Education and training authorisation and monitoring activity

September 2019 – August 2020

Contents

Introduction and overview of 2019-20

1. We have a statutory responsibility for the education and training of solicitors, as set out in the Solicitors Act 1974 and the Legal Services Act 2007. Education and training requirements are a key regulatory tool to protect consumers of legal services. The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020.

2. We introduced the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) on 1 September 2021. This is a single, rigorous assessment for all aspiring solicitors. The SQE means that everyone who becomes a solicitor will meet the same high standards in a consistent way.

3. Ahead of the SQE, in November 2019 we introduced transition regulations allowing anyone who was already studying or training when we introduced the SQE, to continue to qualify through the previous system, now called the Legal Practice Course (LPC) route. This means someone who has a qualifying law degree (QLD) or the Common Professional Examination (CPE)[1], an LPC and a period of recognised training. These regulations mean that there will be people qualifying through the LPC route for some years (until 2032). However, we expect most LPC courses to start to end over the next few years.

4. We have arrangements in place for the orderly closure of LPC courses. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor and report on both the LPC courses and route for as long as the numbers qualifying remain high enough to do so. We know that we must remain vigilant to the risks to quality and standards as these courses come to an end and are replaced by the SQE.

5. We asked LPC providers to start collecting socio-economic information in April 2019. This information will help improve our reporting on the LPC and help inform the baseline of our evaluation work for the SQE.

6. This report covers the first five months of the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, shortly after the introduction of Government restrictions on contact and movement, we decided to relax some of our requirements for the teaching and assessment of the QLD, CPE and the LPC.

7. For the QLD and the CPE, we do not specify the form that the assessments take, and so we left it to providers to make change to assessment arrangements. However, we did require that some form of assessment must be taken.

8. Our Board decided that temporarily during the pandemic, we should relax our assessment requirements for all parts of the LPC. This meant that for skills assessments and elective subjects, where we usually require an exam but not

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[1] The CPE is also known as the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). In this report, we refer to it as the CPE throughout.

necessarily under supervised conditions, we allowed alternative arrangements, for example, assessment using coursework.

9. For the core subjects, to protect the integrity and security of assessments, we kept our requirements for supervised assessment but permitted online or remote proctoring of these assessments. LPC providers then applied to us for temporary approval of changes to their teaching and assessment arrangements.

10. We required all providers to explain how they would maintain the integrity and security of all LPC assessments undertaken remotely. We only approved remote assessment where we were confident that the proposed arrangements would make sure that they would be robustly supervised. For example, the remote proctoring software used recorded assessments in full and flagged any potential issues for immediate review. We are therefore satisfied with the arrangements put in place by providers to assess the LPC during this period.

11. We considered 55 applications from LPC providers to change their teaching and assessment arrangements in response to the pandemic. These included changes to how they taught and assessed electives, skills and core practice areas.

12. The LPC comprises of two stages: Stage 1, covering core practice areas and skills and Stage 2 covering three vocational electives. All LPC providers applied for approval of alternative assessments for Stage 2 electives and skills. Only 85% of LPC providers applied for and were approved to administer Stage 1 supervised assessments via remote proctoring. The remainder continued to assess traditionally.

Executive summary

13. The vast majority of those who qualify as solicitors under the LPC route will have completed:

    - the academic stage of training - QLD or CPE

    - the vocational stage of training - the LPC, period of recognised training (PRT) and Professional Skills Course (PSC).

14. This report looks at the information received from the course providers that we approve or authorise. It also considers information we hold as a regulator on the qualification routes people have been admitted through.

Key findings

15. This year, rates of successful completion[2] for the LPC remained consistent with last year - 57.7% of students passed in 2019/20 compared to 58% in 2018/19.

16. Successful completion of the CPE was also in line with last year – 58.9% of students passed in 2019/20 compared to 58% in 2018/19.

17. There continue to be significant differences in the successful completion rates between providers, with pass rates for the LPC ranging from 100% to 31%. There are a number of different factors which may influence pass rates, including candidate ability and engagement, teaching quality and assessment arrangements, but we are unable to draw firm conclusions from the data available.

18. In addition to the differences in rates between providers, there are significant differences between providers in the proportion of students who achieve pass, commendation or distinction grades.

19. Data shows that students from ethnic groups other than white are less likely to successfully complete the CPE and the LPC, as has been the case throughout our monitoring. This attainment gap is widely seen across higher education and professional assessments. We have initiated external research to better understand the reasons for the attainment gaps in professional assessments.

20. Male and female students appear to perform equally well on the CPE and LPC, and women outnumber men on both courses and at the point of admission.

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[2] We define 'successful completion' as being where a student has passed the LPC in the period under consideration. Students who have not successfully completed may have additional attempts available to them. They may be 'referred', meaning they have failed one or more assessments and may resit, or they may have 'deferred', meaning they have postponed their assessment because of exceptional circumstances, in one or more subjects. This means that those students may successfully go on to complete the LPC in future.

21. Our data on the ethnic origin and disability of those undertaking PRTs is less comprehensive. As shown in figures 12 and 13 below, large numbers of training contracts registered indicated ethnic background as 'unknown' and few declared a disability.

The routes to qualification

Numbers admitted by route

22. Figure 1 sets out the routes to qualification as a solicitor under the training regulations for the LPC route (replaced by the SQE on 1 September 2021). This route takes a minimum of six years for those who study full time and undertake a two year PRT (full time). Figure 1 also illustrates the routes available to legal executives and qualified lawyers.

Figure 1: Routes to qualification before 1 September 2021
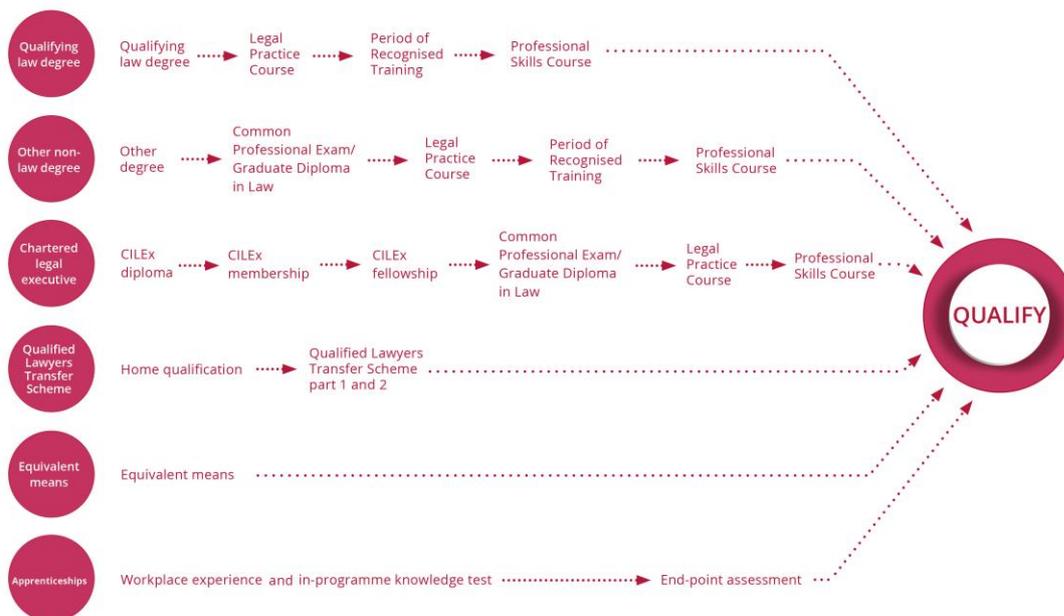
Figure 2: Numbers admitted to the roll by route

12 months to end of	LPC	Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test	Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme	Chartered Institute of Legal Executive routes	Other	Total
Jun-2015	5,327	89	441	136	35	6,028
Jun-2016	5,420	36	580	239	38	6,313
Jun-2017	5,566	27	673	228	58	6,552
Jun-2018	5,713	8	714	319	30	6,784
Jun-2019	5,756	16	814	345	69	7,000
Jun-2020	5,475	5	606	323	312	6,723

23. Key findings from this period are:

- 6,721 solicitors were admitted
- Approximately 83% of those were admitted through the LPC route
- The Qualified Lawyer Transfer Test (QLTT) and Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme (QLTS) account for approximately 11% of those admitted.

24. The QLTS is a two-stage assessment of the knowledge and skills needed to be a solicitor. It was the route to admission for barristers of England and Wales and qualified lawyers in other jurisdictions wishing to become solicitors of England and Wales. It was replaced by SQE on 1 September 2021. See page 31 for more information about candidates qualifying under QLTS.

25. The QLTS assessment replaced the QLTT in 2010. However, candidates who completed the QLTT may still apply for admission, so a small number are still admitted by this route.

Providers of legal education and training

26. Providers ranged from universities that offer only the QLD to those who offer a full range of pre and post qualification courses. All education providers that we authorise are subject to regulation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

27. Since 2014, providers of QLD and CPE courses have to confirm that they meet the requirements of the Academic Stage Handbook if they wish to:

- validate new programmes

- revalidate existing programmes

- make major modification to existing programmes.

28. These arrangements continue to apply for all approved programmes (beginning up to 31 December 2021) until students have completed their course in accordance with our requirements. We will not approve or recognise any new QLD/CPE courses that start after 31 December 2021.

29. In 2019/20, we approved one new QLD provider and one new LPC provider.

30. PRT takes place in organisations that we authorise to provide training.

Monitoring

31. When monitoring the quality and standards of education and training, we focus on the two professional qualifications within the framework. These are the CPE (for which the academic award is often a diploma in law, the Graduate Diploma in Law) and the LPC.

32. For the CPE and the LPC, our monitoring involves initial approval (CPE) or authorisation (LPC). Each provider must also submit an annual course monitoring report consisting of monitoring data and a narrative report. Our main quality assurance activity is reviewing these reports. If we identify issues, we can follow up with the provider and we have the power to make a monitoring visit.

33. We are committed to improving our understanding of and encouraging equality and diversity in the solicitors' profession. For 2019/20 onwards, we have expanded the information that we ask providers to collect about LPC students, including socio-economic data. We changed to the way we collect data about disability and gender, for example we now include options for where respondents prefer not to say. This additional information and data will help develop our baseline data to evaluate the impact of the SQE.

34. The new data we have collected includes a large number of 'unknown' responses. This means that it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from it. We will work with providers to understand how we can improve the quality of the data for future years.

35. However, we have decided to include data showing the breakdown of LPC candidates by two socio-economic categories. These are the type of school that candidates mainly attended between the ages of 11 and 16 and the highest level of qualifications achieved by either parents or guardians by the time the candidate was 18. While the information does include a large number of 'unknowns' it provides some indication of the socio-economic background of the candidates taking the LPC.

36. In summary for the LPC, the figures indicate that overall:

    - 8,306 (57.5% of enrolled students) successfully completed the LPC (compared with 58% in 2019/20)
    - 1.6% failed the LPC in 2019/20
    - the remaining students were either withdrawn or suspended or were referred or deferred from their assessments.

37. In summary, for the CPE, the figures indicate that overall:

    - 3371 (58.9% of enrolled students) successfully completed the CPE (compared with 58% in 2018/19)
    - 2.8% failed the CPE in 2019/20

- the remaining students were either withdrawn or suspended or were referred or deferred from their assessments.
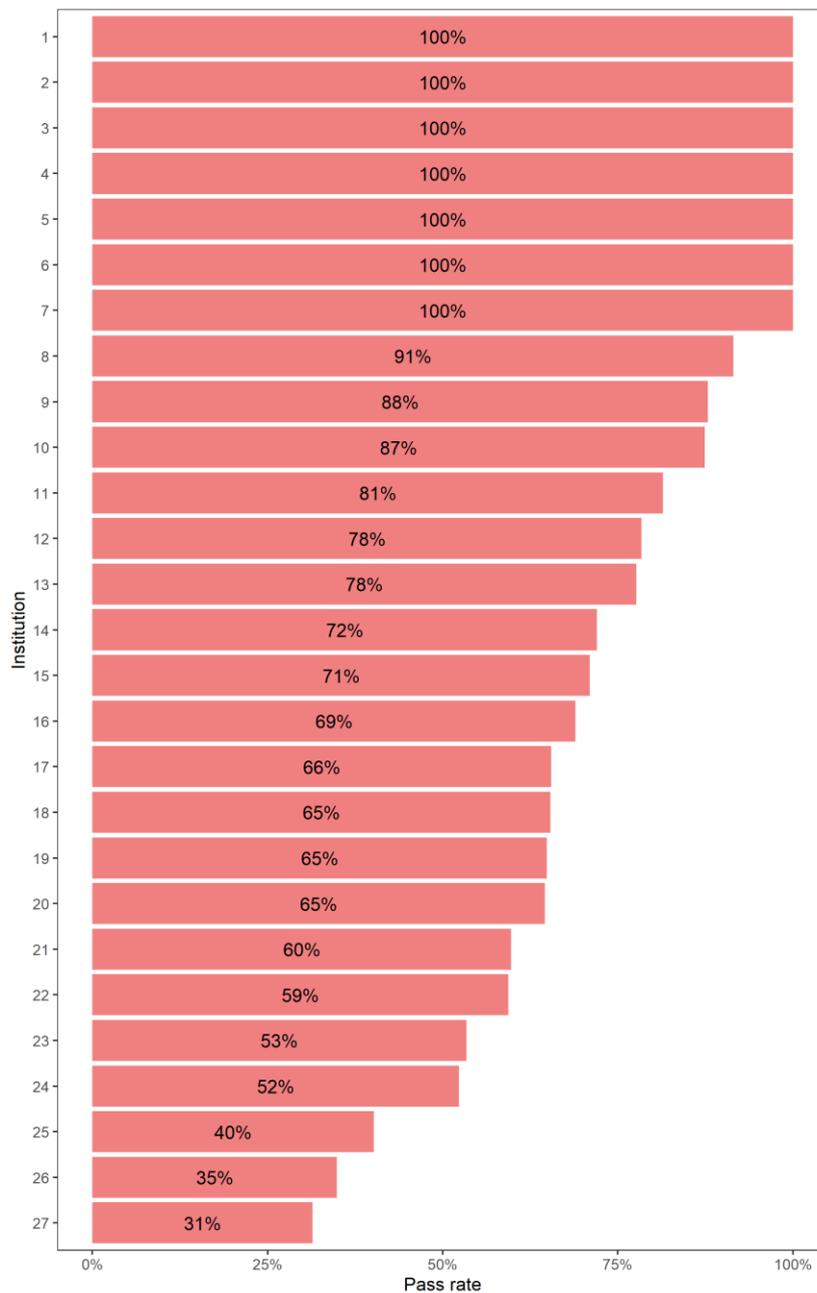
Legal Practice Course

LPC results by provider

Figure 3: LPC results by provider

Each column represents an individual provider

38. Successful completion rates by provider vary from 31% to 100%. In addition to variation in completion rates, there is significant variation between providers in terms of the proportion of students obtaining pass, commendation and distinction grades. It is unclear what the reasons are for such a wide disparity in performance.

39. There was a significant increase in the number of deferrals compared to previous years - 28% of candidates deferred during 2019/20 compared to 13% during 2018/19. This is likely due to candidates choosing to wait to sit assessments face-to-face, rather than take assessments remotely, or other pandemic-related reasons.

40. There may also be variation in academic ability between different intakes, variable quality of teaching, and/or different approaches to assessment. This makes it difficult to be confident about consistent outcomes. These are some of the reasons why we are introducing the SQE.

41. There are also very large differences in the size of different providers and the number of LPC students. These groups range from fewer than ten students to many thousands of students, spread over different locations.

42. The largest providers, BPP University and the University of Law, offer the LPC across different locations. Between them, they shared approximately 81% (12,233) of the total number of students enrolled to take assessments (78% in 2019/20).

LPC results by gender

Figure 4: LPC results by gender

What gender do you identify with?
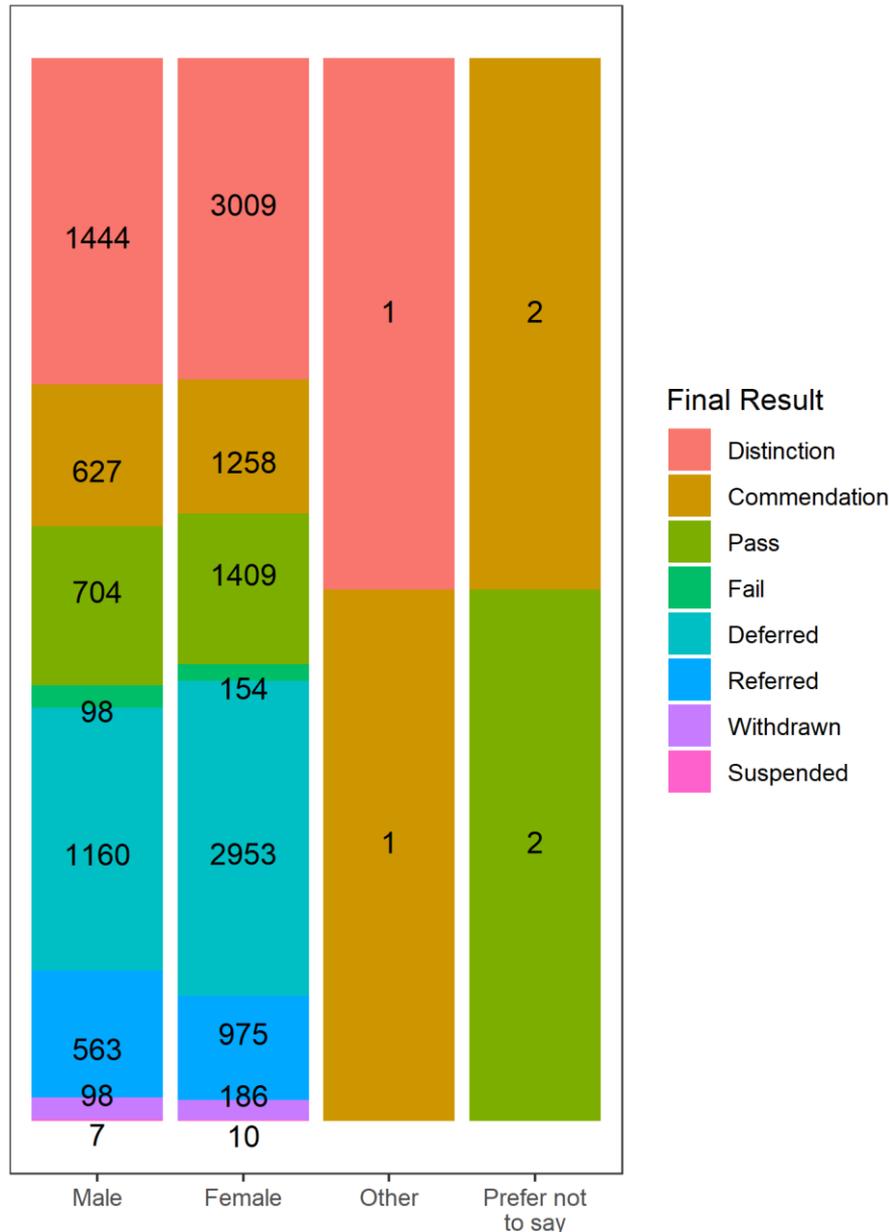
43. We have introduced two additional answers on this question compared to previous years. The options added are 'other' and 'prefer not say'. Our data shows 67% of students in this cohort were female, 32% were male and 1% identified as other or preferred not to say. There remains little difference in performance on the LPC between male and female – 59% of male candidates and 57% of female candidates passed. 66% of 'other' and 'prefer not to say' candidates successfully completed the

LPC. Male and female candidates received similar rates of distinctions, commendations and pass grades.

LPC results by ethnicity

Figure 5: LPC results by ethnicity

Ethnicity
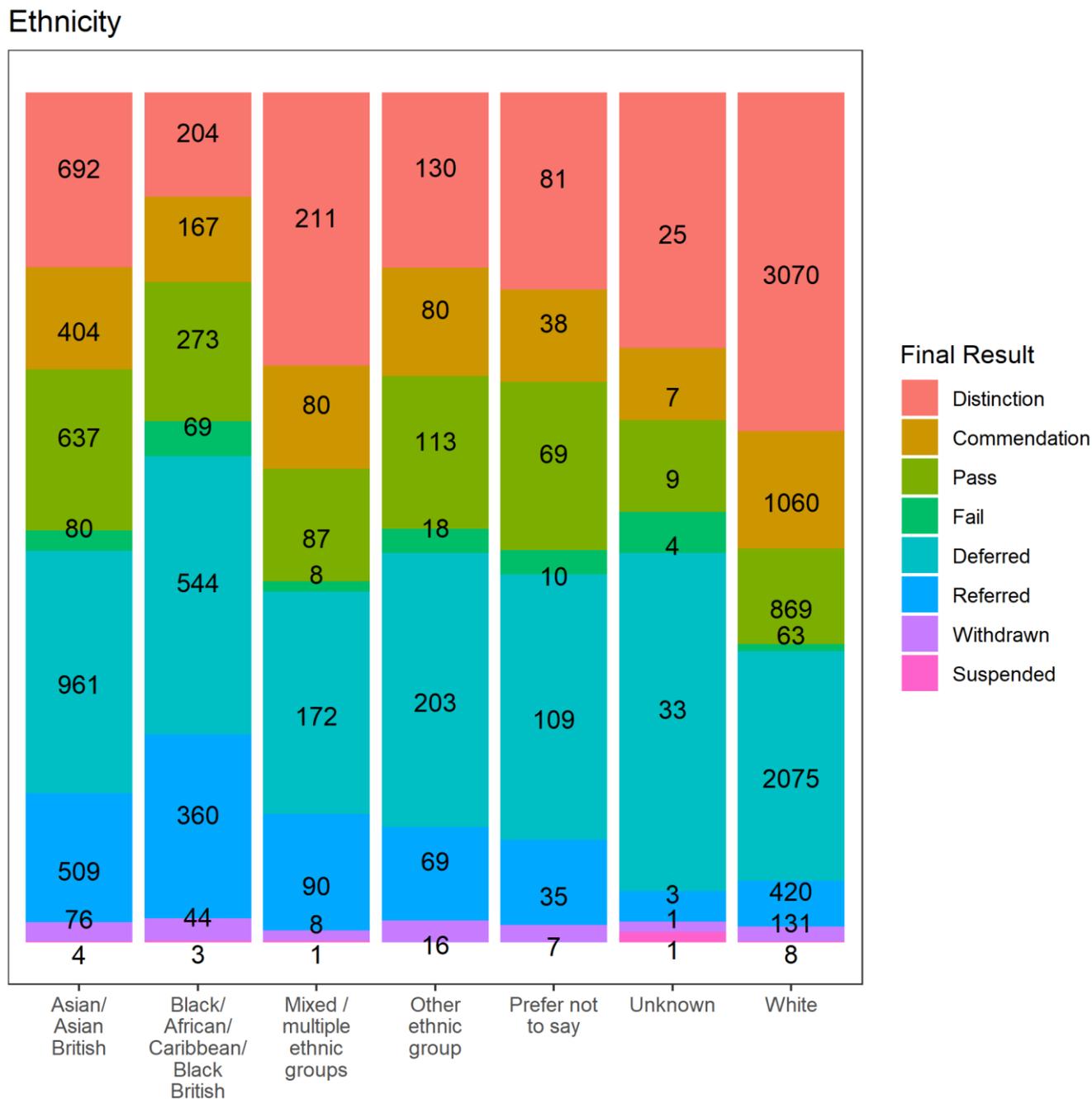
44. The monitoring data shows that:

- 23% of students identified themselves as Asian/Asian British, which is comparable with previous years
- Approximately 12% as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (compared with 11% in 2018/19)
- Approximately 5% as mixed/multiple ethnic groups (compared with 4% in 2018/19).

45. The table indicates that students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to obtain a distinction in the LPC than white candidates.

46. Almost 65% of white students successfully completed the LPC in the period, in comparison with approximately 52% of Asian/Asian British students and 39% of Black students.

LPC results by disability

Figure 6: LPC results by disability
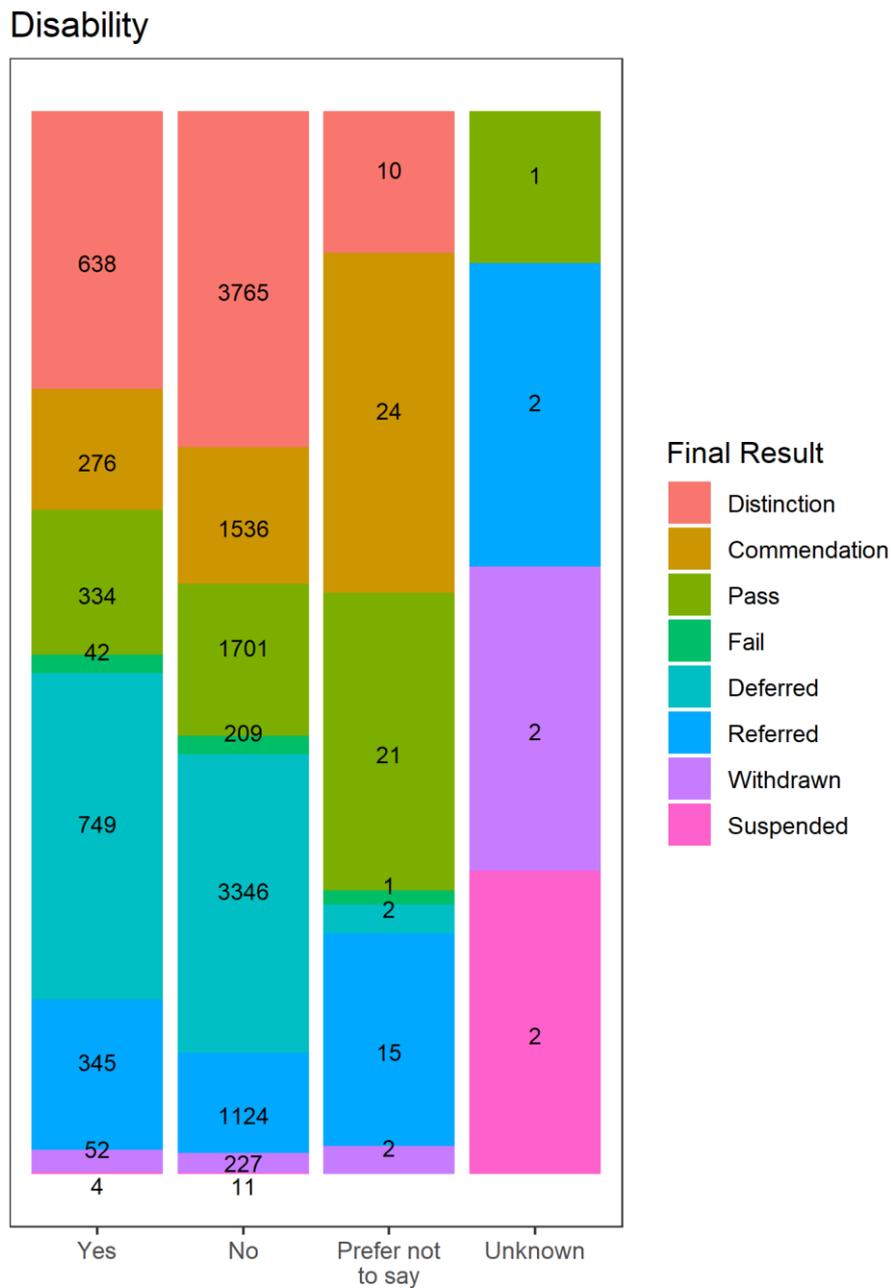
Disability

47. Figure 6 illustrates comparative performance on the LPC of students with disabilities. Approximately 17% of students identified themselves as having a disability and 0.5% preferred not to say (although this does not necessarily reflect the proportion of students who had special arrangements for learning and assessment). We also collected further data identified as having a disability - 18% indicated that day to day activity is limited by their disability.

LPC results by socio-economic categories

Figure 7: LPC results by what type of school that candidates mainly attended between the ages of 11 and 16

What type of school did you mainly attend between the ages of 11 and 16?
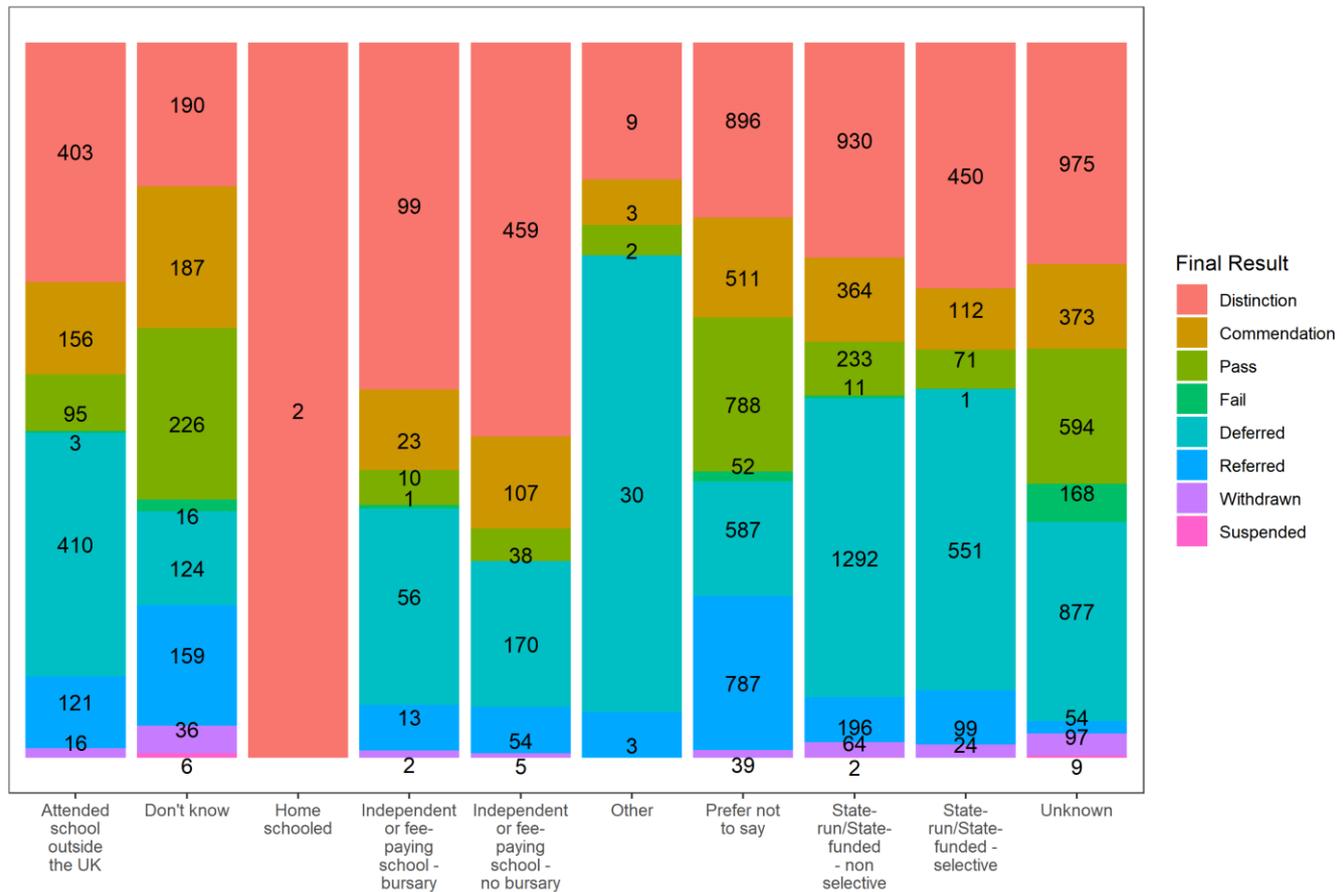
48. The monitoring data shows that:

- 47% answered the question as unknown – we therefore have to recognise the limitations of drawing any firm conclusions from this data
- 30% of students identified themselves as attending state-run/state-funded - non selective or selective schools
- Approximately 7% attended an independent or fee-paying school
- While a smaller proportion of students attended independent of fee-paying schools without a bursary, these were more likely to pass the LPC and more likely to pass with a commendation.

Figure 8: LPC results by highest level of qualifications achieved by either parents or guardians by the time the candidate was 18

What is the highest level of qualifications achieved by either of your parent(s) or guardian(s) by the time you were 18?
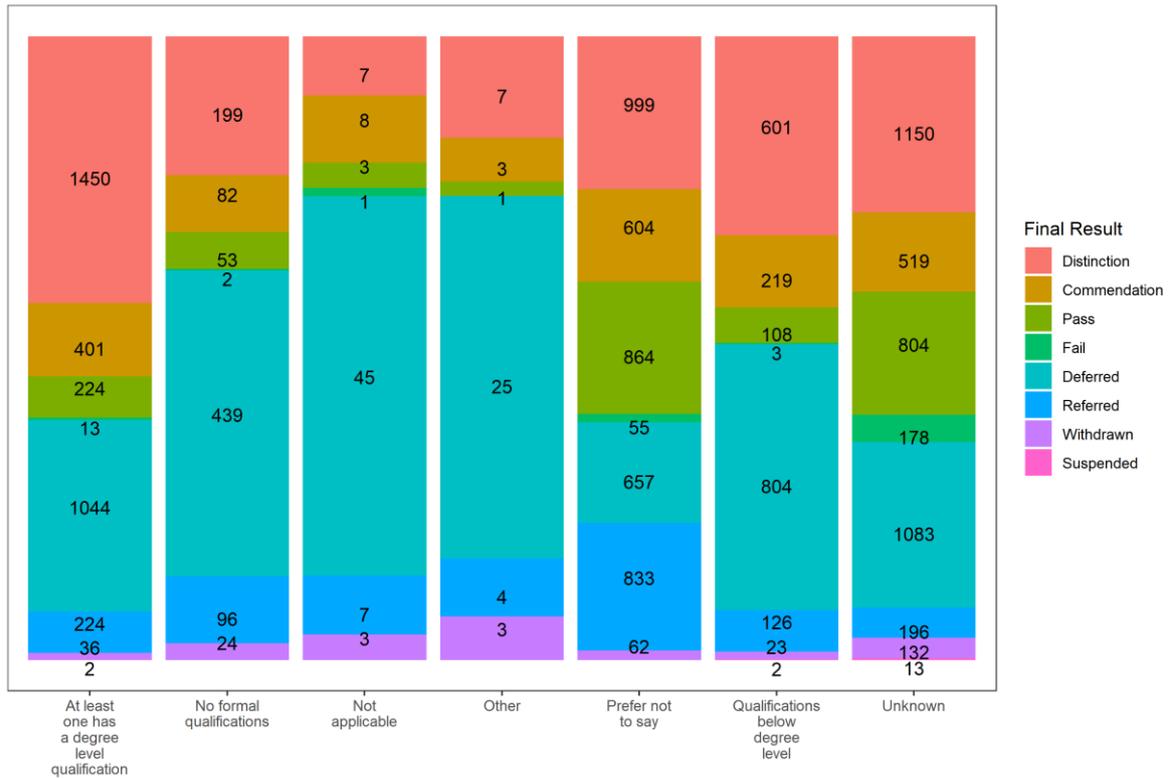

49.   The monitoring data shows that:

- 51% answered the question as unknown - we therefore have to recognise the limitations of drawing any firm conclusions from this data
- 23% of students enrolled onto the LPC identified themselves as having a parent or guardian with at least one degree level qualification and approximately 6% reported no formal qualifications
- The figures also suggest that those students who had at least one parent with a degree level qualification were more likely to succeed on the LPC.

# Summary of narrative reports from LPC providers

50. All providers must give us a narrative annual report on the LPC course. In addition, they must appoint external examiners to review the quality and standards of their assessments. Each appoints their own external examiner and they report to the LPC provider (rather than to us). In their Annual Course Monitoring Reports, the providers include a summary and analysis of issues raised by the external examiners and the provider's response to those issues. We also ask for a copy of the full external examiners' report.

51. Although we prescribe a template for the narrative report, there are nevertheless differences in the amount of information provided by different providers.

52. It was apparent that almost all providers saw an increase in numbers of LPC students compared to last year.

53. The external examiners were largely positive about the LPC overall, with providers reporting positive comments in relation to:

   - making changes to assessments and teaching when Covid-19 restrictions were enforced
   - the quality and consistency of marking and moderation
   - assessment processes measuring achievement appropriately against the intended learning outcomes
   - issues identified in previous years being promptly and effectively resolved
   - learning and teaching strategies and materials
   - student feedback was positive, and there was prompt resolution of complaints.

54. Some external examiners identified general areas of concern, including:

   - administrative issues for external examiners
   - staffing issues, which were subsequently resolved
   - some providers being more generous than others on the administration of assessments, as a result of the pandemic
   - inconsistencies with how feedback was provided about the assessments.

55. We have followed up with providers on the concerns raised by LPC providers, where appropriate.

Common Professional Examination

CPE results by provider

Figure 9: CPE results by provider. Each column represents an individual provider
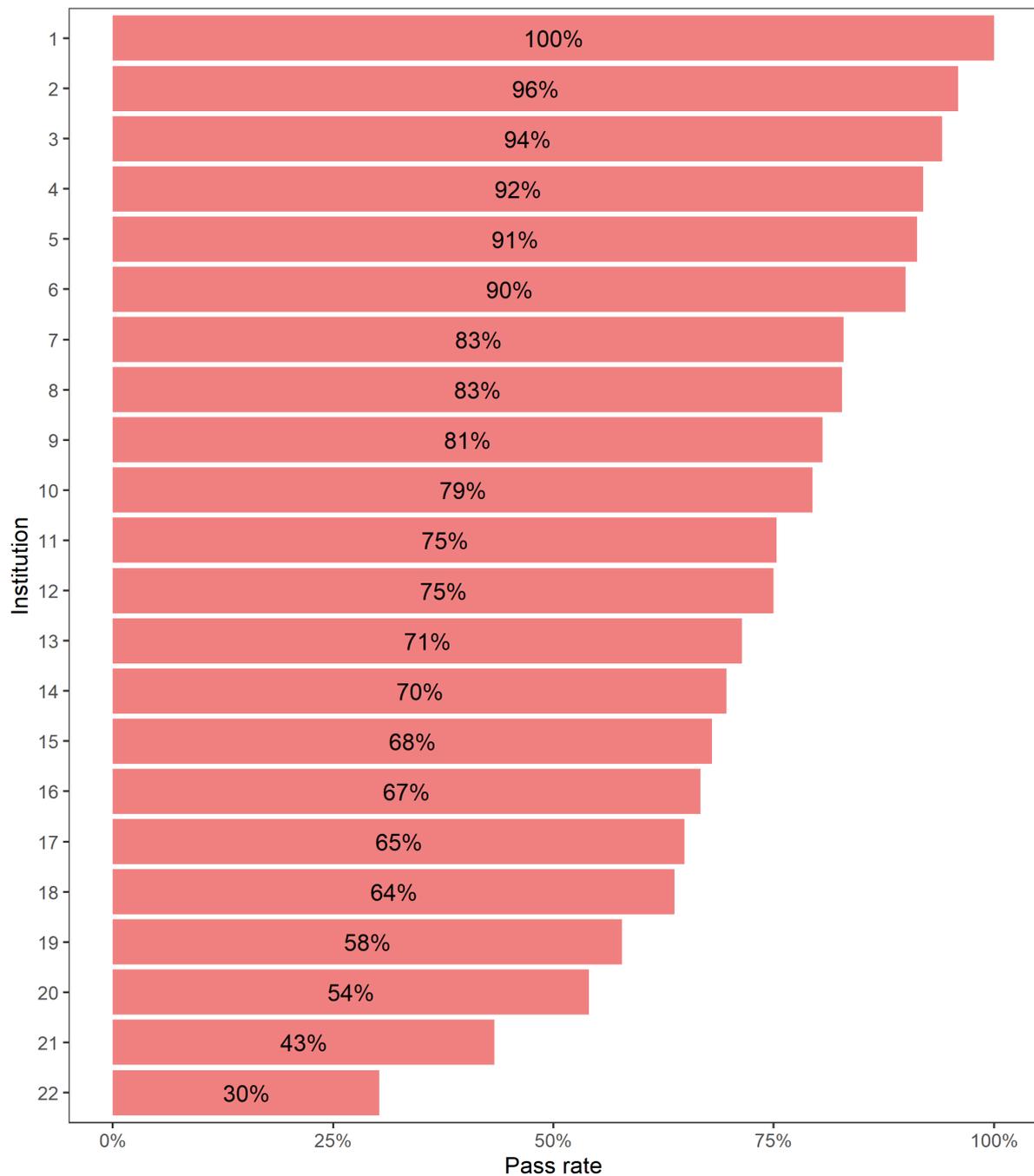
56. Figure 9 shows CPE results. The total number of students who were enrolled and eligible to sit assessments which would enable them to complete the CPE was 5,723 (compared with 5,353 in the previous academic year). This includes full-time students enrolling for the first time in September 2019 (or later), part-time students in their second year of study and students who had deferred assessment attempts. The overall completion rate in 2019/20 was 60%, which is similar to previous years.

57. As with the LPC, the CPE is offered by a range of providers, all of which are also subject to regulation by QAA. The size of the student cohort varies considerably. The largest providers, BPP University and the University of Law, offer the CPE across a range of locations. As with the LPC, these two providers dominate the market.

58. Rates of successful completion of the CPE by provider also vary significantly, from 30% to 100%. In addition to the differences in rates of successful completion, it is again apparent that (among those who do successfully complete) there are very significant differences in the proportion of students who obtain a pass, commendation or distinction grade. Once again, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the reasons for this. There is significant variation in size of providers. There may also be student cohorts of different academic ability, differences in the quality of teaching and/or in the approach to assessment.

59. There was a significant increase in the number of deferrals compared to previous years: 22% of candidates deferred during 2019/20 compared to 15% during 2018/19. This is likely to be due to candidates choosing to wait to sit assessments face to face, rather than take assessments remotely or other reasons relating to the pandemic.

60. Providers supply us with a summary and evaluation of issues raised by their external examiners in their annual narrative reports. These did not raise any concerns about quality and standards on the CPE.

CPE results by gender

Figure 10: CPE results by gender

Gender
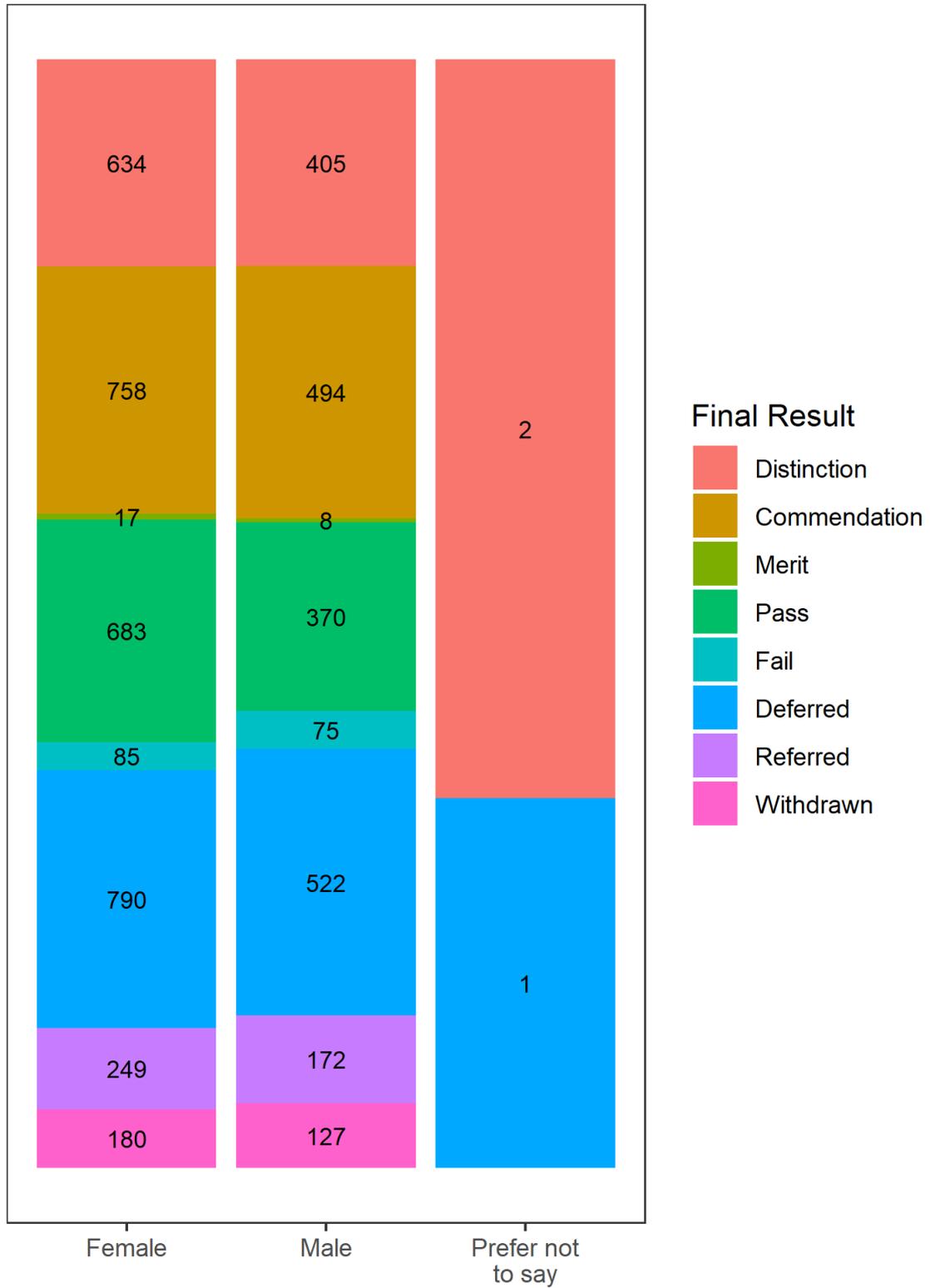
61. Figure 10 provides a breakdown of CPE completion rates by gender. These numbers indicate largely consistent performance in the CPE by gender. We have introduced an additional options of 'prefer not say' on this question compared to previous years.

62. Of this group, 40% of candidates were male and 60% female.

63. The successful completion rate for male candidates was 38% and for female candidates 62%.

CPE results by ethnicity

Figure 11: CPE results by ethnicity
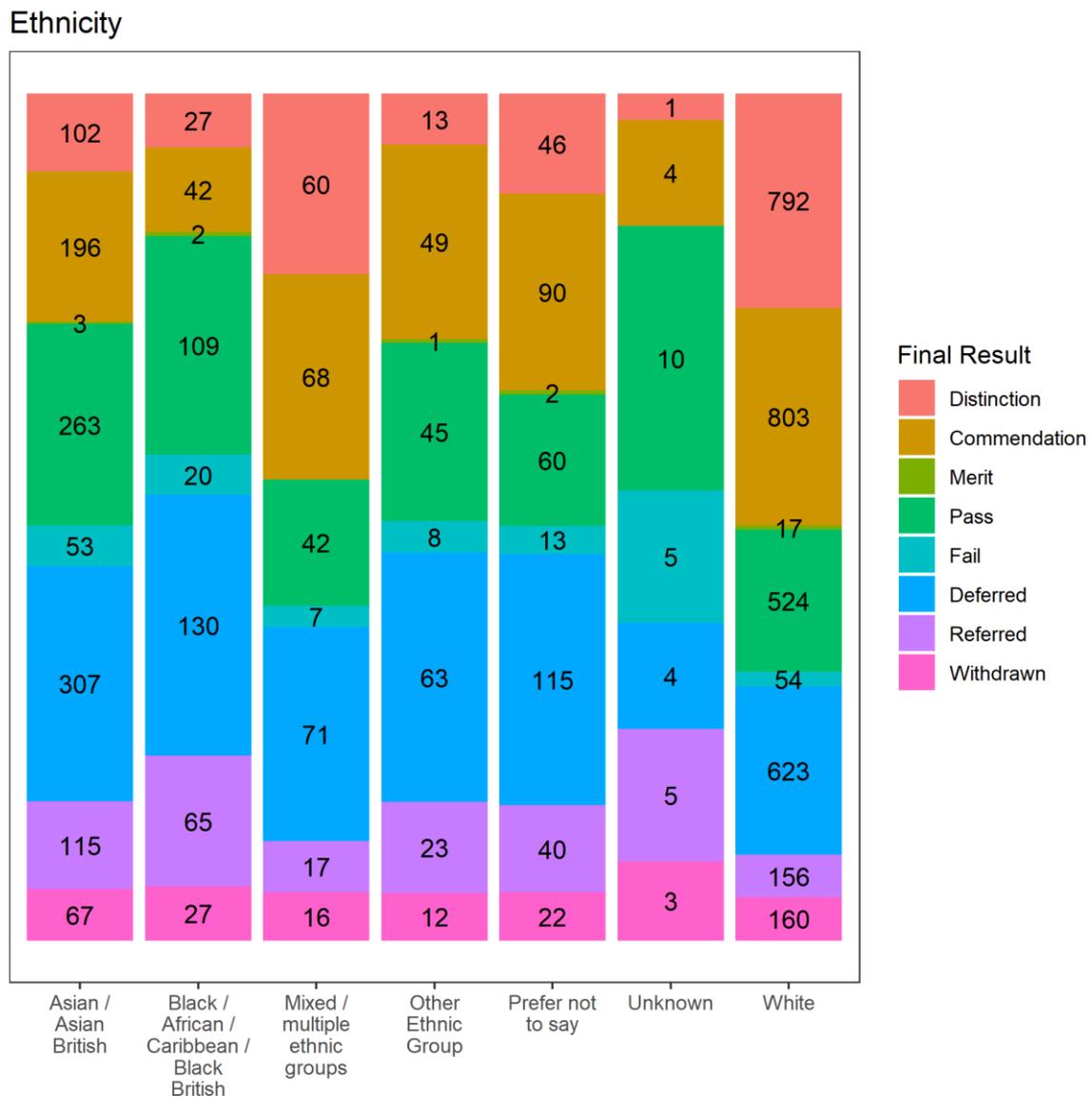
64. Figure 11 shows breakdown of CPE completion rates by ethnicity. 17% of students identified themselves as Asian/Asian British, approximately 5% identified as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and approximately 5% as mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

As with the LPC, these numbers indicate that students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to pass the CPE. White students form approximately 56% of the cohort and have a successful completion rate of 66%. Asian/Asian British students account for 20% of the cohort and have a successful completion rate of 50%. Black (African/Caribbean/Black British) form 8% of the cohort and the successful completion rate is 41%.

CPE results by disability

Figure 12: CPE results by disabilty
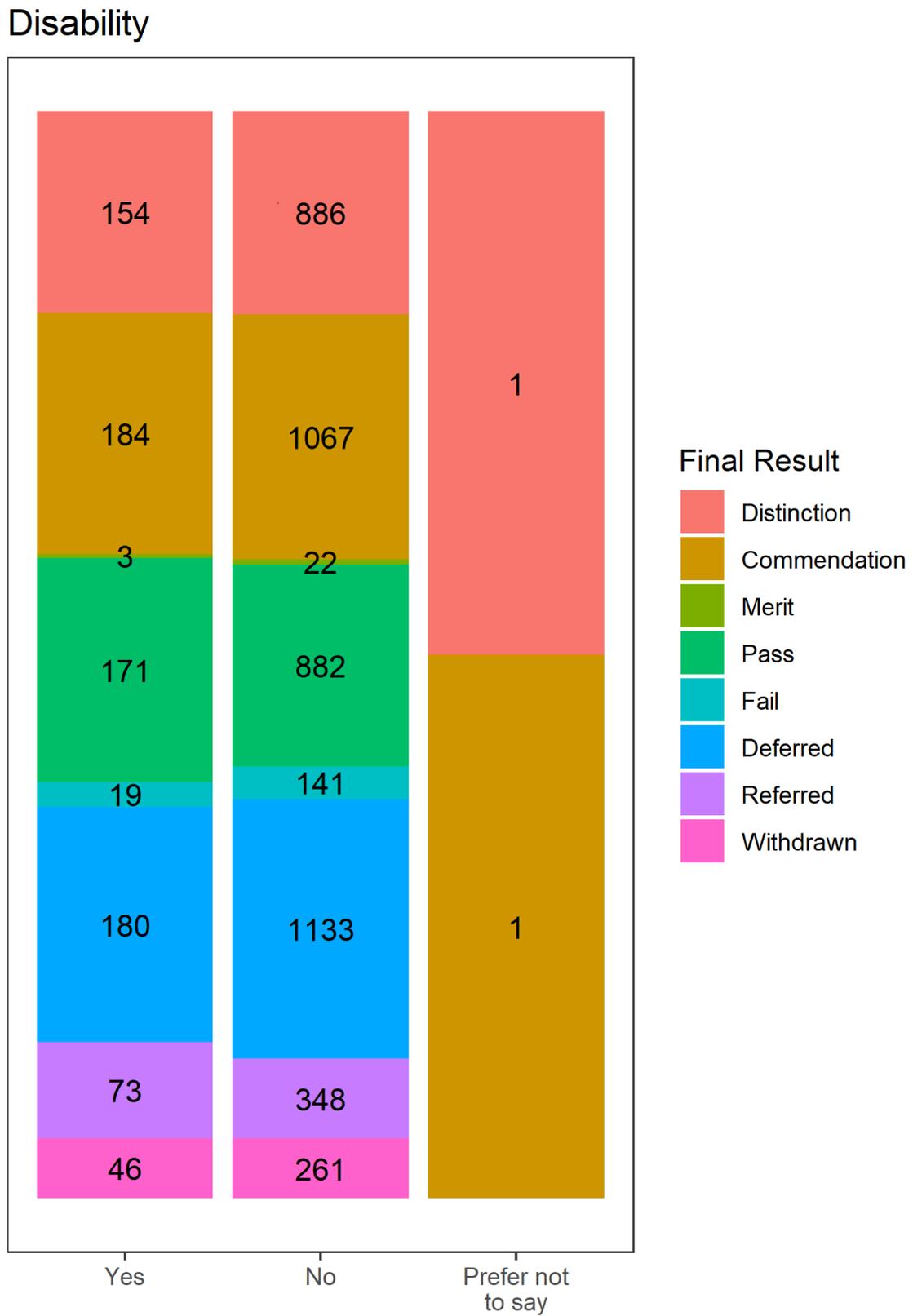
Disability

65. Figure 12 shows comparative performance on the CPE of students with disabilities. Approximately 14% of students identified themselves as having a disability, compared with 16% last year. Atlhough this does not necessarily reflect the proportion of students who had special arrangements for learning and assessment.

66. The successful completion rate for students declaring a disability was 60% in comparison with 59% for students who did not declare a disability.

Periods of recognised training

Training contracts registered

67. The final stage of the qualification pathway is the requirement to complete a PRT (also known as a training contract). This is also when trainees will also undertake the PSC. Training will take place in an organisation that we have approved to take in trainees. If the training is carried out on a full-time basis, it will usually be for a period of two years.

68. The following tables provide details of the number of training contracts registered with us in 2019/20, compared to the preceding three years, broken down by age, ethnicity, disability and gender. Percentages are based on the total known population.

69. The figures shown are for the start of a PRT. Some individuals may not complete the training or may start a PRT more than once. This accounts for a small difference in the total number of PRTs and the numbers for those shown at Figure 2 to have been admitted having taken the LPC.

Figure 13: PRT age breakdown

Age band	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
18 - 21	39	0.7%	41	0.7%	47	0.8%	33	0.6%
22 - 25	3401	57.3%	3435	57.3%	3469	57.4%	3393	58.2%
26 - 30	1892	31.9%	1824	30.4%	1788	29.6%	1736	29.8%
31 - 35	320	5.4%	392	6.5%	397	6.6%	363	6.2%
36 - 40	142	2.4%	150	2.5%	163	2.7%	139	2.4%
41 - 45	70	1.2%	85	1.4%	86	1.4%	80	1.4%
46 - 50	45	0.8%	36	0.6%	54	0.9%	53	0.9%
51 - 55	9	0.2%	25	0.4%	26	0.4%	20	0.3%
56 - 60	10	0.2%	6	0.1%	14	0.2%	9	0.2%

61+	4	0.1%	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	4	0.1%
Total known	**5932**	**100%**	**5995**	**100%**	**6046**	**100%**	**5830**	**100%**
Unknown	**0**	**0%**	**1**	**0%**	**5**	**0%**	**7**	**0%**
Total	**5932**	**100%**	**5996**	**100%**	**6051**	**100%**	**5837**	**100%**

70.   Figure 13 shows that the spread of the age of those taking a PRT has remained broadly stable over a four-year period. For 2019/20, 89% of the training contracts registered with us were for those aged 30 or under.

Figure 14: PRT ethnicity breakdown

Ethnicity	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
Black, Asian and minority ethnic	**245**	**50.8%**	**159**	**50.0%**	**107**	**56.9%**	**93**	**59.2%**
Asian	169	35.1%	106	33.3%	75	39.9%	57	36.3%
Black	45	9.3%	35	11.0%	23	12.2%	24	15.3%
Mixed	19	3.9%	8	2.5%	6	3.2%	5	3.2%
Other	12	2.5%	10	3.1%	3	1.6%	7	4.5%
White	**237**	**49.2%**	**159**	**50.0%**	**81**	**43.1%**	**64**	**40.8%**
Total known	**482**	**100%**	**318**	**100%**	**188**	**100%**	**157**	**100%**
Unknown	**5450**	**92%**	**5678**	**95%**	**5863**	**97%**	**5680**	**97%**
Total	**5932**	**100%**	**5996**	**100%**	**6051**	**100%**	**5837**	**100%**

71.   Figure 14 indicates that for 97% of trainees, their ethnicity is recorded as 'unknown'. This is because we do not routinely collect this data about trainees. Where the ethnicity is known, it is likely the individual has either now been admitted (and so entered their own data via their mySRA profile) or they were known to the SRA previously for another reason.

72.   This is a gap in our understanding of our trainee solicitor population and the progression of students from university into workplace learning.

73.   As part of our SQE introduction preparations, we have reviewed our approach to data collection. This is so we can better understand the diversity and socio-economic background of those seeking to be admitted as solicitors.

Figure 15: PRT disability breakdown

Disability	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Physical	0	0	2	0
Mental	0	0	1	0
Learning	3	3	2	1
Sensory	0	0	0	1
Hearing	0	0	0	0
Visual	0	0	0	0
Long standing illness	1	1	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0
Not specified	5	0	1	0
Total declaring disability	**9**	**4**	**8**	**2**

74. Numbers declaring a disability continue to be very low. This reflects the trend of previous years and, as with previous years, do not reflect numbers declaring a disability on the CPE or LPC. As part of our wider work, we will be encouraging aspiring solicitors and solicitors to declare disability in all our data collection exercises.

Figure 16: PRT gender breakdown

Gender	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
Female	3776	63.7%	3873	64.6%	3949	65.3%	3806	65.2%
Male	2156	36.3%	2123	35.4%	2100	34.7%	2031	34.8%
Total	**5932**	**100%**	**5996**	**100%**	**6049**	**100%**	**5837**	**100%**
Unknown	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**2**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Total	**5932**	**100%**	**5996**	**100%**	**6051**	**100%**	**5837**	**100%**

75. This data indicates that firms and organisations are continuing to recruit more female than male trainees.

Qualified Lawyer Transfer Scheme results data

76. We have replaced the QLTS route with the SQE. Unless someone has already started on the QLTS route, qualified lawyers can now only be admitted as a solicitor of England and Wales through the SQE.

77. The information included in this report for QLTS is for 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020 and so covers the last full calendar year for qualification under QLTS.

78. The QLTS assesses an individual's competence by way of multiple-choice testing (MCT) of legal knowledge and skills-based assessments, called the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Candidates pass the MCT (stage1) before being able to progress to the OSCE (stage 2). The assessments are operated by Kaplan, with the MCT assessment offered globally at multiple centres and the OSCE taking place in London.

79. 2,127 candidates attempted the MCT assessment and 735 candidates attempted the OSCE between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020. Pass rates are shown in figure 17.

80. The January 2020 MCT exam ran as normal. The July MCT ran over two days with social distancing at Pearson VUE test centres internationally.

81. The delivery of all other QLTS exams in 2020 was affected by Covid-19. The April 2020 OSCE was due to take place as the first lockdown was announced and had to be cancelled. However, three other OSCEs in July, August and November 2020 were delivered successfully with social distancing and Covid-19 arrangements in place.

82. There was an increase of 11% of those taking the MCT compared to 2019. This is likely to be due to more foreign qualified candidates seeking to qualify this way before we replace the QLTS with SQE.

83. Due to the impact of pandemic restrictions on the OSCE sittings in 2020 (see paragraph 81 above), there was a decrease of 40% of those who took the OSCE. We recognised the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on those seeking to finish qualification under the QLTS route before it closes. Therefore, we have offered sitting the SQE2 as an alternative to the OSCE for those candidates who had taken the MCT before 1 September 2021 (when we introduced SQE). For those who do this will have an additional 12 months to complete their qualification on this route (31 August 2023). The pass rates in percentages from the total number of candidates achieved by candidates in different groups are set out in figure 17.

Figure 17: QLTS results data and percentage pass rates (calendar year 2020)

(Numbers are of candidates sitting the assessment. Percentages are pass rate of the candidates in each group.)

MCT		OSCE	
Date	**Pass Rates** (All Candidates including exemptees % who passed)	**Date**	**Pass Rates** (All Candidates including exemptees % who passed)
January 2020	57.8%	**July 2020**	67.2%
July 2020 (1)	68.0%	**August 2020**	67.2%
July 2020 (2)	69.6%	**November 2020**	65.8%

Gender				
Assessment	**Number of Candidates**	**Male**	**Female**	**Not stated**
MCT	2063	853 (61.5%)	1180 (61.3%)	30 (1.5%)
OSCE	708	288 (63.9%)	401 (66.6%)	19 (2.7%)
Ethnic Group				
Assessment	**Number of Candidates**	**Black, Asian and minority ethnic**	**White**	**Not stated**
MCT	2063	1141 (56.0%)	625 (68.3%)	297 (14.4%)
OSCE	708	291 (60.1%)	286 (67.5%)	131 (18.5%)
First language English				
Assessment	**Number of Candidates**	**Yes**	**No**	**Not stated**
MCT	2063	814 (67.8%)	1249 (57.9%)	0
OSCE	708	301 (71.8%)	407 (61.2%)	0
Candidates declaring a disability				
Assessment	**Number of Candidates**	**Yes**	**No**	**Not stated**
MCT	2063	18 (55.6%)	2045 (61.9%)	0
OSCE	708	11 (45.5%)	697 (66%)	0

84.   The information in figure 17 is for the period January 2020 to December 2020. Candidates from 100 jurisdictions undertook a QLTS assessment in 2020. We currently recognise more than 170 jurisdictions, which include, as separate jurisdictions, the states of America and territories of Canada.

85.   The overall pass rate for the MCT varied depending on the sitting, with 57.8% of those sitting the MCT in January 2020 passing, and 68.0% and 69.6% of those sitting in July 2020 passing. For the OSCE, the pass rate was 67.2% in July and August 2020 and 65.8% in November 2020.

86.   61.5% of male candidates and 61.3% of female candidates who sat the first stage of the QLTS, the MCT, were successful and eligible to progress to the second stage, the OSCE.

87.   The pass rate for the OSCE was 63.9% for male candidates and 66.6% for female candidates.

88.   Pass rates by gender, ethnicity and first language are shown in figure 17. Eighteen candidates declared a disability for the MCT and 11 for the OSCE.

89.   The results indicate that the pass rate on the MCT for white candidates is 68.3%, whereas for Black and minority ethnic candidates it is 56%.

90.   We also have information about the first language of candidates. The pass rate on the MCT for those with English as their first language is 67.8%, whereas for those for do not have English as a first language, the pass rate is 57.9%.

91.   Once candidates have passed the MCT, the gap in performance by ethnic group narrows in the OSCE. The pass rate is 67.5% for white candidates and 60.1% for lack and minority ethnic. The gap in performance in the OSCE also narrows slightly for candidates whose first language is not English (61.2%) compared to 71.8% for those whose first language is English.

Qualifying through Equivalent Means

92. Since the introduction of the SRA Training Regulations 2014, applicants have been able to meet the academic or vocational requirements of training by an equivalent means application.

93. We may recognise prior learning and grant exemptions where:

    - the level, standard, volume and content of prior learning achieved is equivalent to all or part of a stage of education and training

    - there is relevant, sufficient and adequate evidence of such achievement.

94. We may also grant exemptions based on prior experiential learning. The key principle here is that we will recognise the achievement of learning and outcomes and not simply evidence that an applicant has had experience of doing something.

95. The numbers of those qualifying with part of their training satisfied through equivalent means have been steadily increasing. We make decisions about equivalent means following our assessment of applicants' workplace experience and/or qualifications, considering if these are equivalent to the relevant academic or vocational stage requirement.

96. Figure 18 shows the number of individuals who qualified with part of their training satisfied through equivalent means for the period from 2014/15 to 2019/20.

97. Individuals will continue to be able to apply to qualify through equivalent means during the transition period following the introduction of the SQE.

Figure 18: Number of individuals who qualified through equivalent means 2014/15 to 2019/20 (SRA financial year runs from 1 November to 31 October)

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
8	66	71	85	88	99