SPONSORING SUCCESS:

The Employer's Guide to SQE Preparation and Funding

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Introduction

The SQE - The new pathway to qualifying as a solicitor in England & Wales.

The Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) is a centralised assessment for aspiring solicitors in England and Wales, introduced to standardise the process of qualifying as a solicitor.

Suitability and admission requirements

- Candidates apply for screening and get results
- Candidates can then apply for admission

Degree or equivalent

- Valid UK degree or other level 6 qualification

or

- Candidates can apply for an equivalence using other qualifications or experience

Qualifying work experience (QWE)

- Candidates must record experience and get it confirmed
- NB. This can be in up to four organisations

SQE assessments

- Candidates create an SQE assessment account
- Candidates sit and pass both assessments

Why Was the SQE Introduced

The SQE was introduced by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) with the aim of creating a more consistent, transparent, and fair route to qualification for all aspiring solicitors. The previous system, which included the Legal Practice Course (LPC) and training contracts, faced criticism for being expensive and inaccessible to many candidates, potentially creating barriers to entry into the legal profession.

Key reasons for the introduction of the SQE include:

- **Standardisation:** The SQE ensures that all candidates, regardless of their educational background or training route, are assessed against the same standards. This helps to maintain a consistent level of competence among newly qualified solicitors.
- **Fairness and Accessibility:** By removing the need for a traditional training contract and offering more flexible pathways to qualification, the SQE aims to make the legal profession more accessible to a diverse range of candidates.
- **Transparency:** The SQE provides a clear and transparent assessment process, making it easier for employers and clients to trust in the qualifications of newly admitted solicitors.
- **Cost Efficiency:** The new structure is designed to reduce the overall cost of qualifying as a solicitor, making it more affordable for candidates from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Who Can Take the SQE?

Law Graduates: Those who have completed a law degree (LLB) in the UK or an equivalent qualification from another jurisdiction. The SQE provides a standardized pathway for law graduates to qualify as solicitors.

Non-Law Graduates: Individuals who hold a degree in a non-law subject can also pursue a career as a solicitor and proceed straight onto the SQE without the requirement for a conversion course or Graduate Diploma in Law.

International Candidates: The SQE offers a streamlined route to meet the necessary standards for international lawyers looking to practice as solicitors in England and Wales

Legal Apprentices: Those undertaking legal apprenticeships can add the SQE to their qualification process, combining practical experience with the skills assessments required to qualify to practice as a solicitor.

Paralegals and Other Legal Professionals: Existing legal professionals, such as paralegals who wish to qualify as solicitors can often leverage their experience towards QWE and fast-track their way to becoming a solicitor.

Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)

QWE can be gained in one block, like a two-year training contract, or in stages, in up to a maximum of four organisations.

There are no requirements about when to undertake QWE. It can be undertaken before, during or after taking the SQE assessments.

Candidates' experience must be signed-off in accordance with the SRA's requirements. This would usually be the responsibility of the Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP) or a qualified solicitor within the place of work. However, this can also be fulfilled by a nominated solicitor from outside the organisation with direct knowledge of the work being undertaken. The solicitor does not need to hold a practising certificate.

Learn more

What Counts as QWE?

QWE must involve providing legal services. The Legal Services Act 2007 (s. 12) defines legal activity and can help candidates decide whether their role involves delivering legal services. Because some or all of our competencies are likely to be part of delivering legal services, any work that meets this definition is likely to be QWE.

Questions to help ascertain if work meets the QWE requirements:

- Does or did the job, role or experience involve providing legal services? The Legal Services Act 2007 (s. 12) defines legal activity.
- Does or did the job, role or experience involve real life legal services provision rather than stimulated legal services provision?
- Has the individual been exposed to at least two competences in the Statement of Solicitor Competence?
- Has or will the job, role or experience be carried out in no more than four organisations?
- Has or will the job, role or experience be at least two years' full time or equivalent? We will not prescribe what full time (or equivalent) means.
- Has or will the job, role or experience be confirmed by a solicitor or COLP?

Why sponsor your employees through the SQE?

For 81% of firms surveyed*, recruitment is the top challenge when it comes to talent.

(*The BARBRI Barometer: Navigating Talent Challenges and Opportunities for SME Law Firms in 2024 and Beyond)

Why Sponsor Your Employees Through the SQE

01 Cost-Effective Investment

Lower Recruitment Costs: Recruiting a new solicitor often involves significant expenses, including recruitment agency fees, advertising costs, and onboarding processes. Sponsoring current employees can be more cost-effective.

Retention of Talent: Investing in current staff can enhance loyalty and reduce turnover, leading to lower long-term recruitment and training costs.

02 Enhanced Employee Engagement and Loyalty

Motivation and Morale: Providing development opportunities boosts employee morale and motivation. Employees feel valued and are likely to be more engaged and productive.

Retention: Employees are more likely to stay with a firm that invests in their professional growth, reducing attrition rates and retaining valuable institutional knowledge.

03 Improved Culture

Culture and Values Alignment: Current staff already understand and align with your organisation or firm's culture, values, and practices. Supporting their professional development strengthens this alignment.

04 Increased Internal Mobility and Flexibility

Versatile Workforce: Developing internal talent allows for greater flexibility in workforce planning and can help fill critical roles more quickly and effectively.

Succession Planning: Preparing existing staff for higher qualifications supports effective succession planning and ensures continuity in key roles.

05 Demonstrated Commitment to Professional Development

Attracting Talent: Firms known for investing in their employees' professional development are more attractive to potential hires.

Reputation and Brand: A firm that invests in employee development builds a strong reputation as an employer of choice, enhancing its brand in the legal industry.

06 Better Performance and Client Satisfaction

High Standards of Service: Employees who are better trained and qualified can deliver higher standards of legal service, leading to improved client satisfaction and loyalty.

Competitive Advantage: Firms with highly qualified staff can differentiate themselves in the market, offering a competitive advantage over rivals who may not invest similarly in their employees.

07 Customised Skill Development

Immediate Application: Employees can immediately apply new skills and knowledge gained from the SQE preparation to their current work, benefiting the firm directly.

Tailored Training: Existing employees can tailor their learning with additional skills to the specific needs of the firm, ensuring that they acquire capabilities and knowledge directly relevant to their roles.

A Closer Look at the SQE Assessments

SQE1:

The SQE1 assesses the application of Functioning Legal Knowledge (FLK) through single-best-answer multiple choice questions, split over two days. From the January 2027 sitting, there are 340 questions in total:

- From January 2027, subjects are grouped by session.
- **FLK1** – Session 1: Business Law and Practice, Dispute Resolution, Legal Services; Session 2: Tort, Contract Law, Legal Systems (Legal System of England and Wales, Constitutional and Administrative Law and EU Law).
- **FLK2** – Session 1: Wills and the Administration of Estates, Solicitors Accounts, Trusts, Land Law; Session 2: Property Practice, Solicitors Accounts, Criminal Liability, Criminal Law and Practice.
- Questions remain randomised within each session.
- **Ethics and professional conduct** are examined pervasively across both FLK exams, and principles of taxation are assessed in the context of Business Law and Practice, Property Practice, and Wills and the Administration of Estates.

The exam is computer based and can be sat worldwide.

Look up SQE assessment centres

SQE2:

The SQE2 tests the application of knowledge and legal skills in practical situations.

Candidates will be assessed on 6 legal skills:

- Client interviewing and attendance note/legal analysis (oral)
- Advocacy (oral)
- Case and matter analysis (written)
- Legal research and written advice (written)
- Legal writing (written)
- Legal drafting (written)

Candidates will also need to have knowledge of a selection of the SQE1 subjects to apply in practical situations:

- Criminal litigation (including advising clients at the police station)
- Dispute resolution (including contract law and tort)
- Property practice (including land law)
- Wills and intestacy, probate administration and practice (including trusts)
- Business organisations, rules and procedures (including money laundering and financial services, and contract law)

SQE Prep with BARBRI

Ultimate flexibility, an individualised approach to learning and unrivalled support and wellbeing. Trust BARBRI, you're in safe hands.

Flexibility

- BARBRI's SQE prep courses are delivered online and on-demand.
- Our tech-enabled Personal Study Plan (PSP) creates a unique study schedule for each learner. Your employees can select their preferred study days and times whilst blocking out periods where they are not available such as holidays or peak periods at work, thus allowing your employees to fit their studies around their existing responsibilities.
- Learning is delivered in bitesize sessions, majority are 15 or 30 minutes allowing learners to access them anywhere and at any time via desktop, mobile or the app, helping learners fit studies into lunch breaks and their daily commute!

Individualised Learning

- No two learners are the same. Our course content is delivered in multiple formats meeting the needs of a variety of learning styles.
- Learners also have access to 3,000 MCQs, 8 mock tests and 1 fully simulated mock exam giving them maximum opportunities to practice so they will sit the exam with confidence.

Wellbeing & Support

- The path to qualifying can feel pressured at times but with BARBRI your employees are never alone!
- Learners can book unlimited one-to-one sessions with a learning coach, ask unlimited legal questions via the PSP along the way, join various interactive workshops and strategy sessions with tutors and fellow students. All learners have access to wellbeing and mental health support to help foster a positive, balanced and fulfilling lifestyle during their studies, while our employability team is ready to help with QWE advice.

SQE1 Prep at-a-glance

- Flexible online learning
- Unlimited 1:1 learning coach sessions
- Live online workshops with peers
- Adaptable tech-enabled Personal Study Plan
- 20 – 45 min bitesize video lectures
- Digital and hardback workbooks
- 3,000+ practice multiple choice questions (MCQ)
- 8 mock tests and a full simulated exam

SQE2 Prep at-a-glance

- Flexible online learning
- FLK diagnostic assessment and SQE1 Prep review access
- 20 – 30 min bitesize video skills lectures
- Digital and hardback workbooks
- Guided interactive activities
- Self-practice activities
- 8 practice feedback activities (PFA) with feedback
- 12 mock exams
- Live online workshops
- Drop in strategy sessions

The BARBRI SQE Guarantee

Should your employee not experience first time exam success, with the BARBRI guarantee, they may rejoin any SQE1 or SQE2 Prep course - free of charge - within 12 months of the results date.

Industry Leading Pass Rates

BARBRI has been preparing students for high-stakes legal qualifying exams for over 50 years. Our proven approach to learning has been honed over the years. We utilise a mix of learning materials and study aids and embed the learning through spaced repetition throughout the course.

SQE1 Pass Rates

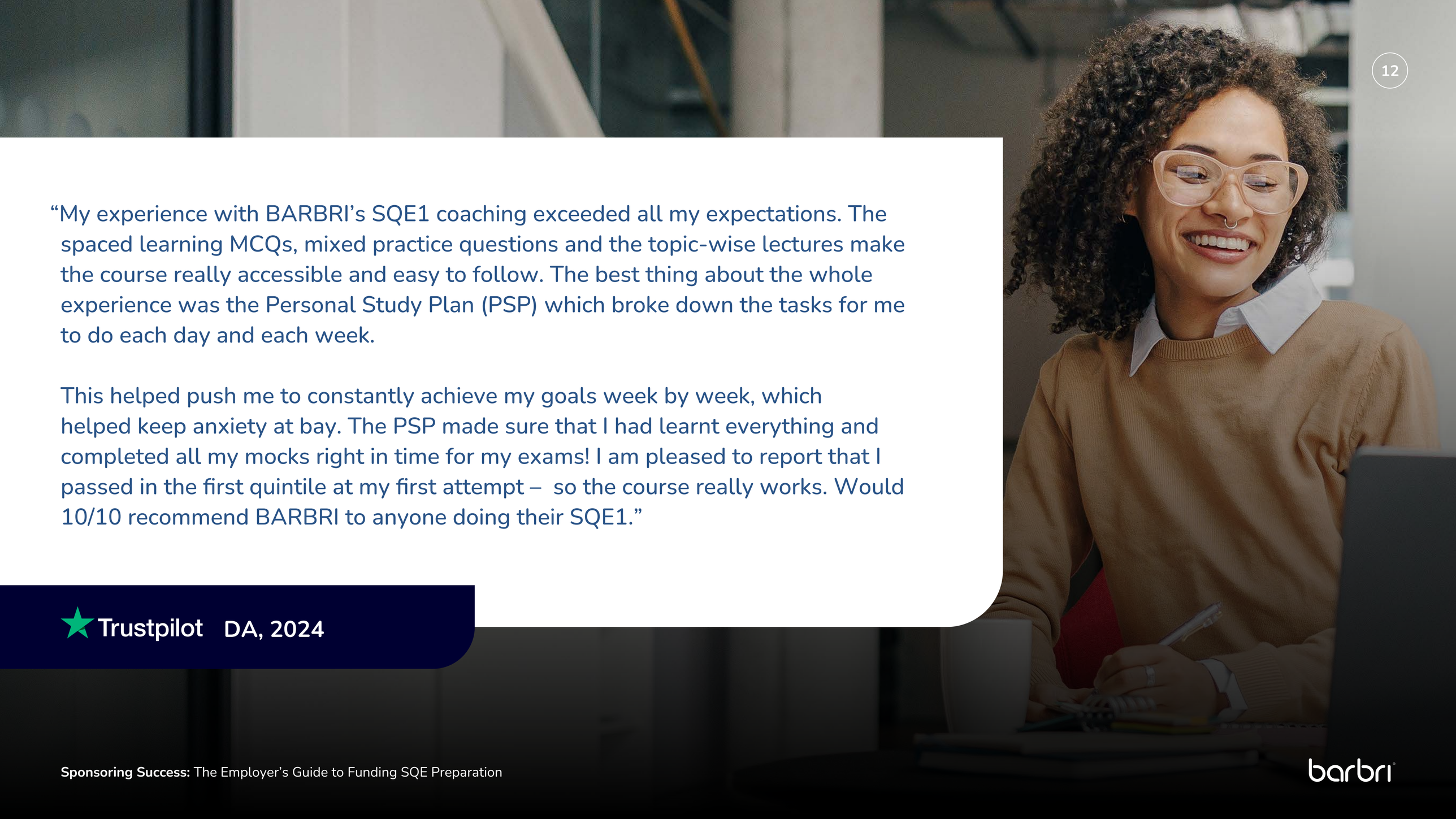
84%
BARBRI average pass rate for sponsored students who completed at least 90% of the recommended study plan

v.56%
Solicitors Regulation Authority industry average from Jan 2024

SQE2 Pass Rates

86%
Pass rate for BARBRI sponsored students (who are SQE1 alumni)

v.73%
Solicitors Regulation Authority industry average from Jan 2024



"My experience with BARBRI's SQE1 coaching exceeded all my expectations. The spaced learning MCQs, mixed practice questions and the topic-wise lectures make the course really accessible and easy to follow. The best thing about the whole experience was the Personal Study Plan (PSP) which broke down the tasks for me to do each day and each week.

This helped push me to constantly achieve my goals week by week, which helped keep anxiety at bay. The PSP made sure that I had learnt everything and completed all my mocks right in time for my exams! I am pleased to report that I passed in the first quintile at my first attempt – so the course really works. Would 10/10 recommend BARBRI to anyone doing their SQE1."

Trustpilot DA, 2024

How much does the SQE cost?

SQE Prep Fees

Standalone Prep Courses

SQE1:

£2,999-£3,299

£2,999 for SQE1 10 & 20 week prep courses
£3,299 for SQE1 40 week prep course

SQE2:

£2,999-£3,499

£3,499 for SQE2 10 & 20 week prep courses
£2,999 for BARBRI alumni taking SQE2 10 & 20 week prep courses

SQE Complete

Includes SQE1 Prep and SQE2 Prep:

£5,499

Exam Fees

SQE1:

£1,888

SQE2:

£2,902

Employer Funding Options

- Pay by credit card (online)
- Pay by invoice

Please also consider:
Students have to travel to a test centre and take the examination face-to-face for both the SQE1 and SQE2. Here is a comprehensive list of all centre locations (both UK and internationally), test dates and ways to book the examination. Therefore, please budget for transport to exam centres, accommodation for exams, which may be over several days and travel insurance.

How much does the SQE cost?

SQE Prep Fees

Standalone Prep Courses

Foundations in Law:

£499

For 6 week course

SQE1:

£2,999-£3,299

£2,999 for SQE1 10 & 20 week prep courses
£3,299 for SQE1 40 week prep course

SQE2:

£2,999-£3,499

£3,499 for SQE2 10 & 20 week prep courses
£2,999 for BARBRI alumni taking SQE2 10 & 20 week prep courses

SQE Prep Packages

Foundations & SQE1 Prep:

£3,399 - £3,699

£3,399 for Foundations in Law & SQE1 20 week prep
£3,699 for Foundations in Law & SQE1 40 week prep

SQE Complete

Includes SQE1 Prep and SQE2 Prep:

£5,499

For SQE1 40 week prep course & SQE2 20 week prep course

Exam Fees

SQE1:

£2,006

SQE2:

£3,086

Employer Funding Options

- Pay by credit card (online)
- Pay by invoice

For best employer rates and discounts for your employer talk to BARBRI.

Please also consider:
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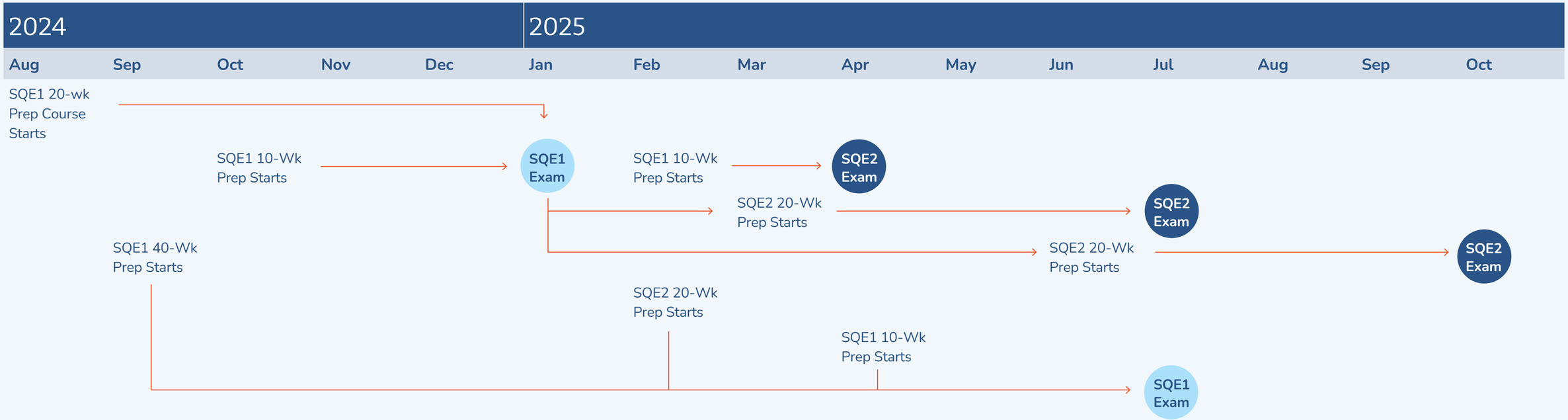
Course start dates & exam sittings



SQE1

Exam Sitting	Course	Duration	Study Hours	Start Date
Jan 2025	SQE1	20-week	Part-time / 20 hours per week	26 August 2024
Jan 2025	SQE1	10-week	Full-time / 40 hours per week	30 September 2024
Jul 2025	SQE1	40-week	Part-time / 10 hours per week	21 October 2024
Jul 2025	SQE1	20-week	Part-time / 20 hours per week	17 February 2025
Jul 2025	SQE1	10-week	Full-time / 40 hours per week	28 April 2025

SQE2

Exam Sitting	Course	Duration	Study Hours	Start Date
Oct 2024	SQE2	10-week	Part-time / 15-20 hours per week	12 August 2024
Jan 2025	SQE2	20-week	Part-time / 10-15 hours per week	9 September 2024
Apr 2025	SQE2	20-week	Part-time / 10-15 hours per week	11 November 2024
Jul 2025	SQE2	20-week	Part-time / 10-15 hours per week	10 March 2025
Oct 2025	SQE2	20-week	Part-time / 10-15 hours per week	9 June 2025

You'll be in good company

"We were very struck by BARBRI's overall offering for SQE provision, in particular, its ambition, dynamism and superlative use of technology, which aligns closely with our own ethos."

Stephen Ratcliffe, BAKER MCKENZIE'S TRAINING PRINCIPAL

"BARBRI really is being brilliantly visionary, innovative and proactive in creating and delivering opportunities to those seeking to enter the profession"

Patrick McCann, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING

"With support from BARBRI, we can help people from a refugee background access the legal profession and acquire the knowledge, confidence, experience and qualifications they need to gain stable, fulfilling employment matching their skills and aspirations."

Matthew Powell, CEO BREAKING BARRIERS

barbri

To enrol, simply visit **barbri.com**, select the course required and look for the employer funded options.

Alternatively, for more information or to speak to a student advisor please contact us.

Enrol **Contact us**