



## Education provider Q&A

8 December 2021

The LPC route of qualifying as a solicitor, consisting of an academic stage and a vocational stage, has now been replaced by the [Solicitors Qualifying Examination \(SQE\)](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/). [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/)

Candidates can only qualify through the LPC route if they meet our [transitional requirements](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/). [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/).

The SRA will no longer be involved in the approval or recognition of new QLD/CPE courses that start after 31 December 2021. Find out more on our position in the [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/). [\[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/common-protocol/) The information below is for existing providers or for those seeking to become a new LPC or PSC provider under the LPC route.

Organisations wishing to become authorised as a new LPC or PSC provider will need a strong business case, given that this route to admission has been replaced by the SQE.

## Remote proctoring

### [Can SRA authorised courses be taught and assessed remotely?](#)

Yes, but only where we have authorised a provider for this. We allow providers of the LPC, PSC, HRA and PSRAS courses to apply to us to offer remote teaching and assessment of their courses.

Students should check with providers to ask if they have been authorised to offer remote assessment on a permanent basis.

To offer remote assessment of a course providers must demonstrate to us that they have met our requirements.

## Qualifying law degree providers (QLD)

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### [How do I become an approved QLD provider?](#)

We are no longer taking applications for new QLD providers. This is because we will only validate QLDs and Exempting Law Degrees (ELDs)



where an offer was accepted by 21 September 2021 inclusive.

To make changes to existing validated courses, existing QLD providers, must self-certify compliance with the [Joint Statement](https://higher-rihts.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/academic-stage-joint-statement-bsb-law-society/) [<https://higher-rihts.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/academic-stage-joint-statement-bsb-law-society/>].

### **Is there an annual fee for being recognised as a QLD provider?**

There is an annual fee of £200 paid per academic year.

### **What is the process for accepting students from other organisations into a QLD programme?**

Organisations should apply their admissions policies and regulations in order to consider enrolling applicants and recognising academic credit achieved in previous study elsewhere or in another programme at their own organisation.

Organisations should also be satisfied that the applicant meets our transitional requirements if they are planning to qualify on the Legal Practice Course route.

### **What is the process for granting extensions of time to students?**

There is a time limit of six years for students to complete the QLD, irrespective of the normal time limit set by an organisation. This six years applies to all modes of attendance.

An organisation should apply their assessment policy and regulations to consider granting an extension of time if they receive medical or other evidence of exceptional circumstances. The grounds for granting any extension should be recorded in the relevant exam board minutes.

If an organisation receives medical or other evidence of exceptional circumstances that will lead to a student being unable to complete their programme of study within the time limit, they should apply their assessment policy and regulations in order to consider granting an extension of time. The grounds for granting any extension should be recorded in the relevant exam board minutes.



## **Common profession examination (CPE)/Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) provider**

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### **What is the difference between the CPE and a Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)?**

The Common Professional Examination (CPE) is the title given by regulatory bodies and is the professional name of the course. However, universities and training providers can call this a different academic title and many choose to use the title Graduate Diploma in Law.

### **How do I become an approved CPE provider?**

We no longer accept applications from potential new CPE providers. This is because students need to have accepted a CPE course offer by 1 September 2021 (in order to qualify under the Legal Practice Course route).

### **Is there an annual fee for being recognised as a CPE provider?**

There is an annual fee of £200 paid per academic year.

### **Can students obtain exemptions from the CPE, and if so, what is the process?**

Since the introduction of the SQE, students are no longer granted full or partial exemptions from the CPE. This is unless they fall under the transitional arrangements because they have accepted an offer to start the LPC or a period of recognised training.

## **Legal practice course (LPC) providers**

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### **Can students obtain exemptions from the LPC, and if so, what is the process?**

Graduates of either the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) or the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) are permitted exemptions from



attendance and assessment. LPC providers are not required to grant exemptions.

Successful BVC graduates may, if the LPC provider determines, be granted exemption from attendance and assessment in the following areas of the LPC:

- Stage 1 – Litigation, advocacy, drafting, practical legal research
- Stage 2 – Two vocational electives

Successful graduates of the BPTC may, if the LPC provider determines, be granted exemption from attendance and assessment in the following areas:

- Stage 1 – Litigation, advocacy, drafting
- Stage 2 – Two vocational electives

Graduates should have successfully completed the BVC/BPTC not more than five years prior to their enrolment on the LPC.

### **What are the requirements of the LPC?**

Details for LPC providers and the requirements of the LPC can be found in the [LPC information pack](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/). [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/>]

### **How do I become an authorised LPC provider?**

Applications to become a provider and validation of specific courses will be considered by a panel appointed by us. These would be considered against published criteria.

Find out more in the [LPC information pack](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/) [<https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/resources/legal-practice-course-information-pack/>].

### **Is there a fee for becoming an authorised LPC provider?**

Yes, there is a fee for authorisation and validation, determined by us from time to time.

### **Is there an annual fee for being authorised as an LPC provider?**

There is an annual registration fee for each student enrolled on the LPC. This is £15 per student.



## **Do we need to confirm to the SRA which students have successfully achieved the LPC?**

At the close of every academic year you should submit to us a 'Pass List' that records all students who successfully completed the LPC.

## **How would we know that applicants have successfully completed the academic stage?**

To ascertain whether or not an award is a qualifying law degree (QLD) or CPE, access the SRA's definitive records of current QLD providers and programmes or CPE providers.

Read [QLD providers and programmes](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/qualifying-law-degree-providers/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/qualifying-law-degree-providers/] or [CPE providers](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/cpe-gdl-course-providers/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/qualifying-law-degree-common-professional-examination/cpe-gdl-course-providers/]

Our records are of current providers and programmes. If a provider stops running or changes programmes, resulting in new award titles, it is possible that an applicant may have a QLD / CPE that is no longer provided. It will therefore not be listed in the current record. If an applicant is claiming that this is the case, or if you suspect that it may be the case, [contact us](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/home/contact-us/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/home/contact-us/] for advice on the historical record.

There are a number of ways to verify that an applicant has achieved a QLD. LPC providers can ask to see the original transcript, diploma supplement or a letter from the awarding institution confirming the award. We are aware that there is some uncertainty as to what constitutes a QLD and we will provide a checklist to assess the transcript against.

Since the introduction of the SQE, students must provide evidence of the date on which an offer was accepted. And the date the course started to demonstrate that their QLD/CPE falls within our requirements for qualifying under the LPC route. LPC providers will need to check this to make sure that a QLD or CPE is within the transitional arrangements.

## **If an applicant for an LPC graduated with a QLD / CPE more than 10 years ago, can we still consider this, or is it stale?**

These decisions are made by the LPC provider.

**If a BVC / BPTC graduate who completed the programme over five years ago, seeks exemptions from the LPC, can they be granted?**

If the provider's accreditation of prior learning policy permits this time frame, exemptions may be granted by the provider.

**Can a student commence the Professional Skills Course (PSC) before completing the LPC?**

The PSC assumes knowledge from the LPC, and therefore students should be advised to commence it after completing the LPC.

**Are we liable in any way if we admit a student to our LPC, but discover after they have completed the LPC that they did not in fact successfully complete the academic stage of training?**

Providing evidence that the academic stage of training has been successfully completed rests with the student. However, there is a requirement that the LPC provider verifies the authenticity of this evidence.

**Do we need to advise students about character and suitability issues?**

We will not check the character and suitability of a student before they enrol on the LPC as it is not a requirement for enrolment. We do however require everyone to disclose issues to us relating to character and suitability when applying for admission as a solicitor.

We appreciate that students who have potential issues may want an early assessment before starting on the LPC and/or a period of recognised training,

They can have their character and suitability assessment assessed at any time by completing the [screening process](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/admission/screening/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/admission/screening/] and submitting the [character and suitability form](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/admission/admission-forms-fees/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/admission/admission-forms-fees/].

## **Profession skills course (PSC) providers**



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## **What are the requirements of the PSC?**

Details for PSC providers and the requirements of the PSC can be found in the [Professional Skills Course information pack](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/professional-skills-course/professional-skills-course-information-pack/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/professional-skills-course/professional-skills-course-information-pack/]

## **Can a student commence the PSC before completing the LPC?**

The PSC assumes knowledge from the LPC, and therefore students should be advised to commence it after completing the LPC.

## **Can a trainee be exempt from the PSC?**

Yes, if they can demonstrate that the knowledge and skills outcomes have been achieved through other assessed learning and supervised work-based learning. And the standard at which they must be acquired. Where this is the case, we may grant exemption from some of the modules on the PSC.