

News release

Positive results from first ever SQE1 assessment

21 January 2022

The results for the first ever Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) assessment are now available for candidates to access, with 53 per cent passing.

Introduced to provide assurance that all qualifying solicitors have met a consistent standard, all the analysis shows that this assessment is fair, reliable and valid. Previously candidates had to complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC), where pass rates vary significantly between providers, ranging from around 23 per cent to 100 per cent.

The November SQE1 assessments saw 1090 candidates, including 27 solicitor apprentices, taking the assessment across more than 100 test centres in 26 countries.

Anna Bradley, Chair of the SRA Board, said: 'The introduction of the SQE should give everyone confidence that those entering the profession have all met the same high standard. So we are pleased that the first assessment has gone well with results that suggest it was a robust, fair and reliable exam.

'It will of course take time for the full benefits of the SQE to be realised, but this is a good start. I would like to thank the expert teams who have delivered what is a step change in how solicitors enter the profession, particularly our Director of Education, Julie Brannan and our provider Kaplan.'

Alongside Kaplan, the assessment provider for the SQE, we have [published headline data \[https://sqa.sra.org.uk/assessment-arrangements/results-and-resits/sqa-reports\]](https://sqa.sra.org.uk/assessment-arrangements/results-and-resits/sqa-reports) on the SQE results, as well as [information on how it went \[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/first-sqa-assessment-results/\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/sra/policy/solicitors-qualifying-examination/first-sqa-assessment-results/) and the diversity of the candidates. We have also [published a report on the assessment by the SQE Independent reviewer. \[https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/SQE1result-reviewer-report\]](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/SQE1result-reviewer-report)

The results show that there was no significant difference between the performance of candidates on a range of diversity characteristics. There was however the expected difference in performance by ethnicity. White candidates generally performed better than candidates from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups: 65 per cent of white candidates passed compared to 44 per cent of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Anna Bradley said: 'We anticipated that we would again see the troubling difference in performance for candidates from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups that has been a longstanding and widespread feature in examinations in the legal and other sectors. We know the reasons will be complex and, as well as ongoing review and analysis, we have appointed Exeter University to carry out in-depth research to better understand the factors driving the attainment gap for these groups in professional assessments, so that we can do everything we can to address the issues.'

Booking for the first SQE2 assessments, taking place in April, opens on 31 January*. The next SQE1 assessments take place in July, with booking opening on 17 March.

*We have updated this date [since initial publication](https://sqa.sra.org.uk/news-item/2022/01/24/sqa2-booking-opening-moved-to-10am-on-31-january) [<https://sqa.sra.org.uk/news-item/2022/01/24/sqa2-booking-opening-moved-to-10am-on-31-january>].