



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 2025

Annual Statistical Report 2025



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Introduction

This annual statistical report presents an overview of the market for professional law courses in the 2025-26 academic year. It is the fourth report to include data on applications and enrolments for SQE courses offered by CAB members, alongside information on GDL programmes and the now rapidly declining LPC.

As in previous years, the report examines the evolution of the professional legal education market, trends in applicant behaviour, demographic patterns and equality and diversity indicators, routes into university study, and funding.

While the statistics do not capture the entire market, most of our original member institutions – those that previously delivered LPC and GDL courses – have chosen to remain with CAB and now list their SQE and law conversion courses through the portal.

We are also seeing continued growth in membership, as we attract new providers who are entering the market to offer SQE programmes and law conversion courses for aspiring solicitors and barristers. Our goal continues to be to provide a single, reliable destination – a one-stop-shop – for anyone seeking to qualify into the legal profession, making it simpler for candidates to explore available courses and understand the qualification route that best suits them.

In 2025, LawCAB processed more than 11,000 applications, resulting in over 8,000 enrolments across our member institutions.

The highlights of this analysis are as follows:

- ❑ The decline in the LPC market accelerated sharply in 2025, with enrolments falling by 73% compared with the previous year.
- ❑ 2025 saw enrolments for law conversion courses rise by 12% compared with 2024, while SQE course enrolments increased by 19%.
- ❑ Applications for the GDL and other law conversion courses have remained strong, reflecting ongoing demand not only from aspiring barristers but also from non-law graduates seeking the foundational legal knowledge that will best help to prepare them for the SQE assessments.
- ❑ There was an overall rise in international applications and enrolments for both the GDL and SQE courses; however, the proportion of international students continued to follow the downward trajectory seen in recent years.

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

Rebecca Bramble-McDade
CAB Manager
March 2026

The demand for and supply of LPC courses

The 2025 figures highlight the continued and rapid decline of the LPC with just seven higher education institutions offering the course for academic year 2025/26. Of the reduced number of places available, only 7% of these were taken.

With both applications and enrolments down by over 70%, as well as a 61% drop in the number of employer sponsored candidates, we are now in the final epoch of the LPC as the market is transitioning much more quickly to the SQE qualification route.

- **37% drop in available places** compared to previous year
- **73% decrease in enrolments**
- **88% fewer deferrals**

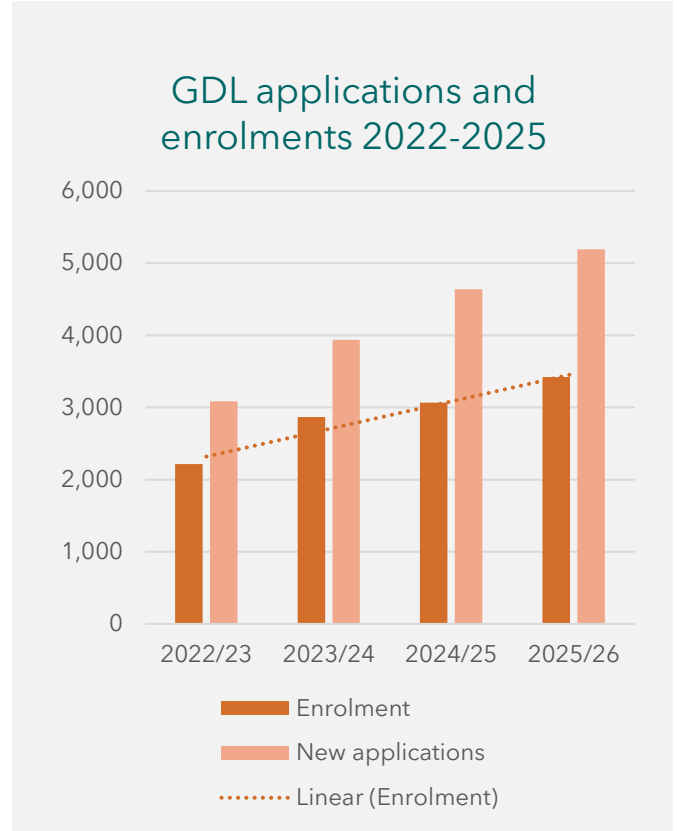
Table 1: The Evolution of the Demand for and Supply of LPC Courses, 2020-2025

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Places available	11,021	11,021	11,021	9,887	9,741	6,060
Enrolment	7,338	6,415	5,331	2,836	1,594	426
New applications	8,728	7,752	6,705	3,726	2,136	595
Deferrals from previous year	582	517	469	443	167	73
Total applications (including deferrals)	9,310	8,269	7,174	4,169	2,303	668
Enrolments/applications %	79%	78%	74%	68%	69%	64%
Annual change in total applications	4%	-11%	-13%	-42%	-45%	-71%
Annual change in enrolment	6%	-13%	-17%	-47%	-44%	-73%

The demand for and supply of GDL courses

As with the previous year, the number of institutions offering law conversion courses fell again slightly in 2025 (down to 15). Despite this, demand continues to grow - new applications rose by 12% compared with 2024, and there was a corresponding increase in enrolments.

Although a law conversion course is no longer a mandatory requirement for qualifying as a solicitor, it remains widely regarded as a valuable route into the legal profession, providing a solid academic foundation in law that supports preparation for the SQE assessments as well as other legal career paths. It is also still required as part of the academic component for Bar training. As more data emerges from the SQE assessment sittings, candidates are increasingly aware of the importance of building a solid foundation in legal knowledge to maximise their chances of success.



The table below shows that in the years following the launch of the SQE in 2021, there has been a year-on-year **increase in both applications for, and enrolments in, law conversion courses**. The last two years have also seen a **decline in the number of deferrals**.

Table 2: The Evolution of the Demand for GDL Courses, 2020-2025

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Enrolment	3,884	3,607	2,214	2,868	3,066	3,422
New applications	5,816	5,295	3,084	3,938	4,638	5,193
Deferrals from previous year	441	585	385	423	319	300
Total applications (including deferrals)	6,257	5,880	3,469	4,361	4,957	5,493
Enrolments/ applications %	62%	61%	64%	66%	62%	62%
Annual change in total applications	21%	-6%	-41%	26%	14%	11%
Annual change in enrolment	21%	-7%	-39%	30%	7%	12%

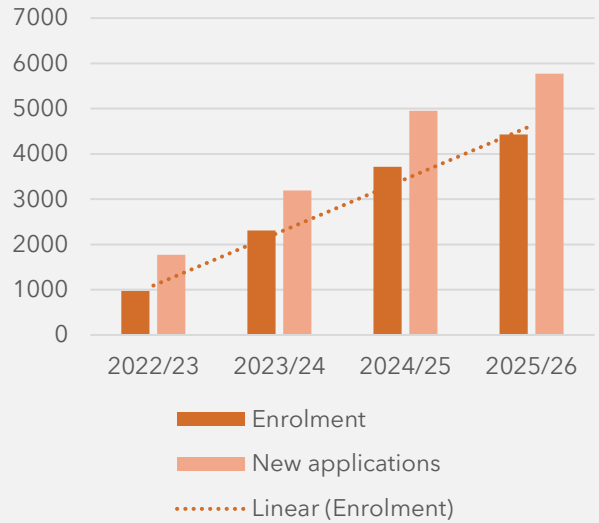
The demand for and supply of SQE courses

Although it remains difficult to assess overall demand and availability of places on SQE courses – since a proportion of providers offering SQE training do not use LawCAB – it is clear from the 24 providers who were on CAB offering SQE courses in 2025 that demand continues to grow. Both applications and enrolments have risen again, though at a slightly slower rate than in previous years.

A variety of courses is still emerging, with different eligibility requirements and intended outcomes. Some focus solely on SQE1 preparation, others cover both SQE1 and SQE2, and we are also now starting to see more courses designed specifically for SQE2.

Courses delivered at LLM/Master’s level continue to attract the highest numbers, largely because they remain eligible for student funding.

SQE applications and enrolments 2022-2025



Using a benchmark of an average of 6,322 LPC enrolments per year over the past eight years, **2025 SQE enrolments** submitted via LawCAB stand at roughly **70% of historic LPC levels**.

Table 3: The Evolution of the Demand for and Supply of SQE Courses, 2021-2025

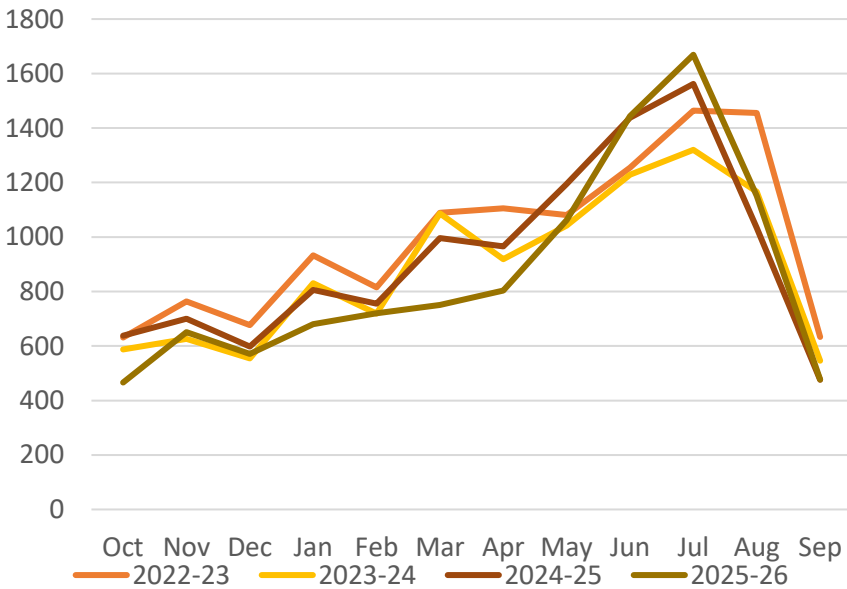
Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Enrolment	217	973	2,311	3,716	4,430
New applications	556	1,769	3,193	4,956	5,774
Deferrals from previous year	0	63	122	154	203
Total applications (including deferrals)	556	1,832	3,315	5,110	5,977
Enrolments/applications, %	39%	53%	70%	73%	74%
Annual change in total applications	N/A	36%	32%	54%	17%
Annual change in enrolment	N/A	348%	138%	61%	19%

Trends in applicant behaviour



LawCAB application data is useful in identifying trends and any changes to patterns in the behaviour of prospective entrants to the legal profession.

Figure 1: Monthly Applications, 2022-25



The Timing of applications

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of applications (based on application fees paid) from academic years 2022 to 2025.

The pattern remains fairly consistent across 2022–2024, but the 2025 cycle follows a slightly different trajectory; applications rise slowly and steadily from January to April, then increase sharply between April and July, before dropping off again quite noticeably from August through September.

Figure 2: The timing of released applications, 2025-26

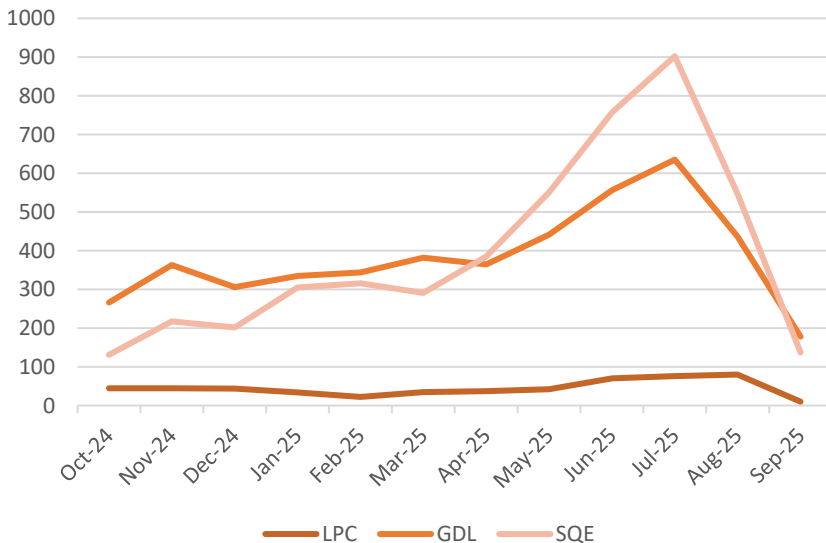


Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the numbers of applications released per month for each course.

While LPC application volumes have remained static, SQE applications rise sharply between late March and late July. By contrast, GDL applications follow a steadier trajectory, retaining the traditional peak in July.

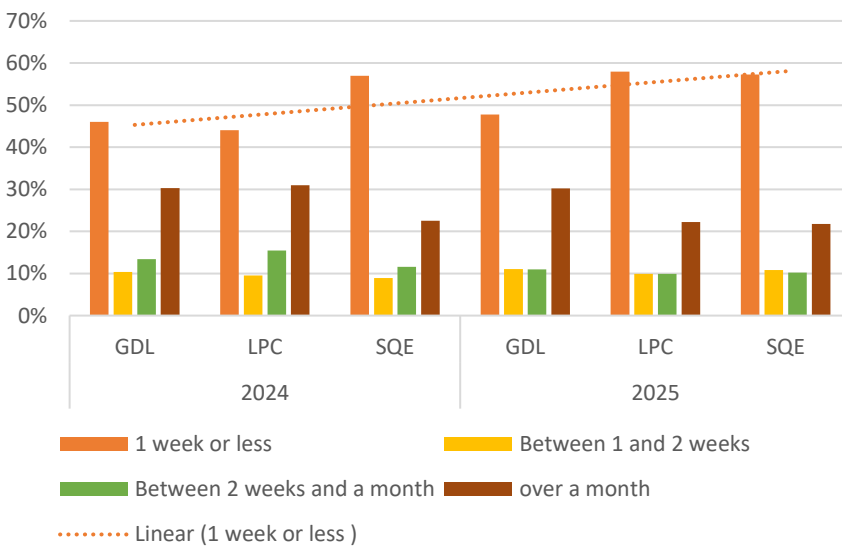
Trends in applicant behaviour



Over half of the candidates applying through LawCAB are now submitting their applications within a week. The data shows a modest rise from 50% in 2024 to 53% in 2025.

A breakdown of the figures reveals that LPC and SQE applicants tend to complete their forms more quickly than those applying for GDL or other law conversion courses. Since most SQE applicants are already law graduates, the data suggest there is less certainty among non-law graduates who are taking longer to explore and consider their options before deciding how they want to prepare for qualification, while LPC and SQE applicants are much clearer about the steps they need to take to complete their qualification journey.

Figure 3: Breakdown by course of the time taken by candidates to submit applications in 2025



Fewer than half of applicants for law conversion courses complete their applications within one week, while **30% of GDL applicants** take **more than a month** to submit.

The trend line in the graph in Fig.3 also shows that applicants for the **LPC** were **more decisive** in 2025, taking advantage of this pathway while it is still available.



Decision time: Over a quarter of applicants are still taking more than a month to decide which courses to apply for, but the majority complete their applications within one-two weeks.

Time Taken by Candidates to Complete Applications, 2025



53% of applicants took **one week or less** to complete their application



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



11% of applicants took between **two weeks and a month**



26% of applicants took **longer than one month**

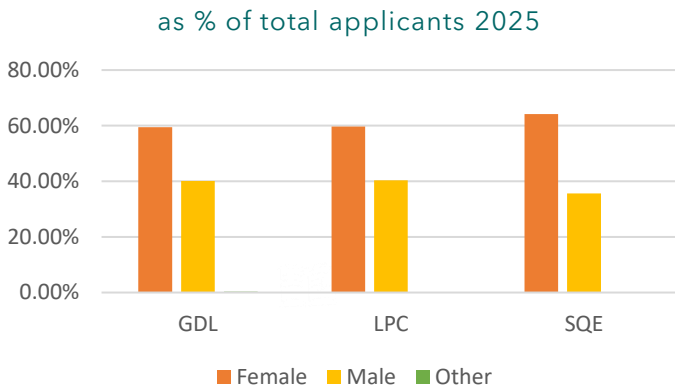
Who are professional law course students? Applicant demographics and equality and diversity indicators



Figures for the last eight years consistently show a higher number of female candidates applying for and enrolling in LPC, GDL and latterly, SQE courses.

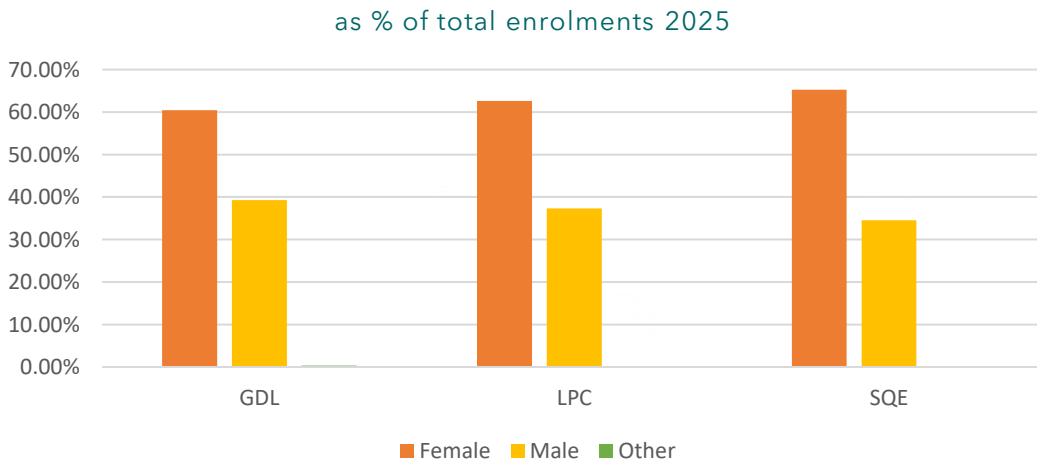
The 2025 figures continue this trend, however, diverging from previous years, 2025 saw an increase in the percentage of male candidates choosing the LPC route from 33% in 2024 to just over 40% in 2025. Despite this, a lower percentage of male candidates ultimately went on to enrol in the LPC.

Figure 4: Applicant gender 2025



For every course type, women remain the largest group of applicants and enrolments, reflecting a wider trend across the higher-education sector.

Figure 5: Enrolment gender 2025



Gender identity of candidates



Table 4: Full-Time GDL Applicants by Gender Identity, 2022-25

	Year	Male	Female	Other
as % total applicants	2022-23	42%	58%	0%
	2023-24	42%	58%	0%
	2024/25	42%	57%	0%
	2025/26	40%	59%	0%
as % total enrolments	2022-23	40%	60%	0%
	2023-24	41%	59%	0%
	2024/25	41%	59%	0%
	2025/26	39%	60%	0%
Enrolments as % applicants	2022-23	63%	68%	67%
	2023-24	65%	62%	63%
	2024/25	64%	67%	46%
	2025/26	64%	67%	59%

Table 5: Full-Time LPC Applicants by Gender Identity, 2022-25

	Year	Male	Female	Other
as % total applicants	2022-23	35%	65%	0%
	2023-24	34%	66%	0%
	2024/25	33%	67%	0%
	2025/26	40%	60%	0%
as % total enrolments	2022-23	35%	65%	0%
	2023-24	33%	67%	0%
	2024/25	32%	68%	0%
	2025/26	37%	63%	0%
Enrolments as % applicants	2022-23	76%	75%	86%
	2023-24	69%	74%	100%
	2024/25	70%	74%	0%
	2025/26	62%	70%	0%

Table 6: SQE Applicants by Gender Identity, 2022-25

	Year	Male	Female	Other
as % total applicants	2022-23	37%	63%	0%
	2023-24	35%	65%	0%
	2024/25	35%	65%	0%
	2025/26	36%	64%	0%
as % total enrolments	2022-23	36%	64%	0%
	2023-24	34%	66%	0%
	2024/25	34%	66%	0%
	2025/26	35%	65%	0%
Enrolments as % applicants	2022-23	54%	55%	100%
	2023-24	68%	70%	50%
	2024/25	73%	75%	100%
	2025/26	72%	75%	58%

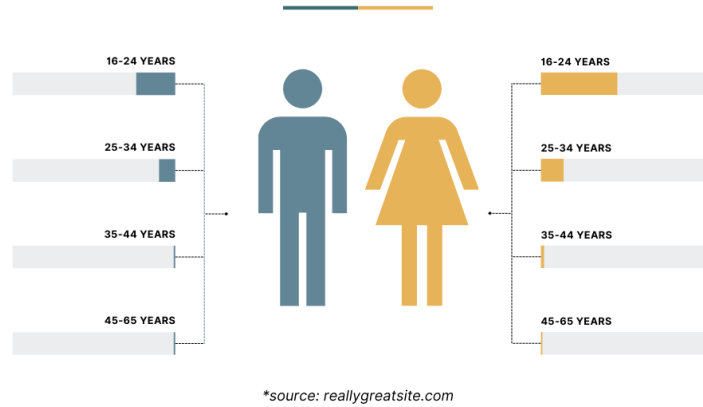
Age profile of candidates



Candidates applying through LawCAB are still largely within the 16-25 age range and we continue to see SQE course applications and enrolments reflecting the historic profile previously associated with LPC applicants.

Although more than 70% of SQE enrolments through LawCAB fall within the SRA's 16-24 age bracket, with fewer than a quarter in the 26-35 range, SRA data for 2023-2025 shows a higher proportion of candidates aged 26-35 sitting the SQE1 assessment.

LawCAB 2025 enrolment age demographic



This indicates that the age distribution observed through LawCAB is broadly reflected in the SRA's figures (shown in table 7 below) as candidates progress through their qualification journey.

The data suggests that SQE candidate demographics are settling into a more stable pattern following the initial transitional phase and that with the likely exception of overseas qualified lawyers, SQE assessment candidates will continue to reflect the demographic cohorts we are seeing coming through LawCAB.

Table 7: SRA figures on age profile of candidates for SQE 1 assessments 2023-2025

Age Group	Jan-23	Jul-23	Jan-24	Jul-24	Jan-25	Jul-25
16-24	36%	27%	50%	31%	52%	36%
25-34	47%	53%	38%	49%	36%	46%
35-44	11%	14%	9%	14%	9%	13%
45-54	3%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%
55-64	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Unknown	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

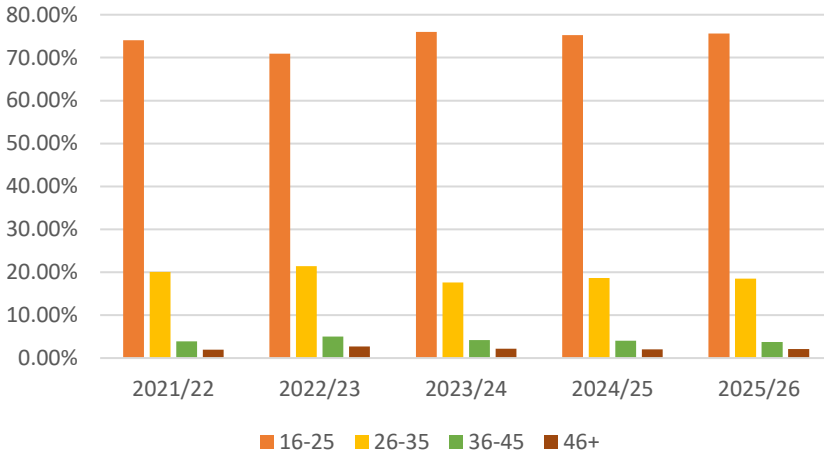
Sources:

- SRA SQE Quality Assurance Report 2022-23
- SRA SQE1 January 2024-2025 Statistical Reports
- SRA SQE1 July 2024-2025 Statistical Reports

Age profile of candidates

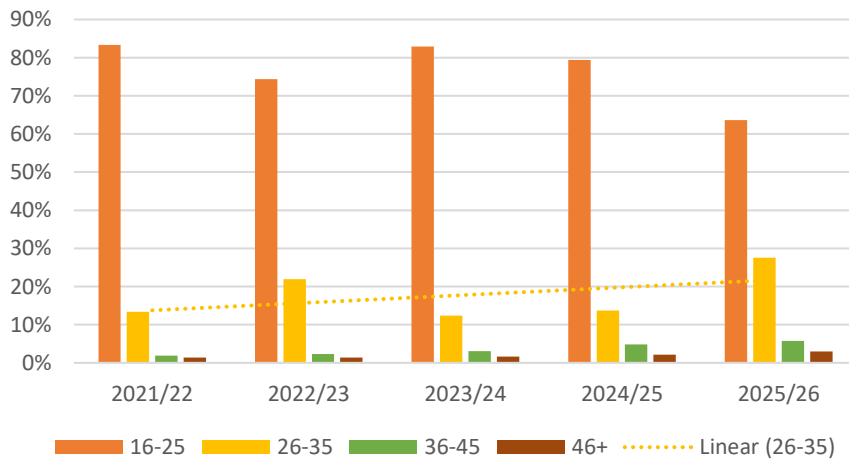


Figure 6: GDL/law conversion enrolments by age



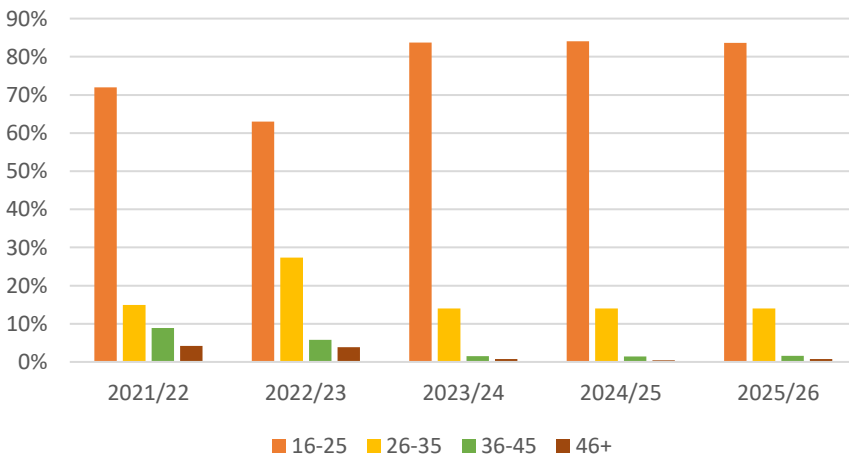
New or recent graduates continue to represent the **largest share** of candidates enrolling in law conversion courses, accounting for **more than 70%** of all enrolments over the past five years.

Figure 7: LPC enrolments by age



In 2025, there was a **marked increase** in enrolments from candidates **aged 26 and above**, reflecting a clear trend of individuals taking advantage of their continued eligibility for the **LPC** while the route remains available. However, most enrolments were aged **16-25**, and represent the **final cohort** eligible to pursue this pathway

Figure 8: SQE enrolments by age



SQE enrolments broadly **mirror** the age profile previously seen among **LPC applicants**, with a noticeable decline from those aged 36 and above. This pattern is also now **consistent with the demographic** distribution reported for the **SRA's SQE1 assessment**.



Ethnicity of candidates

White candidates continue to make up over half of all GDL applications and enrolments as shown in Figure 9 below and Table 9 on the next page. The ethnic make up for the GDL applications has been very consistent over the years, showing little change other than a slight increase in candidates identifying as mixed race.

Having seen a small increase in Black candidates applying for the LPC in 2024, the 2025 figures show a much more notable increase of more than 10% in the number of Asian candidates applying for this route, surpassing the number of White applicants. This marks a significant change in the demographic profile of those choosing the LPC route and could be linked to the lower pass rates among Black and Asian candidates in the SQE assessments, which may be leading to a perception among candidates that the LPC is a more achievable pathway for them.

Figure 9: GDL UK enrolments 2025

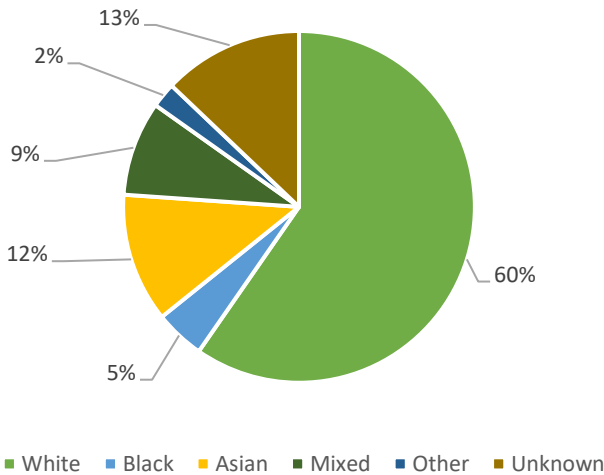
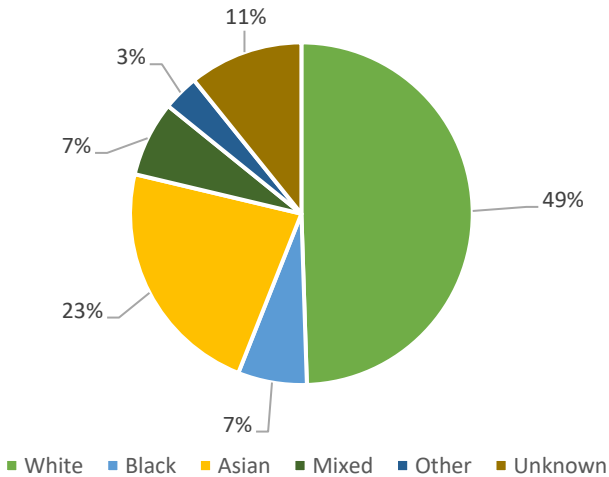
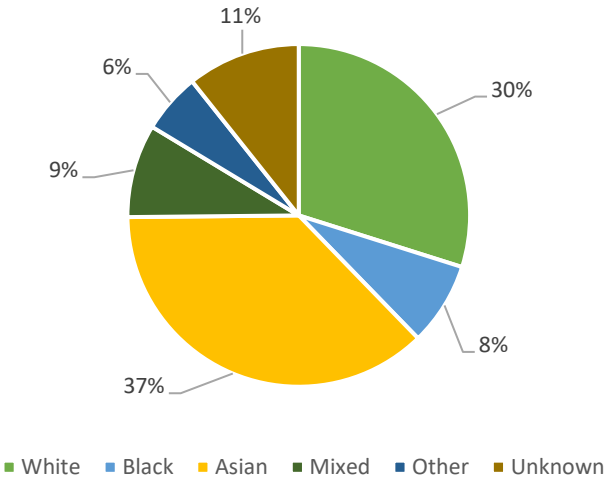


Figure 10: LPC UK enrolments 2025

Figure 11: SQE UK enrolments 2025



Ethnicity of candidates



Table 8: Full-Time UK GDL applicants and enrolments by ethnicity, 2022-25

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024	% of UK enrolments 2025
White	63%	61%	60%	64%	62%	62%	60%
Black	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Asian	11%	12%	13%	10%	12%	12%	12%
Mixed	6%	7%	8%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Other	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Unknown	13%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	13%

Table 9: Full-Time UK LPC applicants and enrolments by ethnicity, 2022-25

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024	% of UK enrolments 2025
White	51%	49%	48%	52%	50%	51%	30%
Black	7%	7%	9%	6%	6%	8%	8%
Asian	21%	26%	26%	20%	26%	25%	37%
Mixed	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	9%
Other	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	6%
Unknown	13%	8%	8%	14%	9%	7%	11%

Table 10: UK SQE applicants and enrolments for Full-Time study by ethnicity, 2022-2025

	% of UK applicants 2022	% of UK applicants 2023	% of UK applicants 2024	% of UK enrolments 2022	% of UK enrolments 2023	% of UK enrolments 2024	% of UK enrolments 2025
White	52%	52%	50%	52%	54%	51%	49%
Black	7%	8%	6%	6%	7%	5%	7%
Asian	21%	21%	23%	20%	20%	21%	23%
Mixed	6%	5%	7%	7%	5%	7%	7%
Other	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Unknown	11%	11%	12%	13%	11%	12%	11%

Candidates with disability



The figures in Table 11 below show that the overall percentage of UK applicants for GDL and SQE courses with special needs is consistent with previous years, with approximately 13-15% declaring a disability.

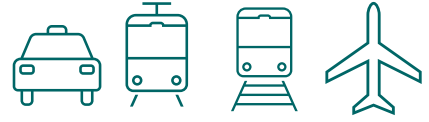
A breakdown of the figures indicates that there was a slight decrease in the number of candidates citing mental health issues in 2025, marking a break from the recent pattern of year-on-year increases. Interestingly, however, this shift is offset by an increase in the number of candidates with autism.

UK nationals with disabilities applying for the LPC has fallen in line with the overall decline in LPC enrolment, however, the share of those with dyslexia is notably higher. Although candidates with disabilities have been performing comparatively well in the SQE assessments, it is possible that a perception that the multiple-choice question format is disadvantageous to candidates with disabilities is leading some to feel that the LPC is the better option for them.

Table 11: Full-Time Enrolments of UK nationals by disability, 2023-2025

UK National enrolments	GDL			LPC			SQE		
Form of Disability	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
<i>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</i>	4%	5%	8%	5%	4%	5%	<1%	3%	7%
<i>Blind/partially sighted</i>	<1%	1%	2%	<1%	3%	3%	<1%	2%	2%
<i>Deaf/hearing impairment</i>	3%	2%	2%	<1%	2%	3%	<1%	3%	2%
<i>Dyslexia</i>	31%	30%	26%	24%	2%	38%	35%	25%	23%
<i>Mental health issues</i>	22%	23%	20%	25%	29%	23%	17%	27%	24%
<i>Multiple disabilities</i>	7%	9%	9%	10%	4%	10%	8%	7%	7%
<i>Unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma</i>	10%	9%	11%	15%	14%	8%	14%	14%	13%
<i>Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties</i>	<1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	<1%	2%	1%
<i>Not listed</i>	21%	20%	21%	17%	17%	10%	14%	18%	21%
<i>Personal care support</i>	0%	0%	0%	<1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Total UK nationality enrolments citing disability</i>	285	293	384	268	144	40	189	226	333
<i>% of Total UK enrolments</i>	15%	14%	15%	13%	12%	13%	12%	13%	13%

Routes to qualification



Tables 12 and 13 below show the percentages of enrolments based on the different routes to qualification for the LPC and SQE, while Table 14 provides a breakdown of enrolments by eligibility criteria.

The LPC saw a small rise in the number of enrolments from Russell Group graduates, whereas the SQE saw a corresponding decline in Russell Group enrolments.

53% **Non-Russell Group graduates accounted for over half of SQE course enrolments in 2025**

Table 12: Route to the LPC, Enrolments for Full-Time Study 2023-2025

Route	% Total enrolments 2023/24	% Total enrolments 2024/25	% Total enrolments 2025/26
GDL	10%	7%	8%
QLD/LLB	89%	93%	90%
o/w Russell Group	30%	25%	27%
FILEX	0%	1%	1%

Table 13: Route to SQE courses, Enrolments for Full-Time Study 2023- 2025

Route	% Total enrolments 2023/24	% Total enrolments 2024/25	% Total enrolments 2025/26
New graduates	96%	97%	97%
o/w Russell Group	52%	51%	47%
Lawyers from other jurisdictions	3%	3%	3%
Previously completed LPC	0%	0%	0%



95% of SQE enrolments are in LLM courses, eligibility for which includes previous study of the **seven foundations of legal knowledge**.

Non-law graduates – **67% of whom expressed an intention to qualify as solicitors** – are choosing to complete a law conversion course before SQE preparation. A further **17% plan to qualify as barristers**, while **15% remain undecided** and are keeping their career options open.

Table 14: Breakdown of SQE enrolments based on course eligibility 2025

	QLD/GDL % of total SQE enrolments	non-law % of total SQE enrolments	law/non-law* % of total SQE enrolments
LLM	89%	2%	3%
PGCert/Dip	6%	0%	0%
Prep course	0%	0%	0%
% of SQE enrolments	95%	2%	3%

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

Who funds participation in the courses?



Funding for the GDL remains unchanged, with just 14% of enrolments securing employer funding, indicating that employers are less willing to invest in candidates at this stage of legal training.

For the SQE, the picture is more nuanced; although the number of employer-funded SQE candidates has continued to rise each year since the SQE was introduced, the proportion of sponsored candidates fell nearly 10% in 2025. This contrasts with the LPC, where the share of employer-funded enrolments increased by 4%.

The decrease in the SQE share of employer sponsored enrolments could be reflective of a changing qualification landscape, where employers are using the SQE 1 as a gateway to determine who they take on.

Despite a **fall** in the **percentage share of sponsored enrolments**, the **total number of employer-funded places** across GDL, LPC and SQE courses **rose by 8%** compared with 2024.

Fig. 12: All sponsored enrolments

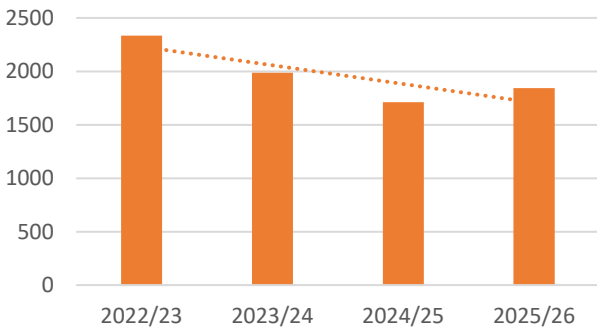


Fig. 13: % sponsored enrolments

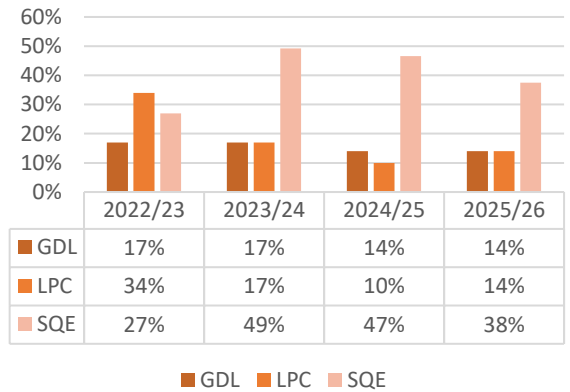


Fig.14: SQE enrolments fee payer

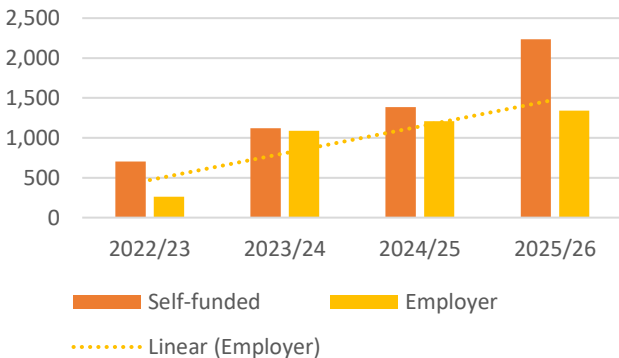
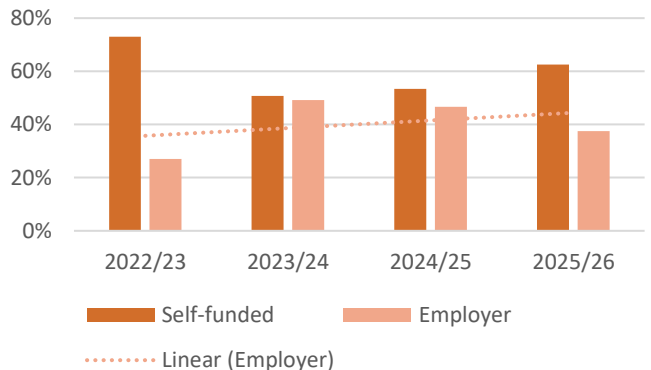


Fig. 15: % SQE enrolments fee payer



Distribution of funded candidates



LawCAB data continues to indicate that candidates from non-Russell Group universities have a lower chance of being sponsored when compared to Russell Group graduates.

2025 saw an increase both in the share of Russell Group sponsored enrolments as well as the share of UK Russell Group graduates securing employer funding for their courses.

Table 15: Training Contract/Sponsored Enrolments 2024-2025

	2024		2025	
	% 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
<i>GDL</i>	80%	86%	83%	88%
<i>LPC</i>	53%	52%	63%	67%
<i>SQE</i>	76%	76%	77%	78%
Total	75%	76%	78%	80%

Most funded places continue to remain concentrated in London and the South East. The figures below are based on candidates who applied through LawCAB and indicated that they had employer sponsorship, however, the data doesn't include the City Consortium candidates, who apply for their GDL and SQE courses directly rather than through LawCAB.

In contrast with GDL and SQE, the Midlands has a notable 17% of all sponsored LPC places, a significantly higher share than for the GDL and SQE, which stand at 4% and 7% respectively.

Table 16: Funded enrolments by region in 2025

Funded enrolments by region (grouped)	GDL	SQE	LPC
<i>London & South East</i>	83%	75%	67%
<i>South West</i>	2%	5%	0%
<i>Midlands</i>	4%	7%	17%
<i>North East</i>	5%	5%	4%
<i>North West</i>	3%	5%	7%
<i>Wales</i>	0%	0%	0%
<i>Distance Learning/Online</i>	4%	2%	6%

Distribution of enrolments in England and Wales 2025



Figure 16 provides an overview of enrolment patterns across England and Wales showing the share of enrolments for each region.

London and the South East continue to attract more than half of all enrolments for the GDL and SQE courses. While there was a slight increase in GDL enrolments, SQE enrolments in the region fell by 6% compared with 2024. This contrasts with a notable rise in LPC enrolments, which increased from 31% in 2024 to 42% in 2025.

Outside of London, the Midlands and North East remain relatively stable, with small shifts across programmes. Enrolments in Distance Learning courses, however, grew across all programmes, especially LPC which is likely to be reflective of the significantly reduced number of on-campus LPC options available in 2025.

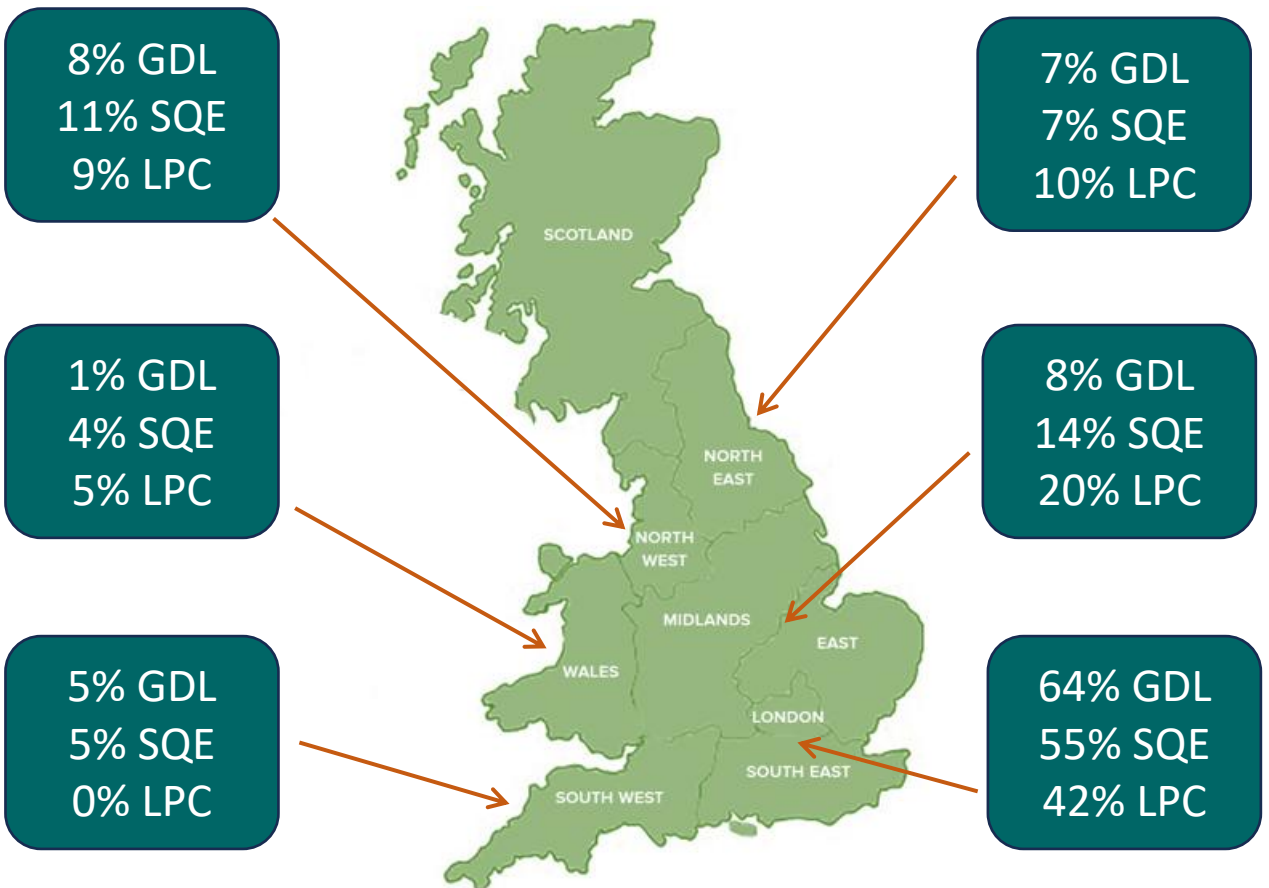


Figure 16: Enrolments in England and Wales 2025



International applicants

While the majority of applicants for the GDL, LPC, and SQE courses offered through LawCAB continue to be UK nationals, international candidates still represent a substantial and important minority.

Tables 17-18 show a breakdown of international student applications and enrolments by EU/EEA and rest of the World categories. Non-UK nationals consistently make up around one-third of all GDL and SQE applications. There was a slight dip in applications from Rest of World (RoW) candidates for both routes in 2025, however, the volume of EU/EEA applications and enrolments has remained broadly stable compared with previous years.

Table 19 highlights an overall gradual downward trend in international applications in recent years. Interestingly, the LPC experienced a slight increase in the share of international applications in 2025, but this did not translate into enrolments and the data from LawCAB tends to reflect the wider trend of falling numbers of international students in higher education.

Table 17: Distribution of applicants based on nationality

	2023			2024			2025		
	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE
<i>UK National</i>	64%	70%	63%	67%	74%	63%	68%	72%	65%
<i>RoW</i>	28%	21%	27%	27%	19%	27%	25%	22%	26%
<i>EU/EEA</i>	8%	9%	10%	7%	7%	9%	7%	6%	9%

Table 18: Distribution of enrolments based on nationality 2023-25

	2023			2024			2025		
	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE	GDL	LPC	SQE
<i>UK National</i>	75%	75%	70%	78%	78%	69%	79%	80%	71%
<i>RoW</i>	17%	15%	20%	16%	14%	22%	15%	14%	20%
<i>EU/EEA</i>	8%	9%	10%	6%	8%	9%	6%	6%	9%

Table 19: Total share of International applicants in applications and enrolments, 2023-25

(based on nationality)

	Total share of international students in total applications			Total share of international students in total enrolments		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
<i>GDL</i>	36%	33%	32%	25%	22%	21%
<i>LPC</i>	30%	26%	28%	25%	22%	20%
<i>SQE</i>	37%	37%	35%	30%	31%	29%



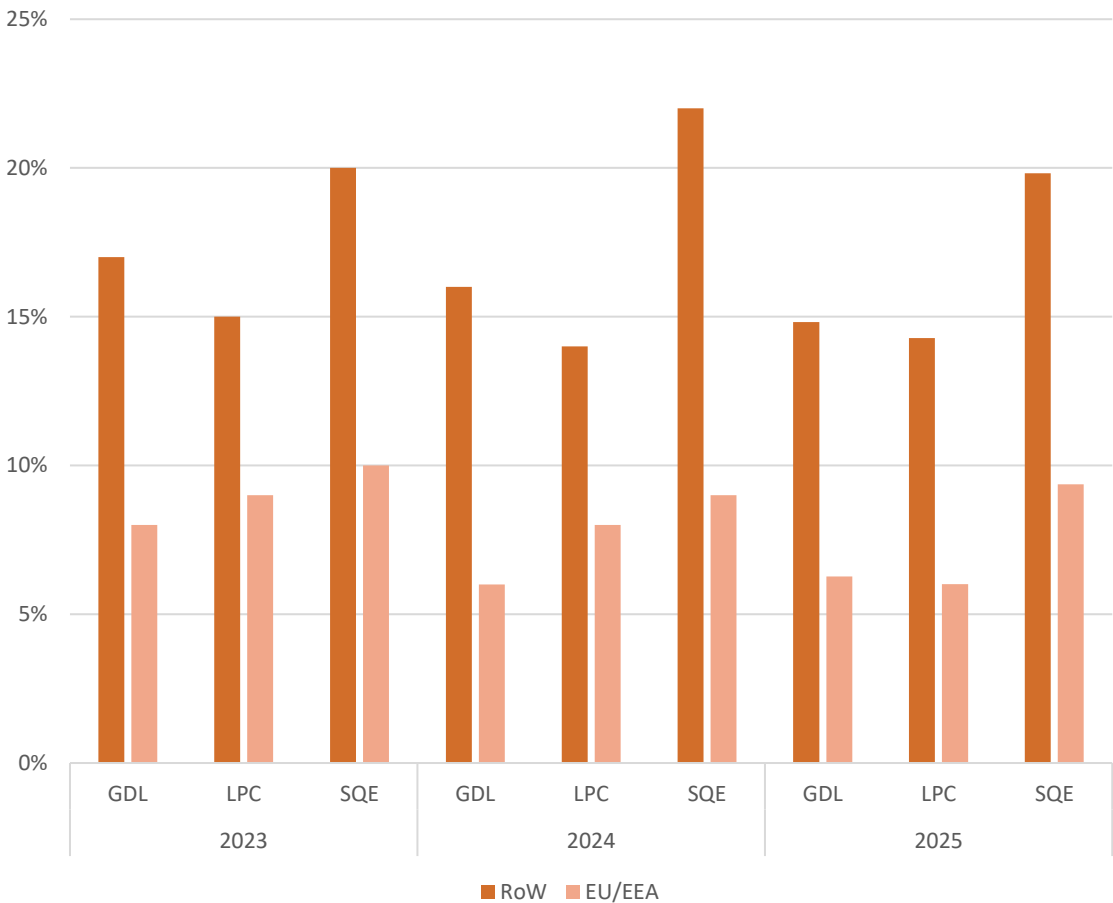
International applicants

Figure 17 below shows the volume of Rest of World (RoW) and EU/EEA enrolments since 2023.

Although 2024 saw a spike in SQE enrolments from RoW candidates, this fell again in 2025. In contrast, enrolments from EU/EEA candidates increased slightly.

For the GDL, enrolments figures have remained more-or-less consistent with previous years, indicating that it remains a popular and established pathway to legal qualification in several key common law jurisdictions.

Figure 17: International enrolments





Where do international applicants for the GDL come from?

Key headlines from the 2025 data suggest a rebound year for international recruitment on the GDL following a dip in 2024, with a rise by more than 20% in applications and enrolments.

Notable areas of growth are South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh), the US and China. There was also an increase in students from some of the European countries including Ireland, Romania, Netherlands and Portugal.

Ghana maintained an ongoing downward trend in both applications and enrolments, while the data for India and Nigeria shows a decline in numbers, which aligns with data published in the [HESA Statistics: UK, 2024/25 \(published January 2026\)](#).

Table 20: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time GDL courses, 2021-25

Nationality	Applications					Enrolments					% Enrolment/Applications				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Pakistani</i>	169	134	181	156	225	47	51	48	40	54	28%	38%	27%	26%	24%
<i>Ghanaian</i>	152	117	151	131	93	53	30	37	34	20	35%	26%	25%	26%	22%
<i>Indian</i>	164	106	129	114	153	71	50	51	49	58	43%	47%	40%	43%	38%
<i>Nigerian</i>	85	62	38	33	54	22	15	10	11	15	26%	24%	26%	33%	28%
<i>US Citizen</i>	95	61	88	86	110	56	30	44	42	48	59%	49%	50%	49%	44%
<i>Chinese</i>	84	51	77	58	72	45	25	42	31	39	54%	49%	55%	53%	54%
<i>French</i>	54	32	47	28	47	32	19	31	16	28	59%	59%	66%	57%	60%
<i>Bangladeshi</i>	53	32	51	56	87	17	9	18	21	26	32%	28%	35%	38%	30%
<i>Italian</i>	69	31	47	37	45	45	15	31	22	29	65%	48%	66%	59%	64%
<i>Irish</i>	38	29	43	35	37	22	23	29	21	28	58%	79%	67%	60%	76%
<i>Hong Kong</i>	97	28	42	31	42	63	18	32	20	26	65%	64%	76%	65%	62%
<i>German</i>	28	20	24	17	22	18	14	13	12	15	64%	70%	54%	71%	68%
<i>Canadian</i>	44	20	25	33	31	20	7	15	19	18	45%	35%	60%	58%	58%
<i>Turkish</i>	45	15	25	20	19	18	4	9	7	6	40%	27%	36%	35%	32%
<i>Polish</i>	19	13	18	18	14	13	8	8	7	5	68%	62%	44%	39%	36%
<i>Spanish</i>	25	13	20	14	18	12	10	13	12	8	48%	77%	65%	86%	44%
<i>Romanian</i>	12	12	13	10	10	5	8	10	3	7	42%	67%	77%	30%	70%
<i>Dutch</i>	19	11	14	11	12	10	7	9	6	10	53%	64%	64%	55%	83%
<i>South Korean</i>	22	10	10	12	19	14	7	6	4	10	64%	70%	60%	33%	53%
<i>Portuguese</i>	15	7	7	13	16	6	5	4	6	10	40%	71%	57%	46%	63%
All international	1774	1108	1436	1259	1543	841	505	652	539	672	47%	46%	45%	43%	44%



Where do international LPC applicants come from?

As expected, the accelerated phase-out of the LPC has resulted in a substantial decline in applications from international students, as far fewer are now eligible to pursue this qualification route.

Every country listed in Table 21 shows a pronounced reduction in applicant numbers, and overall international LPC enrolments have fallen by 75%.

Table 21: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time LPC, 2021-25

Nationality	Applications					Enrolments					% Enrolment/Applications				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Indian</i>	113	117	61	45	14	70	56	41	22	7	62%	48%	67%	49%	50%
<i>Pakistani</i>	102	106	118	63	16	52	46	52	32	6	51%	43%	44%	51%	38%
<i>Nigerian</i>	161	102	51	28	11	99	49	22	14	2	61%	48%	43%	50%	18%
<i>Italian</i>	65	73	39	29	6	58	54	28	21	4	89%	74%	72%	72%	67%
<i>Ghanaian</i>	65	67	40	28	9	37	36	22	9	4	57%	54%	55%	32%	44%
<i>Canadian</i>	68	57	28	12	6	44	39	22	5	2	65%	68%	79%	42%	33%
<i>Hong Kong</i>	65	56	19	11	1	41	36	14	7	1	63%	62%	74%	64%	100%
<i>US citizen</i>	51	54	20	6	4	39	35	16	3	1	76%	65%	80%	50%	25%
<i>Malaysian</i>	58	53	28	10	3	47	38	16	7	3	81%	72%	57%	70%	100%
<i>Irish</i>	63	49	39	12	45	51	40	27	9	3	81%	82%	69%	75%	7%
<i>French</i>	59	47	27	7	40	53	35	23	7	3	90%	74%	85%	100%	8%
<i>Trinidadian</i>	54	46	57	30	11	37	21	25	19	5	69%	46%	44%	63%	45%
<i>Singaporean</i>	54	46	18	3	0	48	34	11	3	0	89%	74%	61%	100%	0%
<i>Polish</i>	62	46	32	26	42	52	39	25	24	1	84%	85%	78%	92%	2%
<i>German</i>	51	41	23	8	33	40	29	18	8	2	78%	71%	78%	100%	6%
<i>Cypriot</i>	51	40	27	13	27	37	32	17	9	1	73%	80%	63%	69%	4%
<i>Chinese</i>	42	38	17	11	1	27	26	10	5	0	64%	68%	59%	45%	0%
<i>Greek</i>	37	37	14	3	5	30	27	10	3	4	81%	73%	71%	100%	80%
<i>Romanian</i>	35	35	17	11	1	28	28	12	9	0	80%	80%	71%	82%	0%
<i>Portuguese</i>	40	28	22	10	1	35	16	13	7	1	88%	57%	59%	70%	100%
All International	1848	1743	1114	552	164	1415	1108	670	329	81	77%	64%	60%	60%	49%



Where do international applicants for the SQE come from?

International applications for and enrolments in SQE courses rose in 2025, particularly among students from Nigeria, Ghana, the United States and Singapore. Numbers from some European countries also increased, including France, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Poland and Cyprus. In contrast, applications and enrolments declined among students from Pakistan, China, Romania and the Netherlands.

The SQE route to qualification offers several advantages for international candidates compared with the LPC, and the rise in non-UK applicants in 2025 suggests not only that a UK professional law qualification continues to hold global appeal, but also that awareness and understanding of the SQE pathway are expanding among overseas students.

Table 22: Top 20 Nationalities applying for and enrolling in full-time SQE, 2021-25

Nationality	Applications					Enrolments					% Enrolment/Applications				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Indian</i>	19	93	97	129	175	5	26	43	89	96	26%	28%	44%	69%	55%
<i>Nigerian</i>	23	82	67	75	115	6	28	22	31	60	26%	34%	33%	41%	52%
<i>Pakistani</i>	16	51	124	162	238	4	11	47	71	94	25%	22%	38%	44%	39%
<i>Ghanaian</i>	22	30	50	58	53	4	5	14	18	26	18%	17%	28%	31%	49%
<i>Malaysian</i>	5	30	45	51	57	4	17	31	41	46	80%	57%	69%	80%	81%
<i>Canadian</i>	6	24	29	34	27	1	17	22	26	20	17%	71%	76%	76%	74%
<i>Italian</i>	6	22	39	36	50	2	15	26	29	39	33%	68%	67%	81%	78%
<i>Chinese</i>	9	20	35	29	40	2	11	19	18	23	22%	55%	54%	62%	58%
<i>US citizen</i>	5	17	33	33	43	1	9	18	20	29	20%	53%	55%	61%	67%
<i>Singaporean</i>	3	17	28	36	49	1	13	22	27	43	33%	76%	79%	75%	88%
<i>French</i>	5	14	31	32	40	0	11	21	20	31	0%	79%	68%	63%	78%
<i>Irish</i>	7	14	35	38	45	4	10	27	30	36	57%	71%	77%	79%	80%
<i>German</i>	6	14	29	23	33	2	7	22	17	28	33%	50%	76%	74%	85%
<i>Hong Kong</i>	2	13	36	41	48	1	6	28	37	34	50%	46%	78%	90%	71%
<i>Romanian</i>	3	10	16	16	21	2	6	12	14	16	67%	60%	75%	88%	76%
<i>Portuguese</i>	3	9	21	14	24	0	9	13	10	19	0%	100%	62%	71%	79%
<i>Polish</i>	5	8	26	31	42	4	5	22	19	31	80%	63%	85%	61%	74%
<i>Greek</i>	0	5	17	18	31	0	2	11	15	22	0%	40%	65%	83%	71%
<i>Dutch</i>	4	5	11	14	17	1	3	7	9	10	25%	60%	64%	64%	59%
<i>Cypriot</i>	0	4	13	19	27	0	4	11	12	21	0%	100%	85%	63%	78%
All international	230	734	1182	1281	1685	66	317	666	799	1041	29%	43%	56%	62%	62%

Student experience survey 2025/26



This was our third student experience survey, conducted with applicants for the 2025/26 academic year.

Our aim was to find out:

- What students considered before applying and what they wish they had known
- What they plan to do next after completing their courses
- What influenced their provider choices
- Their career motivations and well-being impacts
- Educational backgrounds and family context

We contacted over 10,000 applicants for whom we had current contact addresses and received 500 responses. 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

Some of the **key headlines** coming out of the survey results from 2025/26 candidates include:



Cost remains a primary barrier

26% of respondents said that the cost of qualifying was a major factor that would discourage them from pursuing a career in law. Among those who chose not to enrol on a course, 28% indicated that the primary reason was that the course fees were too high.



Wellbeing concerns

Although 53% of respondents said that higher education has had a positive impact on their wellbeing, 14% reported negative effects, highlighting the need for additional support resources.



First-generation university students well-represented

31% of respondents identified themselves as first-generation university graduates, and 67% reported being the first in their family to study law. This suggests that the field is attracting – and remains accessible to – new entrants.

Over half (53%) of respondents that didn't enroll in courses are **planning to re-apply**, showing a **commitment to legal careers** despite barriers.

Law is attracting not only **first-generation** university graduates, but **over half** of entrants are the **first in their family** to study law.

What we found out about GDL students



GDL applicants were asked about their plans after completing the course.

There were some notable shifts compared with previous survey results, most significantly an increase in the number of respondents indicating that they intend to sit the SQE1 assessment after finishing their GDL. This may reflect the growing number of students enrolling on law conversion courses that include SQE1 preparation but, more worryingly, it could also point to ongoing confusion about the type of preparation required for the assessments. This aligns with one of the key messages from GDL students: uncertainty about the qualification pathway and how the GDL connects to SQE1 and SQE2.

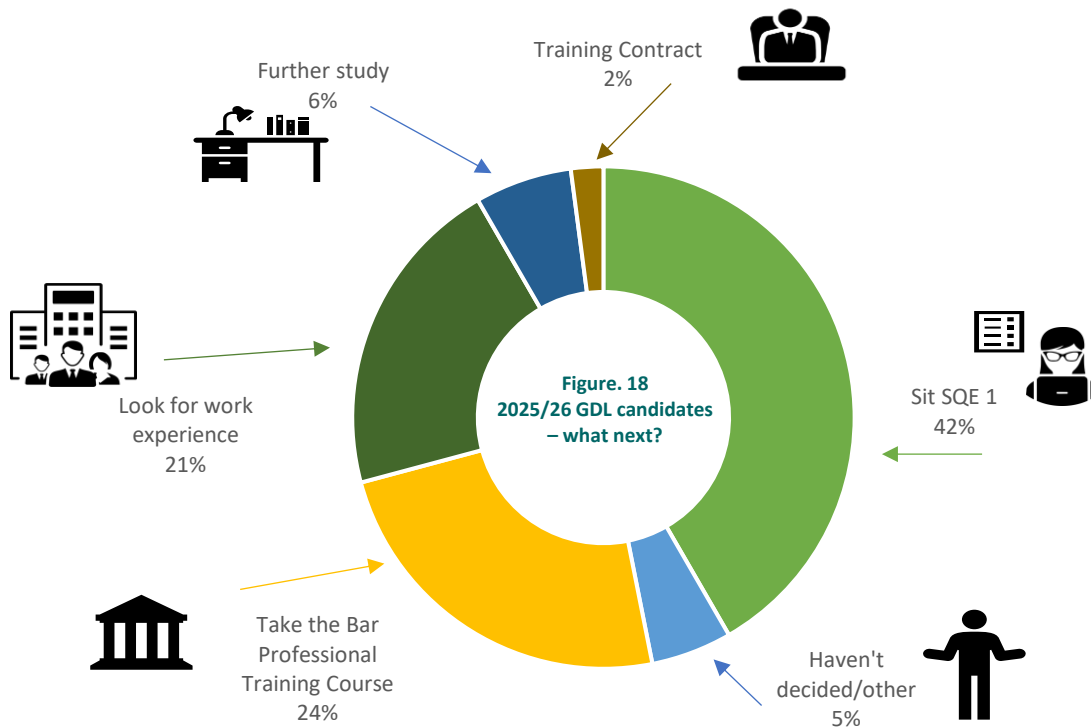


Table 23: GDL candidates 2023-2025 - what next?

GDL candidates - What next?	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Sit SQE 1	37%	19%	40%
Haven't decided/other	19%	10%	5%
Take the Bar Professional Training Course	19%	28%	23%
Look for work experience	19%	19%	20%
Further study	4%	20%	6%
Training Contract	2%	4%	2%

GDL candidates in 2025 appear to have a clearer understanding of their post-course plans than previous cohorts, with notable shifts both in the proportion who know their next steps and in the percentage intending to pursue further study.

What we learned from the SQE candidates



SQE students remain focused on progressing through the route and applicants in 2025 seemed to have a clearer idea of their steps to qualification, with many planning to sit SQE exams, start training contracts or seek work experience. A small minority remain undecided. There is, however, ongoing 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.

And what next?

Students applying for an SQE course beginning in 2025 were asked about their plans after completing the programme.



Less than **5%** planned further study

Less than **half** planned to sit **SQE** assessments.



21% of SQE candidates who hadn't booked, or were not planning to book, an SQE assessment **cited cost** as the primary reason.



60% planned to look for **work experience** or start a **training contract**

What do SQE students wish they had known?

One of the questions we asked was what students wished they had known before applying for a course. Respondents were given a free-text box to share their thoughts, and from the 174 detailed responses provided by SQE students, some recurring themes emerged.

Training contracts and work experience

- How competitive and difficult it is to secure training contracts
- The importance of starting the application early
- The amount of work experience needed before applying

Course intensity and workload

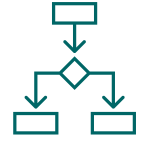
- How demanding SQE prep courses are
- The time commitment required for successful completion
- The impact on work-life balance and well-being

Assessment and SQE process

- The difficulty of SQE assessments
- How to navigate MySRA and booking systems
- The importance of understanding assessment techniques early

Financial planning

- The total costs beyond course fees (assessments, materials)
- The funding options for subsequent stages
- The early deadlines for scholarship and discounts



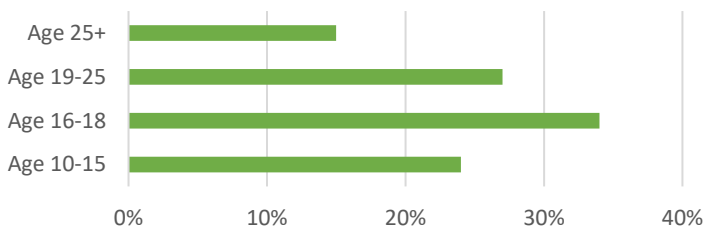
Applicant background and decision making

In this year’s survey, we asked applicants about their motivations for pursuing a career in law and when they started thinking about it, the factors that might discourage them from entering the profession and what the main influences on their decision making were.

When choosing a course, reputation and location consistently stand out as the strongest influences. While cost certainly plays a role, it is less often the sole deciding factor although it remains the leading reason why prospective students ultimately decide not to enrol.

In addition to training contract providers, decision-making is shaped largely by family, friends, word-of-mouth, and online resources – including websites, forums, rankings, reviews, as well as social platforms such as Reddit. Future employability also plays a significant role, with many candidates highlighting the importance of a law school’s reputation for connecting graduates with law firms. For international graduates, career and professional opportunities were the main attraction for studying in the UK.

Table 24: When did you start thinking about a career in law?



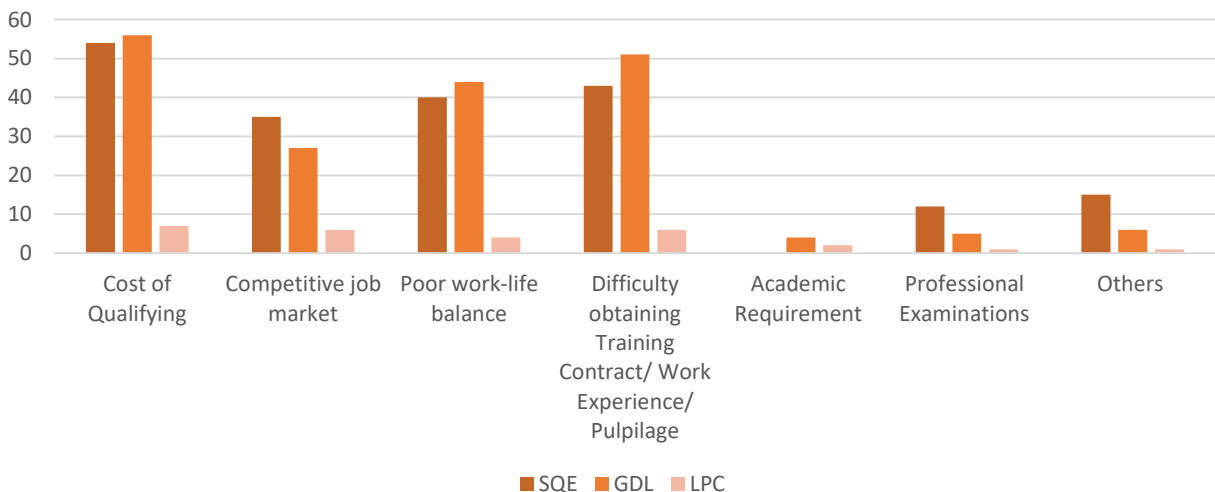
Just **under half** of students start thinking about postgraduate study **during their degree**, with **24%** waiting until their **final** year.

34% don’t think about applying for postgraduate study until **after** their degree, while **10%** consider it **before** their degree.

Why law?

- Range of career options & career progression (30%)
- Helping others and social change (33%)
- Intellectual stimulation (21%)
- Money (14%)

Figure 19: What would put you off going ahead with a career in law?



Concluding remarks



The SQE has now firmly overtaken the LPC as the primary route to qualifying as a solicitor, and both the availability of LPC courses and the demand for them have declined sharply over the past year.

Despite the significant fall in LPC applications in 2025, there is still a residual demand for the course. Some candidates are keen to qualify through the LPC while the route remains open, and others may be motivated by a desire to avoid the SQE assessments, which could be causing some anxiety among prospective students.

Interest in law conversion courses continues to grow, although many candidates remain uncertain about the full pathway to qualification.

Although it is encouraging to see an increase in the number of international applications and enrolments for both the GDL and SQE courses in 2025, the overall proportion of international students applying and enrolling is continuing to decline.

CAB Ltd Secretariat

March 2026

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