

# **SQE Access and Reinvestment Fund**

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We are using the SQE Access and Reinvestment Fund to support schemes that help aspiring solicitors who face significant personal barriers to qualify. Organisations offering such schemes can apply for funding that will cover the cost of sitting the SQE assessments.

## **Where does the money come from**

The fund was established at the outset of our contract with Kaplan, and financial penalties incurred by Kaplan have been paid into the fund when it failed to deliver agreed targets. The fund currently holds around c. £360,000.

## **Who can apply to the fund**

Established organisations with a track record of running schemes helping aspiring solicitors are invited to apply. Applicants must support candidates who have the commitment and ability to qualify, are funding themselves, and whose means to do so are limited by significant personal barriers.

Organisations will need to demonstrate that aspiring solicitors are self-funding and have no/limited access to other means of paying for the SQE assessments (such as familial loans or financial gifts, access to savings, access to loans).

Significant personal barriers could include, but are not limited to, having faced exceptional circumstances in pursuing their studies and aim to qualify as a solicitor. This could be due to:

- a disability
- time spent in local authority care
- family estrangement.

We wish to support existing schemes, where these align with our aims.

Our aims are to use the fund to address barriers to qualifying as a solicitor faced by those candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is to address some of the factors which might contribute to differential outcomes and promote diversity within the profession.

However, we cannot guarantee that support will be available in future years. Organisations should take this into account when considering whether to apply and the nature of any proposal they put forward.

Applications cannot be made directly by candidates. The support is being offered only to organisations that run schemes supporting aspiring solicitors to qualify.

## How to apply

If you are interested in applying, you will need to show:

- you are an established organisation with a track record of supporting candidates to qualify as a solicitor of England and Wales through the SQE
- you are based in England and Wales
- you are committed to assisting aspiring solicitors:
  - who have the commitment and ability to qualify
  - who are self-funding
  - whose means to do so are limited by significant personal barriers.

Applications must include:

- information about how and when your organisation was established, its formal status and how it is governed
- evidence of a track record of running schemes to support aspiring solicitors to qualify
- information about how your organisation's scheme would use the fund for the benefit of individuals:
  - who aspire to qualify as a solicitor
  - who have the commitment and ability to do so
  - whose means to fund their qualification are limited by significant personal barriers
- information about how you would select the individuals including any criteria applied, and due diligence carried out to verify selected individuals have met the selection criteria
- confirmation that your organisation could cover any administrative costs associated with selecting the individuals benefiting from the fund and report to us
- estimated number of additional candidates you could support
- the timeline of your scheme(s), when applications open and when decisions are made
- confirmation that, if successful, you would:
  - consent to us publicising your selection
  - report to us on how the fund was allocated, including getting consent from the individuals to give us their details
- confirmation you understand that we cannot guarantee we will continue to provide support in the future.

We highly recommend that you [read the guidance for applicants](https://update.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/access-reinvestment-fund/access-reinvestment-fund-guidance/) [https://update.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/access-reinvestment-fund/access-reinvestment-fund-guidance/] before completing the application.

If you are interested, please [complete the application](https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-Access-Fund-25) [<https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-Access-Fund-25>].

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 30 April 2025.

If you have any queries, please [contact us](https://update.sra.org.uk/contactus) [<https://update.sra.org.uk/contactus>].