

News release

Third year review of SQE shows continued improvements

11 March 2025

The [Solicitors Qualifying Examination \(SQE\) Independent Reviewer](https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-independent-24/1) [https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-independent-24/1] has confirmed the assessment is robust and the outcomes are fair. His report is among a suite of annual reports on the third full year of delivery of SQE, during which more than 14,600 individual candidates took part in the SQE in 37 countries.

Evidence in [Kaplan's annual report shows](https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/sqe-reports/) [https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/sqe-reports/].:

- The assessments are well designed, delivering reliable outcomes.
- Pass rates for SQE2 continue to be notably higher than for SQE1. This is consistent with previous years and is expected given the SQE2 eligibility requirement to have qualification-level functioning legal knowledge (ie have passed SQE1 or be a transitional candidate).
- Solicitor apprentices continue to perform well across both SQE1 and SQE2, with pass rates typically higher than the wider candidate cohort.
- The SQE booking process was redesigned, improving the candidate experience. Candidate feedback shows by the end of 2024 satisfaction with the booking process had increased.

The report covers the mistake made to the way the January 2024 SQE1 results were initially calculated, when the approach taken to rounding was not in line with the published policy. Kaplan summarises in its report the actions it has taken to prevent errors in the future.

Paul Philip, SRA Chief Executive said: 'The latest reports again confirm that the SQE is a robust, fair, and valid assessment. Increased numbers of candidates have been assessed. Kaplan has responded to candidate feedback, including by transforming the booking process. I am delighted to see that solicitor apprentices continue to perform well in SQE as this route to qualification is providing real opportunities for social mobility. The take-up by candidates across the world highlights how the SQE can help spread the use of the law of England and Wales.'

Ricardo Le, the Independent Reviewer said: 'The SQE is a high-stakes, complex and multi-faceted assessment. I have been assured, through my observations during the year, that it's a robust and fair

assessment. I have seen evidence of best practice and a strong commitment to continual improvement.'

We have also published today a [quality assurance report](https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-qa-report-23-24/) [https://update.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/sqe-qa-report-23-24/], summarising how we have quality-assured the SQE during the reporting period.

SQE fees

Alongside publication of the annual reports, we have also confirmed the fees for the SQE from September 2025.

In line with contractual agreements with Kaplan, fees will increase by 2.3% to reflect inflation plus a small additional uplift towards the costs of translating the assessments into Welsh.

The fees for 2025/2026 will be:

- SQE1: £1934 (£1888 for 2024/25)
- SQE2: £2974 (£2902 for 2024/25)