Can I apply for an exemption from SQE2?

We accept applications from the following qualified lawyers in England and Wales:

- Barrister with a full practising certificate
- Chartered Accountants with probate practice rights
- Chartered Legal Executive
- CILEX Practitioner
- Cost Lawyer
- Licensed Conveyancer
- Notaries
- Patent Attorney
- Trade Mark Attorney

Being eligible to apply does not mean that an SQE2 exemption will automatically be granted. We will consider each application on an individual basis.

Your application must demonstrate that your legal qualification and/or experience matches the content and standard of the SQE2 assessment.

To do this, you must have at least one of these practice rights:

- Criminal litigation (including advising clients at the police station)
- Civil litigation - referred to as dispute resolution on the application form



- Property practice
- Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice
- Business organisations, rules and procedures.

These practice rights represent the areas in which the SQE2 assessment tests candidates' practical legal skills. Therefore, you need to have at least one of these to demonstrate that your qualification and/or your post-qualification experience matches the content and the standard of the assessment.

If you have some but not all the practice rights listed above, you will need to fill section 8 of the application form. You will need to provide specific scenario-based examples, supported by one or two samples of your work and references from your supervisor.

We recommend giving one or two examples. You can do this by:

- explaining the scenario
- explaining the steps taken by you and advice given to the client (your involvement) with reference to each legislation/case law and the skills you demonstrated; and
- explaining the outcome.

The above should then be cross-referenced with relevant supporting work samples.

You should provide a reference from a supervisor and or peer corroborating the experience/examples put forward. We may not be able to grant an exemption without a reference. This is an important part in the application process as it confirms the information you have provided and that you have the required level of skills we are assessing.

You should ask your referee(s) to confirm they have:

- read your application
- reviewed any supporting work samples
- confirmed that it is your work, or highlight your involvement in the work sample.

We require proof of your referee(s) professional qualification, eg an admission certificate or a certificate of good standing.

To submit an application, please [read and follow this guidance](https://referral.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/sqe-exemptions/individual-sqe-assessment-exemption/#sqe2) [https://referral.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/sqe-exemptions/individual-sqe-assessment-exemption/#sqe2].