



**A not-for-profit company supporting
those seeking legal qualification in
England and Wales**

Central Applications Board Ltd

The Market for Professional Legal Education in 2024

Annual Statistical Report 2024



Introduction

This annual statistical report provides information about the market for professional law courses for academic year 2024-25. This is the third annual report to contain information about applications and enrolments for SQE courses offered by CAB members alongside information about GDL and LPC courses.

As in previous years, the report covers: The evolution of the market for these professional legal education courses, trends in applicant behaviour, applicant demographics and equality and diversity indicators, routes to university courses, and funding.

Unlike the statistics for the GDL and LPC, which include all applications for these courses at all institutions offering them, the SQE statistics do not cover the whole market, although the share of the non-legally qualified market that CAB is covering is steadily increasing as the market normalises.

As SRA data on SQE sitters is only published some time after the event, we do not yet have a time series that can be read across from CAB data into SRA SQE data, however there are still useful insights to be gleaned from a comparison across GDL, LPC and SQE applications and enrolments.

The highlights of this analysis are as follows:

- ❑ The shrinkage in the LPC market has accelerated and SQE applications now outnumber LPC applications on CAB by more than 2:1.
- ❑ 2024 saw an 8% increase on 2023 in total applications made through LawCAB and a 5% increase in enrolments.
- ❑ Numbers applying for the GDL have remained resilient, reflecting the ongoing need for conversion courses and the recognition of this course as a route to domestic qualification in some other common law jurisdictions.
- ❑ There is no EDI benefit yet discernible from the SQE. As in 2023, SQE course applicants are disproportionately from Russell Group universities.

The rest of this report sets out the underlying statistics which have led to the above observations.

Rebecca Bramble-McDade
CAB Manager
May 2025

The demand for and supply of LPC courses

The LPC is declining at a rapid rate, with just seventeen higher education institutions opening for applications for academic year 2024/25, compared to twenty-six in 2023/24.

While 2023 saw demand for the LPC halved and enrolment at just over 40% of its 2018 level, 2024 figures show the LPC at less than a quarter of its 2018 levels, albeit with a slight increase in enrolments as a percentage of applications.

2024 also saw a significant decrease in the number of deferrals, a reflection of institutions not offering the option of deferring because they are withdrawing their courses, as well as candidates eligible to qualify through the LPC wanting to complete the course while it is still available.

- Fewer places available
- Increased enrolments
- Fewer deferrals

Table 1: The Evolution of the Demand for and Supply of LPC Courses, 2018-2024

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Places available	10,901	11,021	11,021	11,021	11,021	9,887	9,741
Enrolment	6,545	6,896	7,338	6,415	5,331	2,836	1,594
New applications	7,993	8,314	8,728	7,752	6,705	3,726	2,136
Deferrals from previous year	583	607	582	517	469	443	167
Total applications (including deferrals)	8,576	8,921	9,310	8,269	7,174	4,169	2,303
Enrolments/applications %	76%	77%	79%	78%	74%	68%	69%
Annual change in total applications	2.0%	4.0%	4.4%	-11.2%	-13.2%	-41.9%	-44.8%
Annual change in enrolment	2.3%	5.3%	6.4%	-12.6%	-16.9%	-46.8%	-43.8%

The demand for and supply of GDL courses

GDL statistics in this report refer to courses designed for non-law graduates that are agnostic in their outcome (i.e. they are not linked explicitly to either the SQE or Bar preparation). Courses which are advertised as suitable for both law and/or non-law graduates, offered in preparation for the SQE are, on the other hand, counted in the SQE statistics.

2024/25 saw a drop in the number GDL places, with sixteen institutions offering GDL, or equivalent, conversion courses compared to twenty-three in 2022/23 and eighteen in 2023/24. It is worth pointing out, however, that alongside this drop in GDL course, there was an increase in the number of SQE courses tailored specifically to non-law graduates as providers realign their law conversion courses to the SQE.

In keeping with recent trends, the number of places available – just over 5000 in 2024 – continued to exceed demand, however, applications and enrolments saw an increase on the previous two years, exceeding 2018 levels.

Reduced number of courses but an increase in the number of SQE courses tailored to non-law graduates as providers realign their law conversion courses to the SQE

A **conversion course** continues to be part of the requirements for the **academic component** in **Bar training**

As SQE assessments results are published, it is clear **non-law graduates are realising the need for a solid foundation** in law to help prepare for the assessments and build their career in law.

Despite **a fewer number of law conversion courses** on offer in 2024, with 16 institutions opening courses for application, (down from 18 in 2023 and 23 in 2022) the table below shows a notable **increase in both applications and enrolments**.

Table 2: The Evolution of the Demand for and Supply of GDL Courses, 2018-2024

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Places available	5,632	5,624	5,614	5,574	5,384	5,134	5,094
Enrolment	2,984	3,209	3,884	3,607	2,214	2,868	3,066
New applications	4,562	4,746	5,816	5,295	3,084	3,938	4,638
Deferrals from previous year	436	410	441	585	385	423	319
Total applications (including deferrals)	4,998	5,156	6,257	5,880	3,469	4,361	4,957
Enrolments/ applications %	60%	62%	62%	61%	64%	66%	62%
Annual change in total applications	-4.1%	4.0%	21.4%	-6.0%	-41.0%	25.7%	13.7%
Annual change in enrolment	-2.7%	7.5%	21.0%	-7.1%	-38.6%	29.5%	6.9%

The demand for and supply of SQE courses

It remains difficult to assess the overall demand and supply of places for SQE courses because of the number of new providers in the market, not all of which take applications through CAB.

For academic year 2024/25, however, the number of new applications for SQE courses through LawCAB rose by over 50%. The courses range from full one-year Masters' courses and postgraduate diploma courses through to modular preparation courses. Some are suitable for non-law graduates while others are specifically tailored to UK law graduates.

The variety of SQE courses and differing eligibility requirements presents a confusing market for candidates, and it is becoming evident that there may be a need for some uniformity in course labelling and guidance on course content to promote a clearer understanding among candidates about the options available to them and what will best suit their requirements.

In contrast with the decline in the LPC, the number of **new applications** in 2024 for **SQE** courses rose by **over 50%**, and **enrolments** by **over 60%**.

The variety of the SQE courses and eligibility requirements presents a **confusing market for candidates**.

Possible need for greater **uniformity in course labelling** and guidance on course content to promote a clearer understanding about the options so that candidates can determine what will best meet their needs.

More course providers are entering the **SQE market**, including those who have not previously offered the traditional LPC and GDL courses, resulting in a **year-on-year increase in the number and variety of SQE courses** available for candidates to choose from.

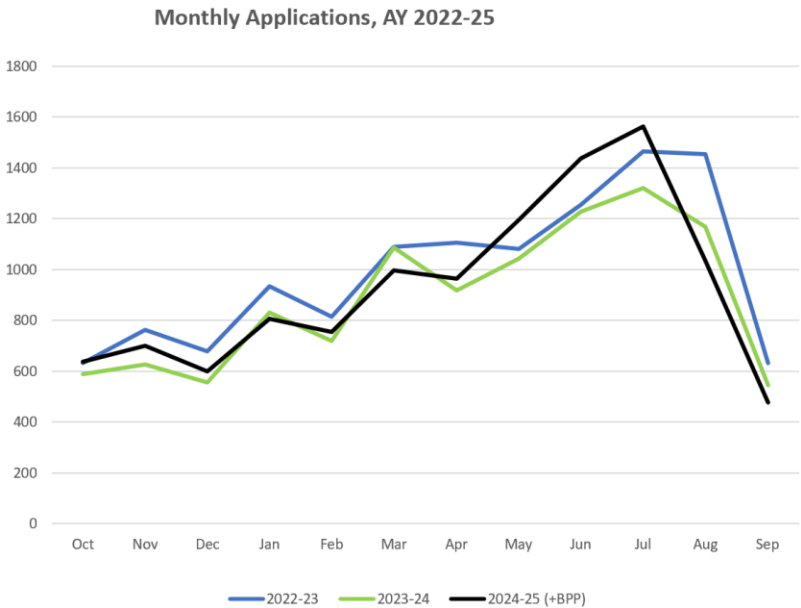
Table 3: The Evolution of the Demand for and Supply of SQE Courses, 2021-2024

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Enrolment	217	973	2,311	3,716
New applications	556	1,769	3,193	4,956
Deferrals from previous year	0	63	122	154
Total applications (including deferrals)	556	1,832	3,315	5,110
Enrolments/applications, %	39%	53%	70%	73%
Annual change in total applications	N/A	36%	32%	54%
Annual change in enrolment	N/A	348%	138%	61%

Trends in applicant behaviour

LawCAB application data provides insight into some interesting trends in the behaviour of aspiring entrants to the legal profession.

Figure 1: Monthly Applications, 2022-25



The Timing of applications

The timing of applications for all courses has demonstrated a fairly consistent pattern in recent years.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of applications (based on application fees paid) from academic year 2019-20 through academic year 2024-25.

This illustrates a roughly similar pattern across these years, with candidates looking for courses all year round, a slight pause in applications around exam time in May and a very busy period between June and August.

Figure 2: The timing of released applications, 2024-25

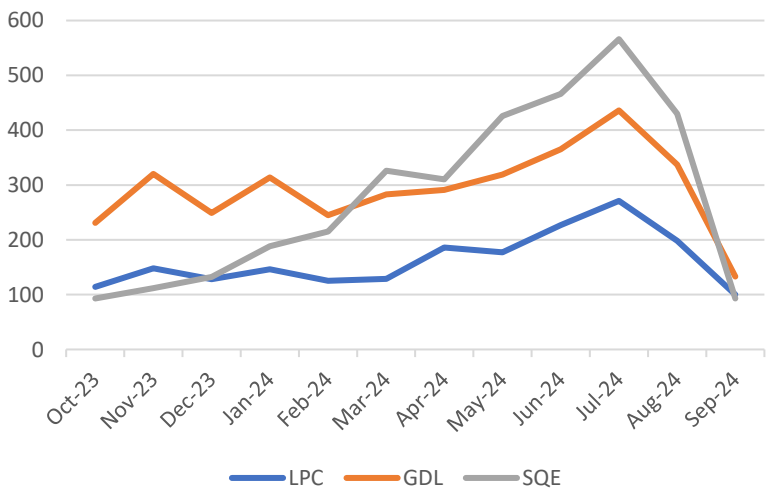


Figure 2 breaks the overall applications figure down into the different course types that applicants applied for through LawCAB in 2024.

This clearly shows a steady growth in applications for SQE courses, which rapidly overtook LPC applications from early 2024. Thereafter, the SQE applications tend to match GDL and LPC applications peaks and drop-offs as the year progresses.

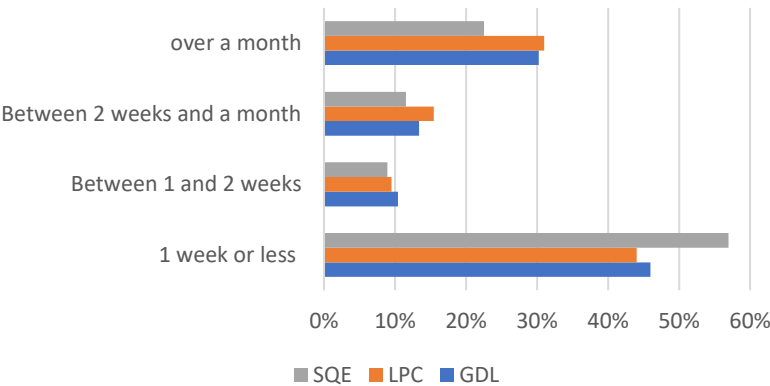
Trends in applicant behaviour

Half of the candidates coming to LawCAB now submit their applications within a week, which is a higher percentage than in recent COVID affected years.

The graph below shows that 57% of those applying for SQE courses are completing their applications within a week, compared to 46% for GDL and 44% for LPC.

GDL and LPC candidates are spending longer considering which institutions and courses to apply for.

Figure 3: Breakdown by course of the time Taken by Candidates to submit applications in 2024



The **faster submission of SQE forms**, compared to GDL and LPC could in part be explained by the **higher number of employer sponsored SQE applicants**, who are told which courses they need to apply for. This is further evidence to support the hypothesis that it is the LPC that is still being pursued by more disadvantaged candidates.



Decision time: Although many candidates come to LawCAB with their minds made up and are able to submit their applications within a week, just over a quarter of applicants are still taking more than a month to decide which courses to apply for.

Time Taken by Candidates to Complete Applications, 2024



50% of applicants took **one week or less** to complete their application



10% of applicants took **between one and two weeks**



13% of applicants took between **two weeks and a month**



27% of applicants took **longer than one month**

Who are Professional Law Course Students? Applicant Demographics and Equality and Diversity Indicators

Equality and diversity indicators continue to be an important part of CAB’s monitoring activity, and this is particularly so now, following the introduction of the SQE, given the SRA’s declared objectives around the introduction of the centralised assessments.

Figure 4: Applicant gender 2024

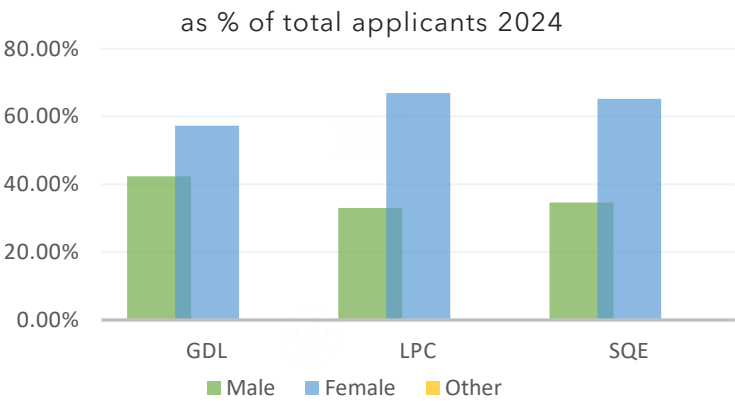
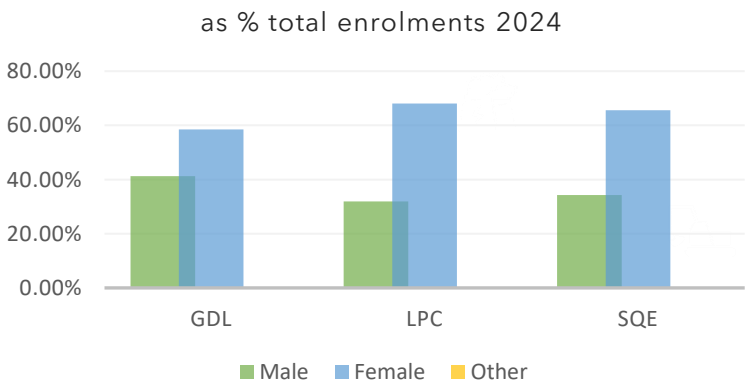


Figure 5: Enrolment gender 2024



Gender Identity

A breakdown of applications and enrolments by gender across GDL, LPC and SQE courses shows that a significant majority of candidates are female.

2024 saw a small percentage change between male and female applicants and enrolments over the last few years, with a slight decrease in female candidates compared to a slight increase in male candidates.

A comparison between LPC and SQE shows that to date, there has been very little change in the trend for female candidates to outnumber male candidates, a pattern also reflected in the SRA’s figures for those sitting the assessments.

Female applicants are more likely to enrol than their male counterparts with the percentage of female applicants going on to enrol in law conversion courses up by 5%, from 62% in 2023 to nearly 67% in 2024.

Gender identity of candidates

Table 4: Full-Time GDL Applicants by Gender Identity, 2021-24

	Year	Male	Female	Other
<i>as % total applicants</i>	2021-22	39.90%	59.80%	0.30%
	2022-23	41.70%	58.10%	0.20%
	2023-24	42.00%	57.80%	0.20%
	2024/25	42.40%	57.30%	0.30%
<i>as % total enrolments</i>	2021-22	38.50%	61.20%	0.30%
	2022-23	40.00%	59.80%	0.20%
	2023-24	41.10%	58.70%	0.20%
	2024/25	41.30%	58.50%	0.20%
<i>Enrolments as % applicants</i>	2021-22	62.50%	66.40%	71.40%
	2022-23	63.30%	67.90%	66.70%
	2023-24	64.50%	62.00%	62.50%
	2024/25	63.80%	66.90%	46.20%

Table 5: Full-Time LPC Applicants by Gender Identity, 2021-24

	Year	Male	Female	Other
<i>as % total applicants</i>	2021-22	33.80%	66.10%	0.04%
	2022-23	34.90%	64.90%	0.10%
	2023-24	34.30%	65.50%	0.20%
	2024/25	33.00%	67.00%	0.10%
<i>as % total enrolments</i>	2021-22	33.70%	66.20%	0.05%
	2022-23	35.00%	64.90%	0.12%
	2023-24	32.90%	66.90%	0.22%
	2024/25	31.90%	68.10%	0.00%
<i>Enrolments as % applicants</i>	2021-22	79.70%	80.10%	100%
	2022-23	75.60%	75.20%	85.70%
	2023-24	69.00%	73.70%	100%
	2024/25	70.00%	73.50%	0.00%

Table 6: SQE Applicants by Gender Identity, 2021-24

	Year	Male	Female	Other
<i>as % total applicants</i>	2021-22	37.80%	61.60%	0.50%
	2022-23	36.60%	63.40%	0.10%
	2023-24	34.80%	65.20%	0.10%
	2024/25	34.70%	65.20%	0.10%
<i>as % total enrolments</i>	2021-22	35.10%	64.00%	0.90%
	2022-23	36.30%	63.60%	0.10%
	2023-24	34.20%	65.80%	0.10%
	2024/25	34.30%	65.60%	0.10%
<i>Enrolments as % applicants</i>	2021-22	34.90%	39.00%	66.70%
	2022-23	54.20%	54.80%	100%
	2023-24	68.00%	69.80%	50.00%
	2024/25	73.40%	74.60%	100%

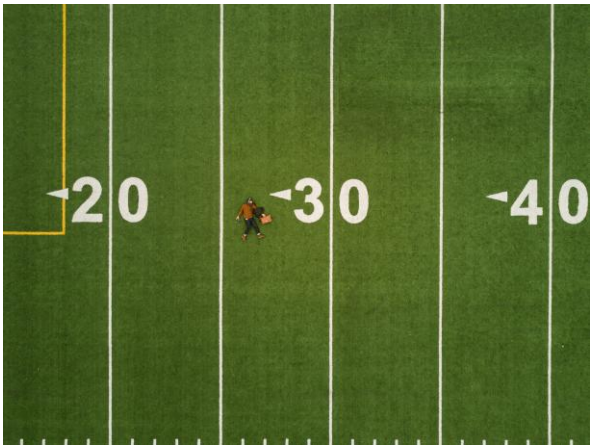
Age profile of candidates



Most applicants for GDL, LPC and SQE courses through LawCAB continue to fall within the 16-25 age bracket, with SQE applicants now mirroring more closely the age profile of LPC applicants, although with a noticeable drop-off from 36+.

The graphs on the next page (Figures 6-8) show that the GDL saw a slight decrease in the number of 16-25-year-old enrolments, alongside a corresponding increase in the number of 26-35-year-old enrolments.

As the number of candidates who are eligible for the LPC under the transitional arrangements reduces, so enrolments from the 16-25 age bracket have gone down. In contrast, 2024 saw a slight increase in candidates aged 26 upwards enrolling on LPC courses as they take advantage of being able to qualify through this route before it disappears.



Although for the last few years, applicants coming through LawCAB have been younger than those taking the SQE assessments, recent statistics published by the SRA indicate that most candidates taking SQE1 and SQE2 in the period between July 2023 - July 2024 were under 35 years of age, with more than 40% in the 16-24 age group.

This reinforces our view that SQE candidates are now “normalising” after an initial transitional phase, and with the exception of overseas qualified candidates, SQE assessment candidates and LawCAB applicants will come from the same demographic cohorts.

Table 7 opposite provides the SRA’s breakdown of those taking the SQE 1 January and July assessments, with a clear increase in the 16-24 age bracket.

As the number of candidates by age-group converges more closely with the numbers taking the SQE assessments, we should start to gain a clearer picture in the future of CAB’s share of the SQE market.

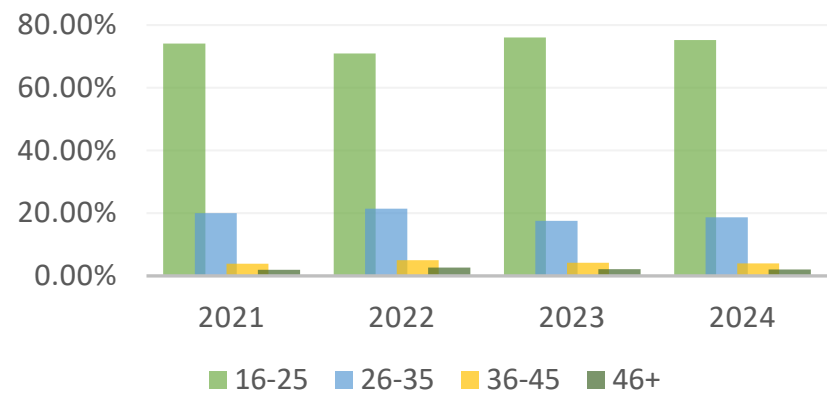
Table 7: SRA Figures on Age Profile of Candidates for Assessment

Age Group	Jan 2023	Jul 2023	Jan 2024	Jul 2024
	SQE1	SQE1	SQE1	SQE1
16-24	36%	27%	50%	31%
25-34	47%	53%	38%	49%
35-44	11%	14%	9%	14%
45-54	3%	4%	2%	4%
55-64+	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Unknown	2%	1%	1%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sources:
[SRA SQE Quality Assurance Report 2022-23](#)
[SRA SQE1 January 2024 Statistical Report](#)
[SQE1 July 2024 Statistical Report](#)

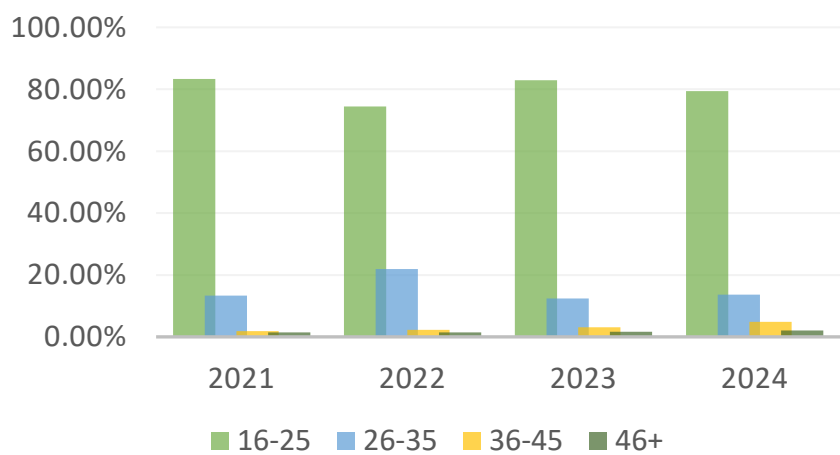
Age profile of candidates

Figure 6: GDL enrolments by age 2021-2024



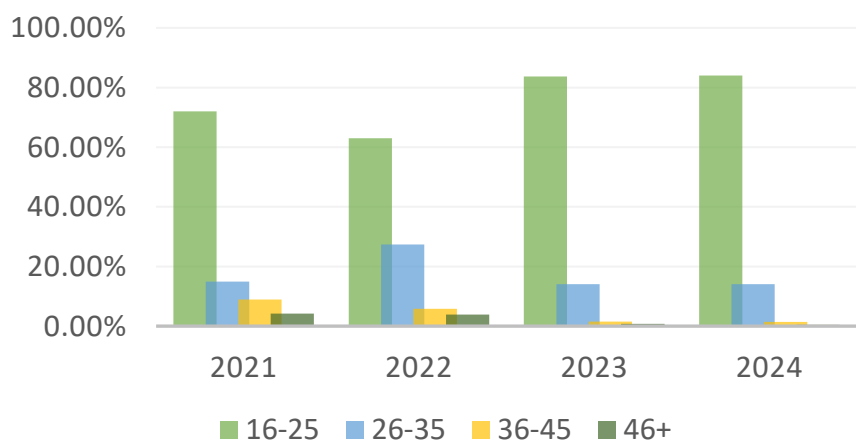
Compared with the previous year, the 2024 figures show a small **0.8% decrease** in **enrolments** from the **16-25** age group, but a **1% increase** in the number of those aged **26-35**.

Figure 7: LPC enrolments by age 2021-2024



LPC enrolments for the 16-25 age bracket were down in contrast to a slight **increase in those aged 26 upwards** as eligible candidates take advantage of being able to qualify through the LPC before it disappears.

Figure 8: SQE enrolments by age 2021-2024



SQE enrolments are starting to reflect the age profile of LPC applicants (with a noticeable drop-off from 36+) as well as recent SRA stats for those sitting the assessments.

Ethnicity of candidates



Figure 9 below and Table 9 (next page) show that the GDL remains dominated by white candidates, who form over 60% of applications and enrolments.

The LPC saw a 2% increase in black candidates in 2024, with a corresponding 2% decrease for the SQE. This could be a reflection of SQE published results which have shown a significant difference in pass rates among black/black British candidates in both SQE1 and SQE2 with candidates possibly sensing they may do better qualifying through the LPC.

There was also a slight increase in white candidates for the LPC in 2024, whereas the percentage of Asian, Mixed and Other candidates decreased for the LPC, but increased for the SQE.

Figure 9: GDL UK enrolments 2024

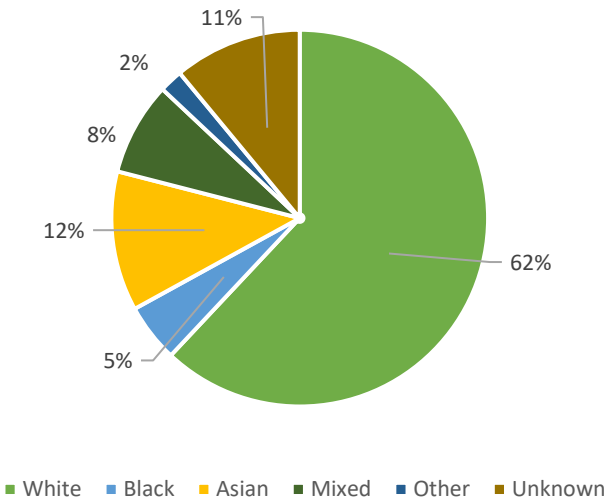


Figure 10: LPC UK enrolments 2024

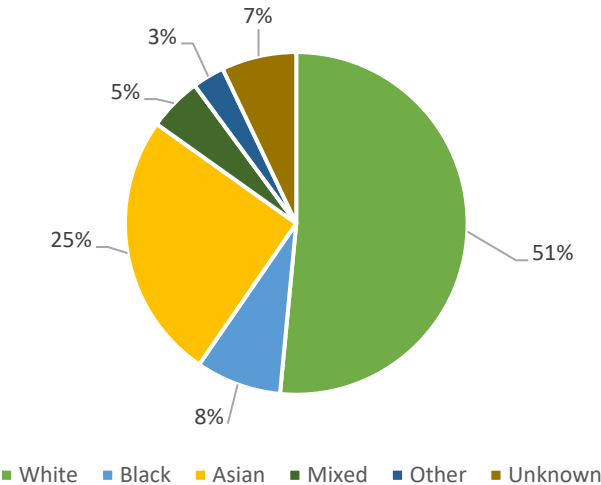
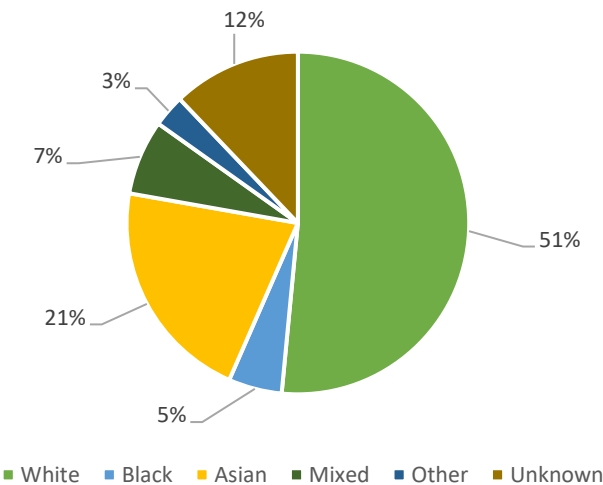


Figure 11: SQE UK enrolments 2024



Ethnicity of candidates



Table 8: Full-Time UK GDL applicants and enrolments by ethnicity, 2022-24

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024
<i>White</i>	63%	61%	60%	64%	62%	62%
<i>Black</i>	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
<i>Asian</i>	11%	12%	13%	10%	12%	12%
<i>Mixed</i>	6%	7%	8%	6%	7%	8%
<i>Other</i>	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
<i>Unknown</i>	13%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%

Table 9: Full-Time UK LPC applicants and enrolments by ethnicity, 2022-24

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024
<i>White</i>	51%	49%	48%	52%	50%	51%
<i>Black</i>	7%	7%	9%	6%	6%	8%
<i>Asian</i>	21%	26%	26%	20%	26%	25%
<i>Mixed</i>	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%
<i>Other</i>	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%
<i>Unknown</i>	13%	8%	8%	14%	9%	7%

Table 10: UK SQE applicants and enrolments for Full-Time study by ethnicity, 2022-2024

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024
<i>White</i>	52%	52%	50%	52%	54%	51%
<i>Black</i>	7%	8%	6%	6%	7%	5%
<i>Asian</i>	21%	21%	23%	20%	20%	21%
<i>Mixed</i>	6%	5%	7%	7%	5%	7%
<i>Other</i>	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
<i>Unknown</i>	11%	11%	12%	13%	11%	12%



Disability of candidates

Table 11 shows the number of UK nationals enrolling in GDL, LPC and SQE courses with certain self-declared disabilities.

Both GDL and SQE courses saw an increase in total UK nationality enrolments citing disability. Although there was a slight decrease across the board in the number of candidates with dyslexia, this continues to be the predominant listed disability.

For all courses, however, 2024 saw an increase in those citing mental health issues.

Table 11: Full-Time Enrolments of UK nationals by disability, 2022-2024

Form of Disability	GDL			LPC			SQE		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
<i>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</i>	3%	4%	5%	2%	5%	4%	<1%	<1%	3%
<i>Blind/partially sighted</i>	<1%	<1%	1%	2%	<1%	3%	<1%	<1%	2%
<i>Deaf/ hearing impairment</i>	2%	3%	2%	2%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	3%
<i>Dyslexia</i>	33%	31%	30%	29%	24%	2%	30%	35%	25%
<i>Mental health issues</i>	25%	22%	23%	26%	25%	29%	24%	17%	27%
<i>Multiple disabilities</i>	6%	7%	9%	6%	10%	4%	8%	8%	7%
<i>Unseen disability, eg diabetes, epilepsy, asthma</i>	10%	10%	9%	13%	15%	14%	16%	14%	14%
<i>Wheelchair user/ mobility difficulties</i>	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	0	<1%	2%
<i>Not listed</i>	20%	21%	20%	19%	17%	17%	14%	14%	18%
<i>Personal care support</i>	0	0	0	0	<1%	1%	0	0	0
<i>Total UK nationality enrolments citing disability</i>	228	285	293	535	268	144	88	189	226
<i>% of Total UK enrolments</i>	15%	15%	15%	14%	13%	12%	14%	12%	13%

Routes to qualification



Tables 12 and 13 show the breakdown of routes to qualification for the LPC and SQE, with Table 14 below providing insight into the academic background of those enrolling in SQE courses based on course eligibility requirements.

As the LPC continues to decline, the majority of those still taking this route are candidates with a qualifying law degree. Around a quarter of LPC enrolments are by Russell Group graduates. This compares to over 50% of SQE enrolments coming from Russell Group universities.

51%



Over half of the SQE course enrolments in 2024 were from Russell Group universities

Table 12: Route to the LPC, Enrolments for Full-Time Study 2022-2024

	% Total enrolments 2022/23	% Total enrolments 2023/24	% Total enrolments 2024/25
Route			
GDL	27%	10%	7%
QLD/LLB	73%	89%	93%
<i>o/w Russell Group</i>	29%	30%	25%
FILEX	0%	0%	1%

Table 13: Route to SQE courses, Enrolments for Full-Time Study 2022- 2024

	% Total enrolments 2022/23	% Total enrolments 2023/24	% Total enrolments 2024/25
Route			
<i>New graduates</i>	93%	96%	97%
<i>o/w Russell Group</i>	39%	52%	51%
<i>Lawyers from other jurisdictions</i>	6%	3%	3%
<i>Previously completed LPC</i>	1%	0%	0%



95% of SQE enrolments are on courses that require applicants to have previously studied the **seven foundations of legal knowledge**, traditionally found in a UK qualifying law degree or GDL/CPE.

This is partly because the majority of SQE courses on LawCAB are aimed at law graduates but also suggests that **non-law graduates are opting for the law conversion courses** before embarking on SQE preparation.

Table 14: Breakdown of SQE enrolments based on course eligibility 2024

	QLD/GDL % of total SQE enrolments	non-law % of total SQE enrolments	law/non-law* % of total SQE enrolments
<i>LLM</i>	92.87%	2.24%	2.54%
<i>PGCert/Dip</i>	2.24%	0.00%	0.12%
<i>Prep course</i>	0%	0%	0%
<i>% of SQE enrolments</i>	95.10%	2.24%	2.66%

* 'law/non-law' refers to courses which are suitable for both law and non-law applicants.

Who funds participation in the courses?



Tables 15 –17 show how applicants funded their enrolment in GDL, LPC and SQE courses between 2022-24, revealing a small decrease in employer funding across the board in 2024.

Although the LPC and SQE tables also show a significant switch on the part of employers from funding LPC courses to supporting candidates in courses to help them prepare for the SQE assessments, the figures point to an overall reduction by 14% in the number of employer funded places for GDL, LPC and SQE courses in 2024 compared to the previous year. Looking at LPC and SQE combined, 2024 saw 203 fewer funded places representing a fall of 13%.

The figures for 2024 point to an overall
14% reduction

In the number of **employer funded places** for GDL, LPC and SQE courses compared to the previous year

Table 15: How the GDL is funded, enrolments for Full-Time Study 2022-2024

Course Fee Payer	2022/23	% of Total	2023/24	% of Total	2024/25	% of Total
Self-funded	1,684	83%	2,166	83%	2128	86%
Employer	348	17%	430	17%	355	14%
TOTAL	2,032	100%	2,596	100%	2483	100%

Table 16: How the LPC is funded, enrolments for Full-Time Study 2022-2024

Course Fee Payer	2022/23	% of Total	2023/24	% of Total	2024/25	% of Total
Self-funded	3,327	66%	2,217	83%	1,367	90%
Employer	1,725	34%	470	17%	146	10%
TOTAL	5,052	100%	2,687	100%	1513	100%

Table 17: How the SQE is funded, enrolments for Full-Time Study 2022-2024

Course Fee Payer	2022/23	% of Total	2023/24	% of Total	2024/25	% of Total
Self-funded	703	73%	1,122	51%	1385	53%
Employer	262	27%	1,088	49%	1209	47%
TOTAL	965	100%	2210	100%	2594	100%

Who funds participation in the courses?



Table 18 shows the share of Russell Group graduates amongst those obtaining sponsored or funded enrolments in courses in 2024.

The figures don't differ from 2023 and continue to demonstrate that the chances of a non-Russell group graduate being funded through the GDL are very small.

Table 18: Training Contract/Sponsored Enrolments 2023-2024

	2023		2024	
	% Russell Group graduates in sponsored enrolments	% UK Nationality Russell Group graduates in UK sponsored enrolments	% Russell Group graduates in sponsored enrolments	% UK Nationality Russell Group graduates in UK sponsored enrolments
GDL	81%	86%	80%	86%
LPC	57%	52%	53%	52%
SQE	75%	76%	76%	76%
Total	72%	73%	75%	76%

Where are candidates choosing to study?



Table 19 below shows where in England and Wales candidates are choosing to undertake postgraduate professional study.

London, the South East and South West take a larger number of the GDL and SQE applications and enrolments, while the LPC is popular in the Midlands, North and Wales.

Table 19: Applications in England and Wales

Applications across E&W	% of total GDL	% of total LPC	% of total SQE
London & South East	59%	33%	57%
South West	5%	3%	7%
Midlands and East	9%	21%	15%
North East	7%	10%	7%
North West	10%	13%	11%
Wales	2%	11%	1%

Map of Enrolments in England and Wales

Where are candidates choosing to enrol in courses?

The map below illustrates how enrolments are spread across England and Wales.

Over half of GDL and SQE course enrolments are in London and the South East.

Outside of London, the Midlands accounts for a quarter of all LPC enrolments, with a smaller spread across the rest of England and Wales.

The **majority** of funded places are **in London** and the South East, with over **50%** for both LPC and GDL.

Over 80% of the **SQE funded places** were by firms in **London** and the **South East**.

Figure 12: Enrolments in England and Wales 2024





International applicants

The majority of candidates applying for GDL and LPC courses and for SQE courses offered through LawCAB are UK nationals. International applicants nevertheless continue to form a significant minority.

Table 20 shows a slight decline in international applications and enrolments for both GDL and LPC, but 1% slight increase on 2023 for SQE enrolments. The figures suggest that a higher percentage of international students are opting for SQE courses than for the GDL and LPC courses. For LPC, this is likely due to international applicants being less likely to be eligible for this route, however, more generally it could also reflect a desire on the part of international applicants to complete their training as quickly and cost effectively as possible by doing a course, which includes SQE assessment preparation.

Across all courses, over two thirds of enrolments are from UK nationals, and 80% or more of enrolments were from UK domiciled candidates which suggests that international students already studying in the UK are an important source of applications for postgraduate professional law courses.

Table 20: Share of International Applicants in Applications and Enrolments, 2022-24
International is defined by nationality

	Share of international students in total applications			Share of international students in total enrolments		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
GDL	36%	36%	34%	25%	25%	22%
LPC	26%	30%	26%	22%	25%	22%
SQE	42%	37%	36%	33%	30%	31%

Figure 13: Falling international applications and enrolments

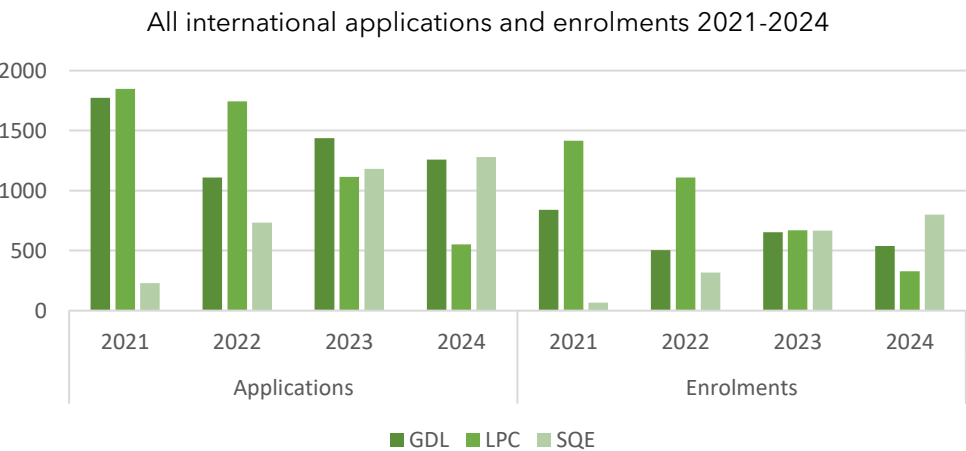


Figure 13 illustrates a marked **decline** in **international applications** and **enrolments** across all courses since 2021



International applicants

Tables 21 and 22 below show a breakdown of international student applications and enrolments by EU/EEA and rest of the World categories.

These figures indicate that the SQE route is proving to be a more attractive route for international students compared to the LPC, which has traditionally attracted around 25% of total applications and enrolments.

International applications for the GDL remain robust, however, because this remains an alternative route into domestic qualification in a number of important common law jurisdictions.

In 2024, **over a third of SQE** applicants and enrolments came from **outside the UK**.

Table 21: Share of International Applicants in Applications 2023-24
(International is defined by nationality)

	2023 Applications			2024 Applications		
	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE
<i>UK National</i>	64%	70%	63%	67%	74%	63%
<i>RoW</i>	28%	21%	27%	27%	19%	27%
<i>EU/EEA</i>	8%	9%	10%	7%	7%	9%
<i>All</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 22: Share of International Applicants in Enrolments 2023-24
(International is defined by nationality)

	2023 Enrolments			2024 Enrolments		
	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE
<i>UK National</i>	75%	75%	70%	78%	78%	69%
<i>RoW</i>	17%	15%	20%	16%	14%	22%
<i>EU/EEA</i>	8%	9%	10%	6%	8%	9%
<i>All</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Where do international applicants come from?

Tables 23 - 25 show in greater detail the breakdown amongst the nationalities most frequently reflected in applications and enrolments for different courses. This shows that populous Common Law countries, such as Pakistan, India and Nigeria continue to account for the biggest source of applications and enrolments for all types of professional law courses, including SQE preparation.

As in previous years, the proportion of applicants eventually enrolling in courses following their application, varies widely. In general, applications from wealthier countries, not surprisingly, tend to convert more consistently into enrolments.

Table 23: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time GDL courses, 2022-24

Nationality	Applications			Enrolments			% Enrolment/Applications		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
<i>Pakistani</i>	134	181	156	51	48	40	38%	27%	26%
<i>Ghanaian</i>	117	151	131	30	37	34	26%	25%	26%
<i>Indian</i>	106	129	114	50	51	49	47%	40%	43%
<i>Nigerian</i>	62	38	33	15	10	11	24%	26%	33%
<i>US Citizen</i>	61	88	86	30	44	42	49%	50%	49%
<i>Chinese</i>	51	77	58	25	42	31	49%	55%	53%
<i>French</i>	32	47	28	19	31	16	59%	66%	57%
<i>Bangladeshi</i>	32	51	56	9	18	21	28%	35%	38%
<i>Italian</i>	31	47	37	15	31	22	48%	66%	59%
<i>Irish</i>	29	43	35	23	29	21	79%	67%	60%
<i>Hong Kong</i>	28	42	31	18	32	20	64%	76%	65%
<i>German</i>	20	24	17	14	13	12	70%	54%	71%
<i>Canadian</i>	20	25	33	7	15	19	35%	60%	58%
<i>Turkish</i>	15	25	20	4	9	7	27%	36%	35%
<i>Polish</i>	13	18	18	8	8	7	62%	44%	39%
<i>Spanish</i>	13	20	14	10	13	12	77%	65%	86%
<i>Romanian</i>	12	13	10	8	10	3	67%	77%	30%
<i>Dutch</i>	11	14	11	7	9	6	64%	64%	55%
<i>South Korean</i>	10	10	12	7	6	4	70%	60%	33%
<i>Portuguese</i>	7	7	13	5	4	6	71%	57%	46%
All international	1108	1436	1259	505	652	539	46%	45%	43%



Where do international LPC applicants come from?

Tables 24 and 25 show that in 2024 international SQE applications outstripped LPC applications by some margin.

Table 24: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time LPC, 2022-24

Nationality	Applications			Enrolments			% Enrolment/Applications		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Indian	117	61	45	56	41	22	48%	67%	49%
Pakistani	106	118	63	46	52	32	43%	44%	51%
Nigerian	102	51	28	49	22	14	48%	43%	50%
Italian	73	39	29	54	28	21	74%	72%	72%
Ghanaian	67	40	28	36	22	9	54%	55%	32%
Canadian	57	28	12	39	22	5	68%	79%	42%
Hong Kong	56	19	11	36	14	7	62%	74%	64%
US citizen	54	20	6	35	16	3	65%	80%	50%
Malaysian	53	28	10	38	16	7	72%	57%	70%
Irish	49	39	12	40	27	9	82%	69%	75%
French	47	27	7	35	23	7	74%	85%	100%
Trinidadian	46	57	30	21	25	19	46%	44%	63%
Singaporean	46	18	3	34	11	3	74%	61%	100%
Polish	46	32	26	39	25	24	85%	78%	92%
German	41	23	8	29	18	8	71%	78%	100%
Cypriot	40	27	13	32	17	9	80%	63%	69%
Chinese	38	17	11	26	10	5	68%	59%	45%
Greek	37	14	3	27	10	3	73%	71%	100%
Romanian	35	17	11	28	12	9	80%	71%	82%
Portuguese	28	22	10	16	13	7	57%	59%	70%
All International	1743	1114	552	1108	670	329	64%	60%	60%



Where do international applicants for the SQE come from?

The SQE route to qualification has many potential upsides for foreign applicants, compared to the LPC route, but is still becoming known and there is still more to be done to familiarise international applicants with this new route to qualification.

Table 25: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time SQE, 2022-24

Nationality	Applications			Enrolments			% Enrolment/Applications		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Indian	93	97	129	26	43	89	28%	44%	69%
Nigerian	82	67	75	28	22	31	34%	33%	41%
Pakistani	51	124	162	11	47	71	22%	38%	44%
Ghanaian	30	50	58	5	14	18	17%	28%	31%
Malaysian	30	45	51	17	31	41	57%	69%	80%
Canadian	24	29	34	17	22	26	71%	76%	76%
Italian	22	39	36	15	26	29	68%	67%	81%
Chinese	20	35	29	11	19	18	55%	54%	62%
US citizen	17	33	33	9	18	20	53%	55%	61%
Singaporean	17	28	36	13	22	27	76%	79%	75%
French	14	31	32	11	21	20	79%	68%	63%
Irish	14	35	38	10	27	30	71%	77%	79%
German	14	29	23	7	22	17	50%	76%	74%
Hong Kong	13	36	41	6	28	37	46%	78%	90%
Romanian	10	16	16	6	12	14	60%	75%	88%
Portuguese	9	21	14	9	13	10	100%	62%	71%
Polish	8	26	31	5	22	19	63%	85%	61%
Greek	5	17	18	2	11	15	40%	65%	83%
Dutch	5	11	14	3	7	9	60%	64%	64%
Cypriot	4	13	19	4	11	12	100%	85%	63%
All international	734	1182	1281	317	666	799	43%	56%	62%

Student experience survey 2024/25

In early 2025, CAB undertook a student experience survey of all applicants for the 2024/25 academic year. We were seeking to find out:

- i) What had students considered before applying for their particular course and what, with hindsight, did they wish they had known?
- ii) What are they planning to do next on completing their courses?
- iii) What they are now doing if they ended up applying but not enrolling?

We contacted over 10,000 applicants for whom we had current contact addresses and had 621 responses, which provides us with responses that are valid for the wider population.

A statistically significant result for the population overall, with a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence rate would have required 370 responses. The responses to the different courses are all separately statistically significant but have a higher margin of error rate of 7-10%.



What we learned from candidates

The survey provided feedback from students about their understanding of the routes to qualification in law, choosing and applying for courses as well as their post-enrolment impressions and what sort of things they wish they had known.

What do they wish they had known?

- how intensive and demanding the course would be, including the time commitment and the impact on their wellbeing;
- the costs involved, including tuition fees, exam costs, and availability of scholarships;
- whether courses leaned more to bar qualification or the SQE route;
- the different career paths (barrister vs. solicitor) and the qualifications required for each;
- the competitiveness of securing Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) and training contracts.

What do candidates want?

- early deadlines for course discounts, and the availability of scholarships;
- funding options for conversion courses and subsequent qualifications;
- the process of becoming a lawyer, including the importance of securing vacation schemes and training contracts;
- the levels of work experience expected and the difficulty of getting pupillage;
- other career options available besides becoming a lawyer.

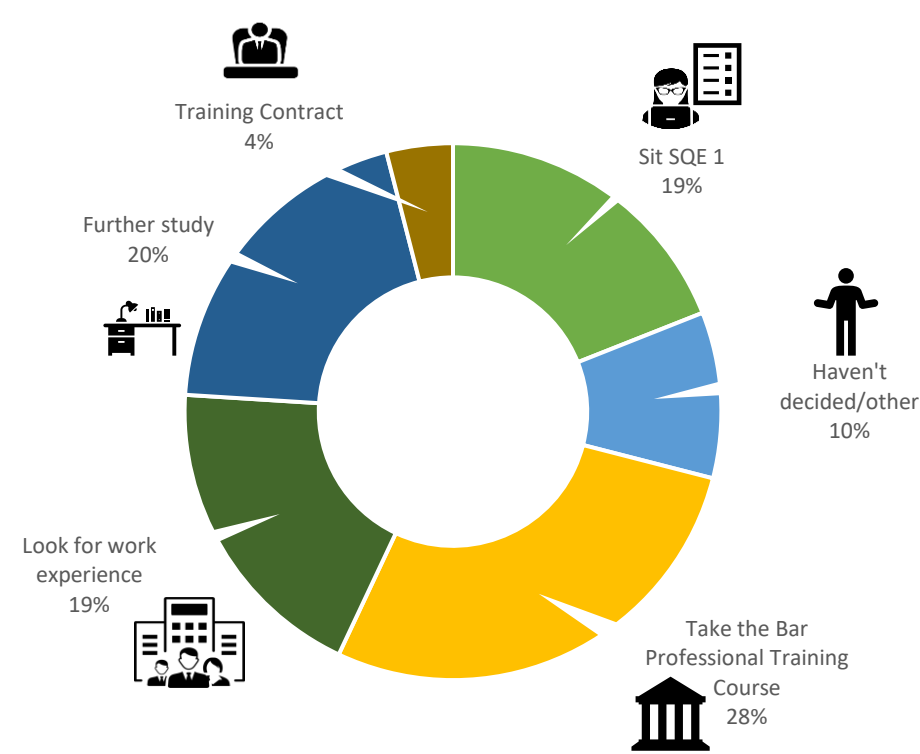
A number of **international respondents** highlighted that if they had known that doing an undergraduate law degree would have enabled them to avoid doing a GDL before the Bar Course they would have chosen that route (especially applicants from Pakistan).

The **PGDL+SQE** prep route emerged as a **favourite** for those looking to qualify through the SQE.

What we found out about GDL students

Students who applied for a GDL starting in 2024 were asked what they intended to do when they had finished their course. There were some notable differences compared to the responses received in the survey of 2023 students, most notably that people seem to be taking longer gaps between finishing a course and taking the SQE assessments. Figure 14 below shows what the 2024 GDL candidates told us they intend to do next.

Figure 14: GDL candidates - what next?



What had non-enrolments done?

Fewer than 10% of GDL applicants did not enrol. Of these:

- 28% had deferred

But around half either went elsewhere, changed their minds or chose qualification in another country

- 33% found the course was too expensive

And what will they do next?

- Over half will reapply or have reapplied
- 14% have changed their career plans

Table 26: GDL candidates 2023-2024 - what next?

GDL candidates - What next?	2023/24	2024/25
Sit SQE 1	37%	19%
Haven't decided/other	19%	10%
Take the Bar Professional Training Course	19%	28%
Look for work experience	19%	19%
Further study	4%	20%
Training Contract	2%	4%

Table 26 compares the responses received from 2023 and 2024 candidates. The figures show a drop off in the proportion of candidates planning on going straight to the SQE 1 assessment.

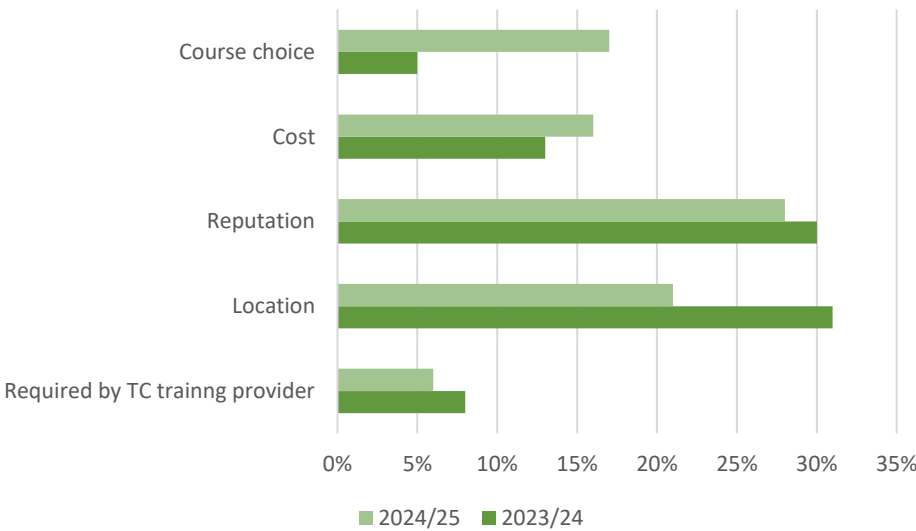
A higher proportion of those doing the GDL in 2024 plan to do BTC and there is a big increase in those planning further study.

What we learned from the LPC students

When it comes to choosing a course, location and reputation remain key factors.

Many respondents indicated that they wish they had known more about alternative routes to qualifying before they started their course, suggesting perhaps that they went from undergrad to LPC without really looking around and doing their research.

Figure 15: What factors influenced students' choice of LPC course?



12% of LPC students in 2024 indicated that they had chosen to remain with their **current training provider**

A **large proportion** of comments from **LPC students** about what they wish they had known before embarking on their qualification journey was how **long** it can take, and how **difficult** it is to **secure a training contract**

And what next?

Students who applied for the LPC starting in 2024 were asked what they intended to do when they had finished their course.



33% will start a **training contract** - (cf. 35% in 2023-24)



53% plan to seek **work experience** (cf. 57% in 2023-24)



<1% plan to sit **SQE 2**

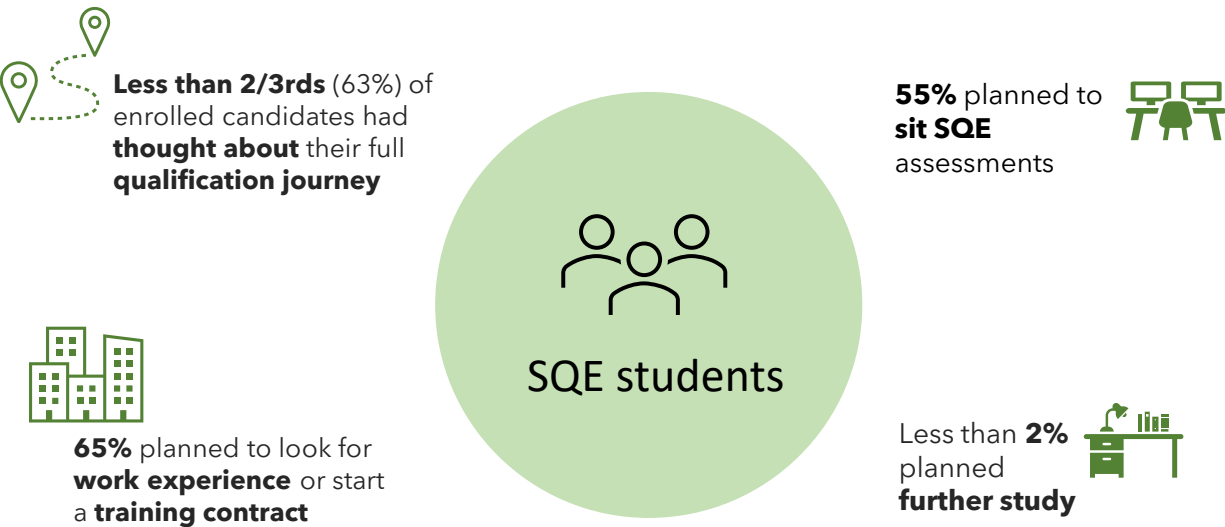
What we learned from the SQE candidates

There was overwhelming concern among students about how to find qualifying work experience, the difficulties in getting a foot in the door of the job market, especially among those without previous work experience. Candidates expressed uncertainty about what employers are looking for in the post-SQE environment, in terms of both training and work experience.

Candidates also expressed anxiety about the difficulty of the SQE assessments and understanding how to choose the right course to adequately prepare them.

And what next?

Students who applied for an SQE course starting in 2024 were asked what they intended to do when they had finished their course.



What more do SQE students want?

More **guidance** on **booking** for **assessments**, logging on with **MySRA**. Lots of confusion!

More **help** in **understanding** how to find **work experience**, log work experience, find **training contracts**

More **transparency** around **pass rates** of candidates studying with **different providers**



Concluding remarks

The SQE has now clearly supplanted the LPC as the main route to qualification as a solicitor, and the drop off in both supply of LPC courses and demand for them has accelerated in the past year. But despite this rapid disappearance in the LPC, it remains a popular choice for candidates who might be considered to be less privileged. This suggests that there are barriers to the SQE route, such as concerns about cost and pass rates, that should be addressed.

CAB Ltd Secretariat

May 2025

© Central Applications Board Ltd 2025

Disclaimer

The information contained in this report draws on statistics gathered from the LawCAB application portal run by the Central Applications Board Ltd. The commentary provided is supplied by Hook Tangaza and does not necessarily represent the views of the CAB Ltd Board or its Members. All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this report but CAB Ltd accepts no responsibility for reliance on its content. Statistics and other material contained in this report may be quoted or reprinted, provided credit is given to LawCAB (the Central Applications Board)

© The Central Applications Board Ltd 2024



Central Applications Board Ltd
The St Botolph Building
138 Houndsditch
London
EC3A 7AR
www.lawcabs.ac.uk

