



## EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO QUALIFYING AS A SOLICITOR

2016

### 1. The law degree route

- a. Obtain a [qualifying law degree](#) at university (the academic stage). This requires three years of full-time study or a longer period of time in part-time study.
- b. Pass the [Legal Practice Course](#) (the vocational stage). This can be studied full-time (and can be completed in six months) or part-time (between 18 months and two years) and covers the skills required for practice.
- c. Secure a [training contract](#) in a law firm (or other training contract provider). This is a two year period of [recognised training](#) and should include both contentious and non-contentious experience.
- d. Pass the [Professional Skills Course](#) (the vocational stage). This is usually taken during the training contract and builds upon skills developed during the Legal Practice Course.
- e. Qualify as a solicitor

### 2. The non-law degree route

- a. Obtain a non-law degree at university (the academic stage)
- b. Pass the [Graduate Diploma in Law or Common Professional Examination](#) (the academic stage). This can be studied full-time or part-time and is designed to cover the core modules studied on an LLB degree. It is possible to apply for some exemptions from the GDL if a student has studied some modules of the Law of England and Wales (or of law of other jurisdictions that are equivalent to English law).
- c. Pass the [Legal Practice Course](#) (the vocational stage). This can be studied full-time (and can be completed in six months) or part-time (between 18 months and two years) and covers the skills required for practice.
- d. Secure a [training contract](#) in a law firm (or other training contract provider). This is a two year period of [recognised training](#) and should include both contentious and non-contentious experience.
- e. Pass the [Professional Skills Course](#) (the vocational stage). This is usually taken during the training contract and builds upon skills developed during the Legal Practice Course.
- f. Qualify as a solicitor

### 3. [Equivalent Means](#).

This is usually used to exempt a person from a training contract rather than any exemption from a law degree or the GDL. The applicant must give details of:

- a. The duration of work experience and number of hours worked;
- b. The level of employment and how much responsibility they have held;
- c. The nature of work undertaken relevant to the outcomes claimed; and
- d. Details of how they were supervised.

All work experience claimed must be supported with references from employers which corroborate the work experience evidence provided. The references must be dated within three months prior to the application.

The application must comply with the [SRA Principles](#) and meet the [Practice Skills Standards](#). The SRA is looking for 'alignment' with the work of a trainee. Ideally, an applicant will have three pieces of evidence per sub-outcome, each area of the outcome must be evidenced and ideally verified by a supervisor.

Three areas of law at a minimum must be covered. The guidelines do not specify both contentious and non-contentious but the Practice Skills Standards include both by implication. The applicant should cover three areas of law per sub-outcome ideally, but fewer may be acceptable if coverage is good over the whole outcome.

The portfolio requires a 'reflective' element, specifically required by the [Training Regulations](#). It provides a clear link between the evidence and the outcomes. One reflection per sub-outcome and a final reflective statement to pull the portfolio together will be valuable in demonstrating overall competence.

Please see here for a case study on the first paralegal to qualify through [Equivalent Means](#).

### 4. Apprenticeship

- a. No enrolment in university course (although the BPP solicitor trailblazer apprenticeship scheme includes completing a law degree)
- b. Secure employment in a law firm. An apprentice must be aged 16 years or over and currently will be funded by the government if under the age of 19 years old.
- c. Study part-time for six years (Read [here](#) for more information). Assessment is through functioning knowledge tests and also a practical legal exam.
- d. Qualify as a solicitor

## 5. The CILEX route

- a. Secure employment in a law firm (it is not necessary to have obtained a university law degree to commence the CILEx route).
- b. Study part-time with ILEX (Read here for more information [CILEx Home](#)). This is based on examination and requires a minimum of five years study.
  - i. CILEx Members do not need to be in legal employment but members must complete the academic and vocational phase.
  - ii. CILEx Fellows must work and train under the supervision of a solicitor for two years after gaining membership of CILEx.
- c. Pass the Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law examinations.
- d. Pass the Level 6 Professional Diploma in Higher Law and Practice examinations.
- e. Pass the Graduate Diploma in Law (partial or full exemptions are possible).
- f. Pass the Legal Practice Course
- g. Pass the Professional Skills Course (no training contract is required).
- h. Qualify as a solicitor

For further advice or information, please feel free to call Jo-Anne Pugh or Katie Jukes at BPP University Law School on 0113 386 8267 or 0113 386 8272.