



## Questions and answers

Updated 3 October 2023

### Qualifying work experience

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#### **What is qualifying work experience?**

Any experience of providing legal services that helps a candidate to develop some or all of competences (minimum of two) required to practise as a solicitor. This could include, for example, working in a law firm or in-house legal team, as a paralegal, as a legal apprenticeship or part of a placement during a degree.

#### **Does working in-house count as qualifying work experience?**

Yes, so long as it:

- provides you with the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences (minimum of two) in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/) [https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/]
- can be confirmed by a solicitor (inside or outside your organisation) with direct knowledge of your work. If it they work externally, there are additional requirements in our rules ([see 2.2c](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2) [https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2]).

#### **Can I gain qualifying work experience through simulated legal services?**

No. It must involve doing real-life work as its designed to give candidates experience of how solicitors work in practice, the challenges they face and to real clients.

#### **Can I count my experience gained at law clinic as qualifying work experience?**

Yes, so long as it:

- provides you with the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences (minimum of two) in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/) [https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/]



- can be confirmed by a solicitor inside the law clinic, or one externally, with direct knowledge of your work. If it they work externally, there are additional requirements in our rules ([see 2.2c \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2)).

### **Does working part time in an organisation count as qualifying work experience?**

Yes. Our requirement is for two years' full time or equivalent experience gained on a part time basis. We do not prescribe what full time (or equivalent) means. We expect employers or those confirming qualifying work experience to take a common-sense view of what this means.

### **I am a paralegal. Can my current work experience count?**

Yes, so long as it:

- provides you with the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences (minimum of two) in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/)
- can be confirmed by a solicitor (inside or outside your organisation) with direct knowledge of your work. If it they work externally, there are additional requirements in our rules ([see 2.2c \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-2)).

### **Does my qualifying work experience need to be the same standard of work as a qualified solicitor?**

No. Qualifying work experience gives a candidate the chance to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of a solicitor during the work experience. So at the start, candidates are likely to be demonstrating skills at a lower standard than at the end.

The SQE assessments make sure that all candidates have demonstrated the necessary skills at the right standard in particular, SQE2 which tests candidates' practical legal skills. Provided that the work experience gives a candidate the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/) it can count as qualifying work experience.

### **Can a supervising solicitor confirm your QWE if you and/or they no longer work for the organisation?**



Yes, the solicitor does not need to still work for the same organisation as you.

They can confirm it so long as they have:

- reviewed your work for the period of work experience they are confirming
- received feedback from the person now supervising your work if you're claiming for work completed after they left.

### **Can I count qualifying work experience that has not been signed off by a solicitor?**

No. It must be confirmed by a solicitor with direct experience of your work. The solicitor can work inside or outside your organisation but if they are external, there are additional requirements in our rules ([see 2.2c \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-21\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-21)).

### **Can I count a paid or unpaid internship as QWE?**

Yes, so long as it:

- provides you with the opportunity to develop some or all of the competences (minimum of two) in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources-archived/continuing-competence/cpd/competence-statement/)
- can be confirmed by a solicitor (inside or outside your organisation) with direct knowledge of your work. If it they work externally, there are additional requirements in our rules (see 2.2c)

The Sutton Trust have information on unpaid internships that you might find useful - [Internships Unpaid, unadvertised, unfair \[https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/internships-unpaid-unadvertised-unfair/\]](https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/internships-unpaid-unadvertised-unfair/) and [Internships – Pay as you go? \[https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/internships-pay-as-you-go/\]](https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/internships-pay-as-you-go/).

### **As I have the LPC, can I use qualifying work experience instead of a training contract to qualify?**

If you already have the LPC, or meet our [transitional arrangements \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/becoming-solicitor-legal-practice-course-transitional-requirements/), you can use qualifying work experience and passing SQE2 as an equivalent to a period of recognised training (training contract). This might be used, for example, if you were unable to get a training contract. It means that you will be admitted as a solicitor under our transitional arrangements, not the SQE. [Find out more \[https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/substitute-qwe-sqe2-equivalent-training/\]](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/legal-practice-course-route/substitute-qwe-sqe2-equivalent-training/)

## **How can I register my qualifying work experience?**

You record a completed period of qualifying work experience through your mySRA account.

[Find out what information you will need](https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/registering-qualifying-work-experience/) [<https://upgrade.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/qualifying-work-experience-candidates/registering-qualifying-work-experience/>]

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