SQE2 - how the first assessment went

Julie Swan,
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Overview – SQE2 first sitting (April 2022)

- Written assessments taken in 86 test centres across 24 countries – 12 written assessments (stations)

- Oral assessments taken in 4 centres in England and Wales – 4 oral assessments (stations)

- Oral assessments taken on 4 different days – 4 'runs' - using different tasks with pass marks set for each run so that candidates on different days were not advantaged/disadvantaged

- 726 candidates received results on 25 August 2022

- 390 candidates will qualify under the transitional arrangements and so did not take SQE1 (LPC and QLTS MCT candidates)

- All other candidates had to pass SQE1 before sitting SQE2

- Indications that this first cohort was atypical

- 22 apprentices took the assessment

Outcomes

- Overall pass rate 77% (53% pass rate for November 2021 SQE1)

- Higher a candidate's degree classification, the better they performed

- Higher a candidate's SQE1 mark, the better they performed

- Those that had done some qualifying work experience performed better than those who told us they hadn't

- Candidates performed better in advocacy, interview/attendance note and legal research tasks than in legal drafting, legal writing and case and matter analysis

Demographics

- 79% of females and 75% males passed

- 92% of candidates who told us they had a disability passed

- Apprentices had a very high pass rate

Demographics

- Overall pass rates varied by ethnicity:

    - 72% Asian/British Asian candidates
    - 53% Black/Black British candidates
    - 55% candidates who declared 'other'
    - 76% candidates who preferred not to say
    - 92% mixed/multiple ethnic groups candidates
    - 85% white candidates

- There is no evidence that the questions/tasks were biased

- July 2022 results published 5 October - 53% pass rate

- Candidates affected by disruption at one centre

- January 2023 booking window open until 19 December

- Higher than expected demand for seats

- Additional capacity arranged to accommodate candidates

Overview of SQE2 exams April 2022

Geoff Coombe, SQE Independent Reviewer

Role of independent reviewer

- Provide external assurance to SRA and Kaplan that the SQE will deliver outcomes:
  - Fair
  - Defensible
  - Command public confidence

Reviewing the SQE2 – gathering evidence

- Observed training meetings for assessors

- Reviewed plans and risk assessments for key processes

- Interviewed Kaplan and SRA staff before and after

- Observed candidates at different venues – both oral and written exams

- Reviewed summary management information

- Each stage of the exam showed good practice and policies were adhered to, including:
  - preparation
  - delivery
  - processing outcomes

- SQE2 is operationally complex

- The psychometric evidence shows the exams delivered well

- There is a thorough lessons learned process - minor but important improvements for future sittings

- The process for determining the pass boundaries was carefully considered and effective

- Prior educational attainment remains the most reliable predictor of SQE2 outcomes (as it did for SQE1)

- There were differences in outcomes by demographic group, including white candidates achieving a higher pass rate than other ethnic groups

- This does not mean the assessment was unfair and good safeguards in place to avoid unintended bias, including:
  - anonymised marking of written papers
  - training for assessment writers and oral exam assessors

SQE2 marks

Sitting	Oral sitting 1 (19-20 April)	Oral sitting 2 (21-22 April)	Oral sitting 3 (26-27 April)	Oral sitting 4 (28-29 April)	Overall
Candidates sitting	326	251	63	86	726
Pass mark	66%	66%	65%	66%	-
Pass rate	77%	79%	79%	70%	77% overall

Your assessment results

Candidate Name	██████████
Candidate ID	██████████
Exam Date 1	2022-04-21
Exam Date 2	2022-04-11
Attempt Number	1

Pass Mark	66
Your Mark	66
Quintile	4
Result	Pass

Result Group	Station	Practice Area	Skills					Legal	
	Advocacy	Criminal litigation	4	5	4	4	4	4	3
		Dispute resolution	4	2	3	4	2	2	1
	Case and matter analysis	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3	3	4			4	3
		Criminal litigation	3	3	4			4	4
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	4	4	4			4	4
	Legal drafting	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3	4				3	3
		Criminal litigation	4	4				3	3
		Property practice	4	4				4	3
	Legal research	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3	4	4			4	3
		Dispute resolution	4	5	5			5	4
		Property practice	3	3	3			3	3
	Legal writing	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3	3	4	3		4	3
		Dispute resolution	2	3	3	2		3	2
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	3	4	2	3		3	2
Interview, and Attendance note/legal analysis *	Attendance note/legal analysis	Property practice	2	3	2			2	2
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	3	4	3			3	2
	Interview	Property practice	3	3	4	4	3		
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	3	3	4	4	4		

			Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Result Group	Station	Practice Area	Skills (Average Skills)	Legal (Average Legal)	Average Skills (2)	Average of Skills & Legal
	Advocacy	Criminal litigation	4 5 4 4 4 — 4.2	4 3 — 3.5		3.9
		Dispute resolution	4 2 3 4 2 — 3.0	2 1 — 1.5		2.3
	Case and matter analysis	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3 3 4 — 3.3	4 3 — 3.5		3.4
		Criminal litigation	3 3 4 — 3.3	4 4 — 4.0		3.7
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	4 4 4 — 4.0	4 4 — 4.0		4.0
	Legal drafting	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3 4 — 3.5	3 3 — 3.0		3.3
		Criminal litigation	4 4 — 4.0	3 3 — 3.0		3.5
		Property practice	4 4 — 4.0	4 3 — 3.5		3.8
	Legal research	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3 4 4 — 3.7	4 3 — 3.5		3.6
		Dispute resolution	4 5 5 — 4.7	5 4 — 4.5		4.6
		Property practice	3 3 3 — 3.0	3 3 — 3.0		3.0
	Legal writing	Business organisations, rules and procedures	3 3 4 3 — 3.3	4 3 — 3.5		3.4
		Dispute resolution	2 3 3 2 — 2.5	3 2 — 2.5		2.5
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	3 4 2 3 — 3.0	3 2 — 2.5		2.8
Interview, and Attendance note/legal analysis*	Attendance note/legal analysis	Property practice	2 3 2 — 2.3	2 2 — 2.0	2.9	2.4
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	5 5 0 — 3.3	3 2 — 2.5	3.5	3.0
	Interview	Property practice	3 3 4 4 3 — 3.4			
		Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice	3 3 4 4 4 — 3.6			

Step 5	Sum of Station scores	52.9
Step 6	Divide sum by 16	3.3
Step 7	Multiply by 20	66.1
Step 8	**Rounded**	**66%**

Step 1 Average Skills scores for each row (18 rows / green cells)
Step 2 Average Legal scores for each row (16 rows / blue cells)
Step 3 Average the two average Skills scores for Attendance note and Interview (orange cells)
Step 4 Average the Average Skills and Average Legal scores for each station (16 stations)
Step 5 Sum the station scores
Step 6 Divide the sum of station scores by 16 (number of stations)
Step 7 Multiply by 20 to convert to % score
Step 8 Round the % score to an integer value for final score

The average of 2.3 and 3.4

The average of 3.3 and 3.6

SQE key dates

- Upcoming assessments
  - October 2022 - second sitting of SQE2
  - January 2023 - third sitting of SQE1
  - From April 2023 - SQE2 assessments every quarter

- Other elements
  - EDI candidate survey questions update - before the end of 2022
  - Q1 2023 - FLK annual review process
  - Spring 2023 - SQE annual report published

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