

Meeting our standards for good qualifying work experience (non SRA-regulated organisations)

Updated 3 January 2025

This information will help organisations that we do not regulate (for example in-house legal departments, university law clinics or voluntary or charitable organisations such as Citizens Advice or law centres) offer a good qualifying work experience (QWE) placement. We have issued separate guidance for organisations we regulate.

This information will help you understand how to:

- provide the best possible QWE to individuals
- maximise the benefits of QWE to your organisation

[SRA-regulated firms? Read our guidance for firms](#)

[\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/meeting-standards-good-qualifying-work-experience/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/meeting-standards-good-qualifying-work-experience/)
[Open all \[#\]](#)

What is QWE?

Individuals wishing to be admitted as a solicitor, once the [Solicitors Qualifying Examination](#) [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/) (SQE) is introduced, need to complete QWE. This is a work placement which meets the following criteria:

- It involves [experience of providing legal services](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/qualifying-work-experience-employers/) [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/qualifying-work-experience-employers/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/qualifying-work-experience-employers/) which enables an individual to develop some or all of the competences outlined in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/) [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/), including professionalism and ethics.
- It may be obtained in England or Wales or overseas.
- In total it must be at least two years working full time or the equivalent on a part time basis.
- It can be obtained in up to four separate organisations providing legal services. There is no minimum or maximum prescribed length for each individual placement.
- It is confirmed by a solicitor inside the organisation where the placement took place. If a solicitor is not available within the organisation, QWE can be confirmed by a solicitor working outside



the organisation where the placement took place who has direct experience of the work of the individual and who has:

- Reviewed their work during the relevant period of work experience.
- Received feedback from the person or persons supervising their work
- It can be obtained in an organisation we do not regulate.
- It can be obtained in a [current](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/using-experience-from-your-current-job-or-role-as-qualifying-work-experience/) or a [previous](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/using-past-jobs-or-roles-as-qualifying-work-experience/) role.

Candidates can now [record their qualifying work experience with us](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/registering-qualifying-work-experience/).

What does good QWE look like?

Any experience that meets these conditions counts as QWE. We expect organisations to take reasonable steps to offer good QWE. Although we do not regulate the organisation, we regulate all solicitors that works within it and may take action if our requirements are not met.

The points below set out our expected standard for a good QWE placement. You should consider these in the context of your own organisation.

Good quality QWE should provide opportunities for individuals to:

- carry out diverse and varied work that enables them to gain exposure to a wide range of competences assessed in [SQE2](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/archive/sqe2-assessment-specification/). A placement that mostly offers repetitive and limited administrative tasks and legal transactions is unlikely to help:
 - individuals develop the specified competences or provide them with the best chance of passing SQE2
 - support your business by developing future employees with broad skills and knowledge.
- regularly reflect on their performance and identify both strengths and areas of development. In a student law clinic for example, feedback could be provided by a tutor. Our [continuing competence resources](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/continuing-competence/reflect-identify/) outline approaches to reflection that might be useful for you or individuals doing their QWE.
- be supported in their work experience. You should discuss from the outset with individuals doing QWE what your expectations are as an organisation, and what they expect from their placement. Being



aware of their career aspirations can help you understand how best to support them.

- develop their professionalism and gain exposure to ethical issues. If appropriate, there should be opportunities for individuals to develop an awareness of standard procedures in relation to, for example:
 - conflicts of interest
 - anti-money laundering checks
 - information security.
- learn from experienced solicitor-role models in your organisation or outside (for example external solicitors you instruct) by seeing how they behave ethically and in accordance with the [Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/) in difficult cases.
- be effectively supervised during the placement. You should be clear from the outset:
 - who is responsible for supervising individuals doing QWE
 - how the supervisor will satisfy themselves about the quality of individuals' work
 - how they will provide formative feedback
 - how they will check that the individual is getting access to a proper range of tasks.
- solicitors supervising QWE in an organisation we do not regulate should consider how they can comply with requirements in the Code of Conduct to:
 - supervise effectively
 - not to abuse your position by taking unfair advantage of an individual.
- be supported in collating any relevant evidence and recording their QWE throughout their placement. If your organisation does not have its own system or process, the individual can use our [training template](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/qwe-training-template/).
- have their placement confirmed by a solicitor of England and Wales. You should make who this is clear to individuals from the outset of their QWE placement. If this changes, you should inform the individual and identify where possible another solicitor who can confirm their experience. It is important to remember that the solicitor confirming the experience is not assessing the individual's competence.
- If you are a confirming [solicitor](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/glossary/#solicitor) working outside the organisation where the placement took place, you must have direct experience of the individual's work and, before confirming, have:
 - reviewed the individual's work during the relevant period of work experience. You can do this by reviewing the trainees training diary or portfolio.

- received feedback from the person or persons supervising their work.

All solicitors offering or confirming QWE should consider whether they are complying with our [Principles](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/) and Code of Conduct to act honestly, fairly at all times and not to abuse your position by taking unfair advantage of an individual. For example, refusing to confirm QWE that meets our criteria is a clear breach of our Principles and Code of Conduct.