

Legal Practice Course (LPC)



What is the LPC?

The Legal Practice Course (LPC) is designed for applicants who are currently studying or have obtained their Qualifying Law Degrees (QLD/LLB) or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) in the UK or for those who have been admitted as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (FILEx).

The LPC is not designed for students who have studied law degrees outside of the UK - unless the

degree has been recognised by the UK QAA and has been awarded in collaboration with a UK institution such as the University of London.

Can I apply?

The LPC route will remain valid until 2032 for those who have already started their journey to qualification in 2021.

This means that you will be able to continue to qualify under the traditional route, providing that before 1 September 2021, you completed, started, accepted an offer of a place or paid a non-refundable deposit for:

- a qualifying law degree (QLD)
- the Common Professional Examination (CPE) / Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)
- exempting law degree (ELD)
- the Legal Practice Course
- a period of recognised training (also known as a training contract).

If you have not already started on this route, your course must start on or before 31 December 2021.

Image



What do I need?

There are two stages to qualifying through the LPC:

Stage 1: Academic Stage - qualifying law degree (QLD) **or** law conversion course (CPE/GDL)

Stage 2: Vocational Stage - Legal Practice Course (LPC) **and** Period of Recognised Training (or Training Contract)

The final requirements include the Professional Skills Courses (PSC) and the SRA Assessment of Character and Suitability and once these have been ticked off then, congratulations, you're ready to be admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales!

Academic stage

To complete the academic component of your training, you must have either a qualifying law degree (QLD) **or** a GDL/law conversion:

Qualifying law degree (QLD)

A QLD is an undergraduate degree awarded by a UK university and validated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). Its purpose is to allow candidates to proceed along the LPC pathway to qualification as a solicitor or as the academic stage in the qualification journey to become a barrister and so the degree itself must cover certain foundational areas of legal knowledge alongside other restrictions such as only allowing a certain number of re-sits. Not all law degrees are QLDs. Your university will be able to confirm details about the law degrees which they offer and whether these count as a QLD.

The SRA maintains a list of authorised qualifying law degree providers.

Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)

The GDL is a law conversion course for those applicants who have an undergraduate degree but it is not in law (or it is not a qualifying law degree awarded by a UK university). It is an intensive course built around the core curriculum and assessment requirements of a qualifying law degree. It aims to condense the knowledge and skills acquired in a graduate course which can bring non-law graduates up to the same standard as law graduates before they go onto the vocational stage of qualifying as a solicitor (i.e. the LPC) or as a barrister (i.e. Bar training courses).

The GDL course can also be extended in duration to satisfy the requirements of a MA.

Vocational stage

To complete the vocational stage of your training, you must complete the Legal Practice Course followed by a period of recognised training, commonly referred to as a Training Contract:

Legal Practice Course (LPC)

The LPC is part of the vocational stage of training to be a solicitor - and it can be studied full or part time with an authorised LPC provider.

The aim of the LPC is to prepare students for work-based learning and to provide a general foundation for practice. Generally, it comprises a first stage that focuses on core practice areas and skills, and a second stage containing three vocational electives. Many providers also bundle their LPC into the postgraduate degree LLM. These courses tend to be longer in duration and involve a module requiring an independent research project.

Providers arrange their LPC in different ways and so you will need to check directly with each institution to confirm how they deliver their programme.

Training Contract

This is a 2 year period of recognised training which must be completed post-LPC; it is commonly referred to as the 'training contract'. Individuals are given supervised experience in legal practice in order to refine professional skills essential to practicing as a solicitor, including: advocacy, client care, drafting, commercial and financial awareness, and experience in specific areas of practice.

Want to apply for the Legal Practice Course?

Use our **course finder** to view the courses available to apply for through LawCAB

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FAQs

How do I apply for a course on LawCAB?

Read about our application process for full details on how to make your application.

What do I need for my LPC application?

Academic documentation

If you are a current undergraduate in your final year, you must attach a transcript to your form showing the courses you have studied in your first two years and the marks awarded so far. If you do not have, and cannot obtain, a copy of your current transcript, please attach a screenshot of your marks to date taken from your student portal. The institutions you apply to will then follow up with you directly on receipt of your application.

If you are a graduate, you must attach a copy of your final transcript and/or degree certificate to your form to your form.

For further information on transcripts, please refer to our FAQ 'What is a transcript?'

LPC applicants should note that from 1 September 2021, LPC providers will need to check that applicants fall within the transitional arrangements in relation to the new SQE route to qualification. This is likely to involve checking the detail of the dates on which offers were accepted and courses started. Applicants will therefore be asked to upload to their forms evidence (which should be provided by the universities) that you either:

- completed, started, accepted an offer of a place or paid a non-refundable deposit on a QLD by 21 September 2021 (inclusive) or
- accepted an offer by 31 August 2021 for a place on a GDL/CPE course that started before 31 December 2021.

Personal statement

Most course providers require a personal statement. You can either type this into the form or upload as an attachment to the reason and personal statement section of the form. Please see our FAQ on What is a personal statement and what should I include in it? for further information on what to include in your personal statement.

Reference

Most course providers require a reference.

If you are a current undergraduate or recent graduate, you are encouraged to nominate a current academic tutor who can comment on your suitability for post-graduate study and a career in law, and also provide an expected final grade for your current studies if possible.

If you cannot nominate an academic tutor, you should nominate a current or recent employer to provide a reference in support of your application. Please see our reference FAQs for further detail.

Passport details

If you are applying from outside of the UK and need a visa, you will need to provide your current passport number and expiry date.

What if I only received a conditional GDL offer by 31 August 2021 and want to do the LPC?

If you received a conditional offer which you accepted by 31 August 2021, but you cannot fulfil the conditions of the offer (e.g. confirming degree or English language test results) until after 31

August, you can still go on to qualify through the LPC route.

By accepting a conditional offer for a place on a course you will be covered by the transitional arrangements, which apply if someone has 'entered into a contractual agreement or made a non-refundable financial commitment to start' a course; accepting a conditional offer of a place on a course would mean that you are entering a contractual agreement.

Do I need to register with the SRA before I apply for the LPC?

Although applicants are not required to register with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) before commencing the LPC, if a potential applicant thinks they might have a character and suitability issue or are unsure as to whether they might have an issue, they can choose to submit an early disclosure. The fee for an early assessment is £100.

Please note that it is very important that potential applicants contact the SRA at least 6 months in advance of their anticipated LPC start date if they have character and suitability issues.

Further information about the SRA's Assessment of Character Suitability Rules can be found [here](#).

Which institutions offer the LPC?

Please use our course finder for further information about the courses available. You will also find a list of course providers, showing the courses each of them offer, in [Where can I study?](#)

Should I choose to qualify through the QLD/GDL+LPC or the SQE?

If you know that you are eligible to qualify either through the QLD/GDL+LPC or the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), you will need to determine which route will best serve you, taking into account your current education, employment status, the financial implications and your future employment aspirations.

First, make sure you fully understand the steps you would need to complete for each route in order to achieve qualification. Visit our [LPC](#) and [SQE](#) sections for a full outline of the qualification requirements for each.

Outlined below are a few of the factors you might want to consider when deciding which route to take.

GDL/LPC with Training Contract versus SQE with QWE route

If you choose the GDL/LPC route, you will need to complete a 2-year training contract before you can qualify as a solicitor. This is often the biggest stumbling block for aspiring solicitors because there are far fewer training contracts available than the numbers applying for them; many pass the LPC to find they are unable to complete their qualification because they cannot secure a Training Contract. Some applicants secure Training Contracts early on to cover the cost of their GDL and/or LPC. In the short-term, firms may be slow to take up the SQE and so you may find that if you do secure a Training contract this year, you are asked to undertake the GDL/LPC qualification route.

Flexibility

The GDL/LPC route is 'tried and tested' and familiar to employers across the legal market in the

UK, and in other jurisdictions, however, the flexibility of the SQE means that not only are you able to choose how you prepare for the SQE assessments, but also how you achieve your qualifying work experience (QWE); under the SQE you are not restricted to needing to complete a fixed two year Training Contract. Rather, you could gain your 2 years of QWE in up to four different work placements, which could include for example time spent working at a law clinic and/or working in law firms. You could do this before, during or after your assessments and so you might find that any experience you already have could count towards your qualifying working experience.

Further information about the SQE can be found on the SRA's dedicated SQE website.

I have a qualifying law degree

If you have a QLD you can still apply for the LPC which is a year-long course (if taken full-time) and would then need to be followed by a period of recognised training (Training Contract) (2 years) before you qualify as a solicitor. The cost of the LPC varies depending on where you do it. If you secure a Training Contract the firm may cover or contribute towards this cost.

Time: 1 year LPC + 2 years Training Contract = 3 years (4 years if studying part-time)
Cost: up to £16,750 (depending on course provider and location)

Alternatively, you can continue your journey through the SQE route instead. It is likely you will still need to undertake additional preparation to pass the SQE 1 assessment but you might find that a short SQE course, independent study or even relevant work experience is sufficient. Or you can choose a fuller, post-graduate course such as an MA or LLM which incorporates SQE preparation. Bear in mind that any courses you do may not include the cost of the assessments themselves and so you will need to factor this in to any budgeting.

Time: 6-24 months depending on the type of course and mode of study you choose + 2 years QWE which can be done before, during or after your assessments.
Cost: £3,980 for the two SQE assessments + course costs.

I have a non-qualifying law degree

Under the old route, you have to do the GDL prior to taking the LPC. Please bear in mind that if you do wish to qualify through the LPC, you must have accepted an offer **by 31 August 2021** for a place on a GDL course **that starts by 31 December 2021** and retain evidence of this for your future LPC application.

Time: 2 years plus 2 year Training Contract = 4 years (6 years if studying part-time)
Cost: up to £30,000 (depending on course providers and location)

When you consider the SQE route, it is worth looking at whether your law degree has covered some of the subjects that come up in the SQE 1 assessment, particularly those traditionally known as the seven foundations of legal knowledge. If so, you might feel that a short SQE preparation course, independent study and/or relevant work experience is sufficient to get you through the assessments and could potentially save you the cost of a full law conversion course and LPC. Alternatively, a longer post-graduate course incorporating SQE preparation could also be an attractive option, still potentially saving you time and money, and giving you that additional academic qualification of an MA or LLM, for example.

Time: 6-24 months depending on the type of course and mode of study you choose + 2 years QWE which can be done before, during or after your assessments.
Cost: £3,980 for the two SQE assessments + course costs.

I have a non-law degree

If you have never studied law previously, or you have gained your law degree outside of the UK, a GDL/law conversion course offers a comprehensive foundation in law, with the option of adding a Masters qualification on top, enabling those that pass to go on to complete the LPC. Please bear in mind that if you do wish to qualify through the LPC, you must have accepted an offer **by 31 August 2021** for a place on a GDL course **that starts by 31 December 2021** and retain evidence of this for your future LPC application.

Time: 2 years plus 2 year Training Contract = 4 years (6 years if studying part-time)

Cost: up to £30,000 (depending on course providers and location)

If you opt for the SQE route, you could consider a postgraduate course, such as an PgDL, MA or LLM incorporating SQE preparation, which would fulfil the same 'law conversion' role as the GDL. You could also choose a shorter SQE preparation course, but if you have no previous experience in the law either through your studies or through work, you might feel you want a longer course with a post-graduate law qualification to add to your CV.

Time: 6-24 months depending on the type of course you choose + 2 years QWE which can be done before, during or after your assessments.

Cost: £3,980 for the two SQE assessments + course costs

How long are the courses?

While the GDL and LPC are year-long courses (or 2 years if taken on a part-time basis), the length of the SQE courses depends on the type of course you choose to do. So, if you have already completed a law degree and/or have experience working in a legal environment, a short SQE preparation course may be all you want to do.

Alternatively, regardless of whether you have previously studied law, a longer course which enables you to study at postgraduate level, for example incorporating an MA or LLM with preparation for the two SQE assessments included, could provide you with a stronger and more confident footing in the law.

Applying for courses via LawCAB

Find out which providers offer which types of courses in our [Where can I study](#) section and see suitable courses using our course finder.

Funding your studies

If funding your training is a concern, you may also wish to consider a solicitor apprenticeship where your employer will cover the cost of any courses and assessments whilst paying you a salary, so you can earn while you learn. There are graduate apprenticeships available, as well as ones open to non-graduates.

Can I qualify through the SQE if I have done the LPC?

If you completed your LPC before 1 September 2021 and have not been able to secure a period of recognised training (PRT), but believe you have acquired the equivalent experience and skills stipulated by the SRA, you have the option of going through the SRA's Equivalent Means route by applying for a Period of Recognised Training exemption. The SRA's fee for completing an assessment of the evidence you submit is £600.

It is worth referring to the SRA for further information about applying for an exemption from the period of recognised training if you are interested in qualifying through this route.

If you do not think you are in a position to apply for a PRT exemption, you could instead ask the SRA to recognise a combination of qualifying work experience and passing the SQE2 assessment as equivalent to the period of recognised training. If you decide that you would like to qualify through this route, you would need to inform the SRA **after** 1 September 2021.

Once you have successfully passed SQE 2 and have your QWE approved, you will be able to apply for admission as a solicitor. Please note you will still need to meet the SRA's character and suitability requirements.

If you have completed an LPC but don't fall into the categories outlined above, you could still choose to qualify through the SQE by completing both SQE 1 and SQE 2 assessments and two years of qualifying work experience.

Source URL: <https://www.lawcabs.ac.uk/legal-practice-course-lpc>