

News release

Consultation on minor changes to Principles for Qualified Lawyers

26 March 2020

We are [consulting on minor changes to exemptions for qualified lawyers](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/], who are seeking admission through the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) once it is introduced in Autumn 2021, subject to Legal Services Board approval.

Some qualified lawyers – lawyers who have qualified in a jurisdiction outside England and Wales or qualified as a barrister - depending on their level of experience and knowledge, may be able to get either a full or partial exemption from taking the SQE2 assessment.

The revisions provide assurances that qualified lawyers who may be exempt from all or part of the SQE2 assessment have the necessary language knowledge to practise as a solicitor.

The proposed changes include:

- removing the requirements for qualified lawyers seeking an exemption from the SQE to be from [a jurisdiction the SRA recognises](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/glts/recognised-jurisdictions/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/qualified-lawyers/glts/recognised-jurisdictions/]. The SRA's focus will be on the qualification and experience of the individual applicant.
- making clear that qualified lawyers can demonstrate their language knowledge in either Welsh or English.
- clarifying that qualified lawyers who are partially exempt as well as fully exempt from the SQE2 must demonstrate their English or Welsh language knowledge through a range of approaches.

The principles also apply to lawyers regulated by another approved legal services regulator in England and Wales, such as chartered legal executives, licenced conveyancers or barristers.

Julie Brannan, SRA Director of Education and Training said:

The public needs to be able to trust that a solicitor, wherever they have trained, has the right skills, knowledge and competence to practise. Our proposed revisions mean that we will be in the right place to gain those assurances for qualified lawyers, ready for the planned implementation of the SQE in 2021.

[The consultation \[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/) runs until 8 May 2020.