

Qualifying law degree or Common Professional Examination

September 2021

You can only qualify through this route if you meet our [transitional requirements](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/students/sqe/transitional-arrangements/). [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/students/sqe/transitional-arrangements/] If you do not meet these, you will need to qualify under the [SQE](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/].

SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations

The SRA has a statutory duty to make sure that those who are admitted as solicitors have the knowledge and skills necessary for practice. For those qualifying under the old system, we specify the education and training that an individual must complete in rule 3A of the [Authorisation of Individuals Regulations](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/].

Our rules are supported by:

- [Academic Stage Handbook \(PDF 44 pages, 422KB\)](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf?version=4a1ac3) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf?version=4a1ac3]
- [Student Information Pack](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/student-information/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/student-information/]
- [Equivalent Means guidance](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/equivalent-means-information-pack/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/equivalent-means-information-pack/]

Our regulations refer to two key stages to complete to qualify as a solicitor under the old system:

- [the academic stage](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/] - meaning completion of a Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) or the Common Professional Exam (CPE), followed by the Legal Practice Course (LPC)
- [the vocational stage](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/]- meaning completion of a period of recognised training

Academic Stage Handbook

[The Academic Stage Handbook \(PDF 44 pages, 422K\)](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf] sets out the basic rules and guidance for those with an interest in providing or undertaking QLDs, ELDs and the CPE.

Academic awards

A QLD is an undergraduate law degree that is recognised by the SRA for the purpose of permitting graduates to proceed to the vocational stage of training under the old system. There are specific requirements regarding the subjects that you must study, the number of assessment attempts that are permitted, and also requirements relating to the amount of credits that must be allocated to the study of law on the degree. For their degree to be recognised as a QLD under the old system, a student must have accepted their offer by 21 September 2021 (inclusive) for courses to start no later than 31 December 2021.

Find out more about [the QLD and its requirement \(PDF 44 pages, 158 KB\)](#) [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/students/academic-stage/academic-stage-handbook.pdf?version=4a1ac3>], and [take a look at our register of approved QLDs](#) [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/qualifying-law-degree-providers/>].

The CPE is a course route is for people who have an undergraduate degree but not in law. It involves successfully completing the CPE / GDL. It is sometimes referred to as a conversion course. If you want to take the CPE for qualification under the old route, in most cases, you must have accepted an offer of a CPE by 1 September 2021. An ELD is a law degree that was recognised under the old system by the SRA for the purpose of permitting graduates to proceed to a period of recognised training, by combining the academic stage of education and training with the LPC. Take a look at [our register of approved ELDs](#) [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/exempting-law-degrees/>].

Joint regulation of the academic stage of education and training

The SRA and Bar Standards Board have made significant changes to their education and training requirements in recent years. We have agreed a Common Protocol to explain the impact of the changes on academic stage courses under the old system.

[Common Protocol on the Academic Stage of training](#) [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/>]